

Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

January

2022

1-26-2022

Daily Eastern News: January 26, 2022

Eastern Illinois University

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Recommended Citation

Eastern Illinois University, "Daily Eastern News: January 26, 2022" (2022). *January*. 3.
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THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

' TELL THE TRUTH AND DON'T BE AFRAID '

January 12, 2022

MORE THAN A CENTURY OF COVERAGE

VOL. 106 | NO. 73

OUT OF CONTROL COVID-19 CASES AT ALL-TIME HIGH, DEATHS ON THE RISE

By Corryn Brock
Editor-in-Chief |@corryn_brock

Nearly two years ago on April 6, 2020, the Coles County Health Department announced the first case of COVID-19 in Coles County. Now, the county has seen 13,719 confirmed cases.

Over the last two years, there have been multiple spikes in cases, but none as extreme as the jump the county has seen this month.

From the start of the pandemic to Dec. 31, 2021, there were a total of 10,118 cases of COVID-19 in Coles County. Since Jan. 1, 3,601 new cases have been added to the list.

This 35.59% increase has come at the cost of the lives of 153 Coles County residents' lives.

Currently, 41 people are hospitalized at Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center. Two of the hospitalized individuals are children.

Of those, 28 are unvaccinated and 13 are vaccinated. Six of the vaccinated are overdue for a booster.

Eight patients are in the critical care unit, six of which are unvaccinated. Of the other two, one individual in critical care is fully vaccinated and the other is overdue for their booster.

On campus, Eastern is reporting that 50 of 110 isolation/quarantine spaces are currently in use.

Of students, 3,595 (77.7%) are fully vaccinated, 999 (21.6%) have opted not to disclose their vaccination status, did not respond to requests for

their vaccination status or are unvaccinated and 32 (0.7%) are partially vaccinated.

Of employees, 985 (79.1%) are fully vaccinated, 257 (20.6%) have opted not to disclose their vaccination status, did not respond to requests for their vaccination status or are unvaccinated and 4 (0.3%) are partially vaccinated.

Those in Eastern's community who are unvaccinated must complete mandatory weekly testing or face disciplinary actions.

Students who do not complete testing will face the following repercussions if they do not follow the university's policy:

-After one week of noncompliance students will receive a written warning and information sheet.

-After two weeks of noncompliance, students will receive a \$150 fine and university disciplinary probation.

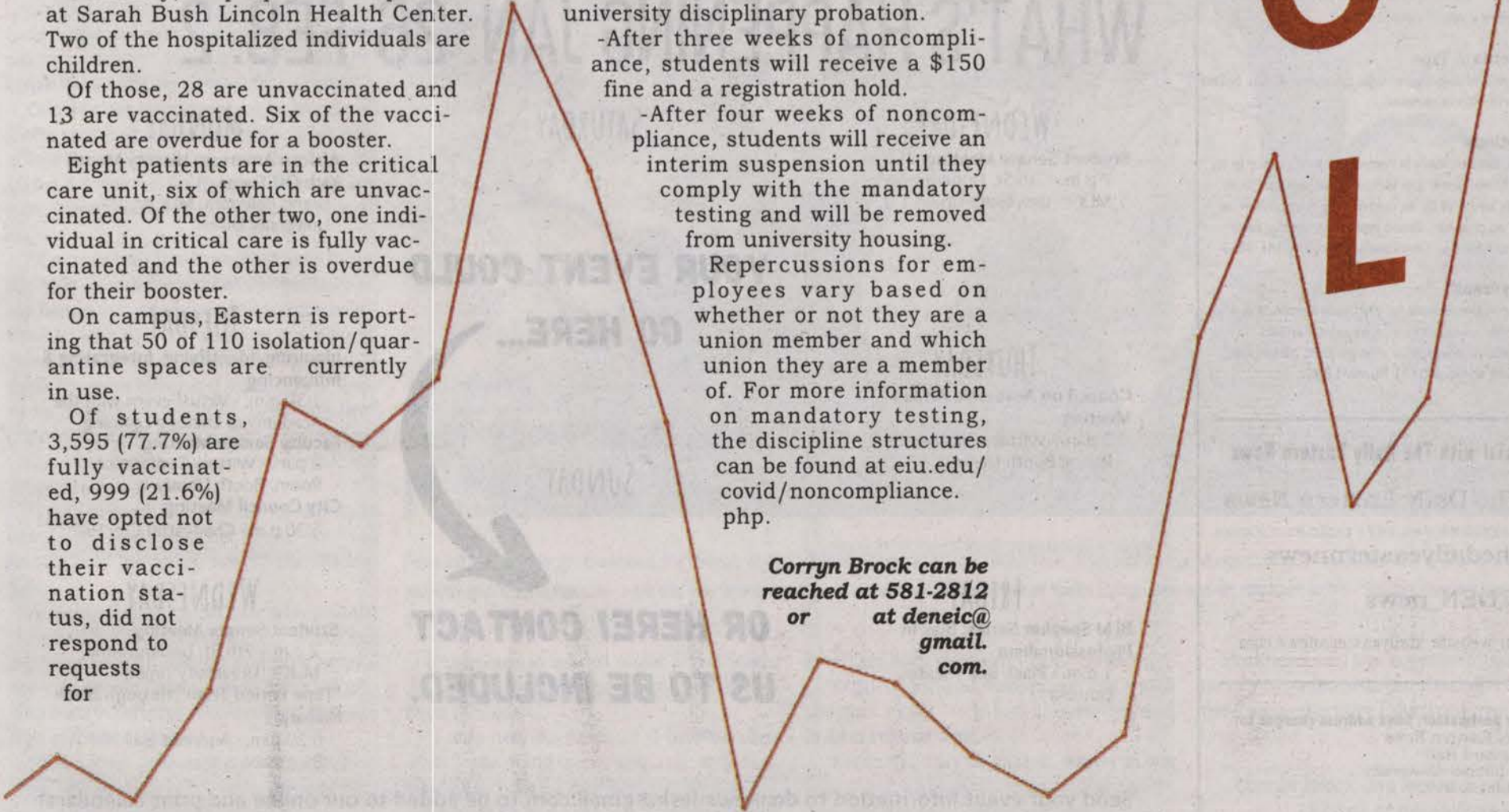
-After three weeks of noncompliance, students will receive a \$150 fine and a registration hold.

-After four weeks of noncompliance, students will receive an interim suspension until they comply with the mandatory testing and will be removed from university housing.

Repercussions for employees vary based on whether or not they are a union member and which union they are a member of. For more information on mandatory testing, the discipline structures can be found at eiu.edu/covid/noncompliance.php.

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The Daily Eastern News is produced by the students of Eastern Illinois University. It is published weekly on Wednesday, in Virton, Ill., during fall and spring semesters and online during the summer term except during university vacations or examinations. One copy per week is free to students and employees. Additional copies can be obtained for 50 cents each in the Student Publications Office in Buzzard Hall.

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Education majors: COVID-19 not only cause for teacher shortage

By Madelyn Kidd
 News Editor | @DEN_news

For the Regional Office of Education district #11, there has been a growing teacher shortage crisis for schools across Coles, Clark, Cumberland, Moultrie, Douglas, Edgar and Shelby counties.

In every county, the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools, IARSS, has an annual survey to document current and recurring problems within school districts.

In a report, local school districts responded to the survey last semester these were some of the results:

-35% said COVID-19 increased the teacher turnover.

-94% said the teacher shortage problem was getting worse.

-29 classes were canceled, and 14 became online due to the teacher shortage.

-94% said they are concerned about future teacher shortages.

Bailey Reed, a sophomore secondary education biology major, said she thinks the conditions teachers are in is causing the shortage in teachers in America.

"I believe the conditions for teachers is the cause for the shortage of teachers in America overall," Reed said. "Generally the pay starting off isn't phenomenal, but is getting better as the baseline pay is getting raised (at least in Illinois). Also, teaching can really be a stressful job. As a teacher, you are there for the students more than anything else. You are your student's safe place, and sometimes that means you have to handle some of those stressors with them and help them through it. And that's hard. It can get to you, which is why a lot of teachers leave after 5 years."

Reed also said whether or not COVID-19 was the cause for the teacher shortage-facing

the district right now.

"I mean, the teacher shortage has been an issue since before COVID made its way into our lives, especially in Illinois, but I have no doubt that it's made the shortage worse," Reed said. "I know of many teachers from my hometown who retired early or quit as a result of the pandemic. Many teachers did it because of their own health or a family member's health."

Reed said her thoughts on COVID-19 was a catalyst for the shortage or if it was inevitable.

"We were already at a point of crisis in many states," Reed said. "In Illinois, there are plenty of classrooms that have to go on without a certified teacher guiding the class, but I do see the pandemic as catalyzing the crisis."

Reed brought up how COVID-19 is a

stressful situation for teachers.

"Teachers are constantly testing positive for COVID putting more stress on them as well as their colleges and administration," Reed said. "Many administrators, teachers and other specialists are expected to step up and act as substitutes during their lunches and planning periods."

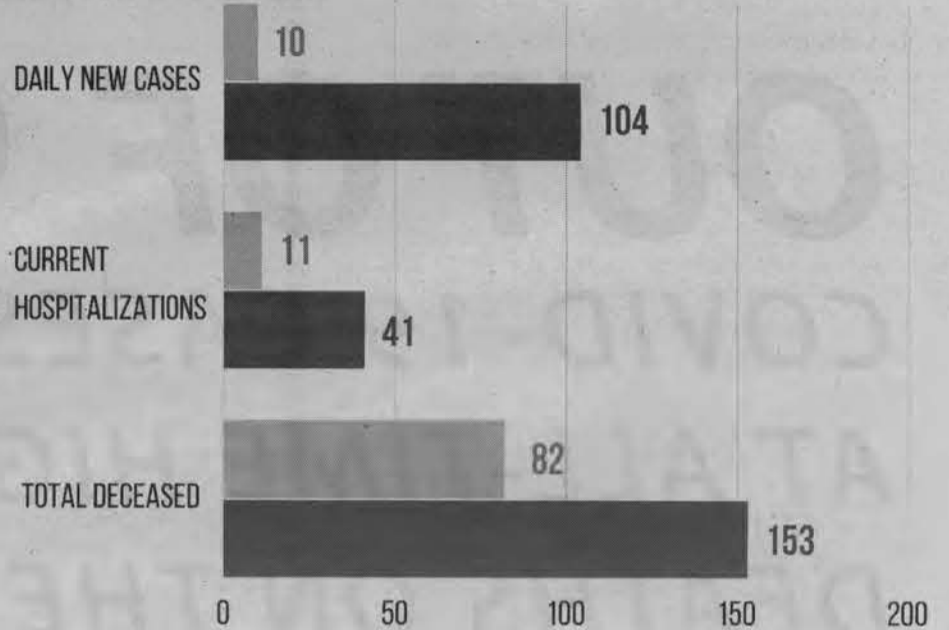
Ellen Dooley contributed to this article.

Madelyn Kidd can be reached at 581-2812 or at mekidd@eiu.edu.

The rest of this story can be found online on The Daily Eastern News website:

dailyeasternnews.com

■ JAN. 24, 2021 ■ JAN. 24, 2022



Coles County COVID-19 Stats Graphic by Luke Taylor

WHAT'S HAPPENING JAN. 26-FEB. 2

WEDNESDAY

Student Senate Meeting
 7 p.m. - 7th St. Underground,
 MLK Jr. University Union

SATURDAY

MONDAY

African American History Month
 Kick-Off Event
 Grand Ballroom, MLK Jr.
 University Union

THURSDAY

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

SUNDAY

FRIDAY

BLM Speaker Series: Bias in
 Professionalism
 1 p.m. - Black Box Theater,
 Doudna

TUESDAY

Inquiring, Identifying, Integrating &
 Influencing
 1:30 p.m. - Virtual event with the
 Academy of Lifelong Learning
Faculty Senate Meeting
 2 p.m. - Witters Conference
 Room, Booth Library
City Council Meeting
 6:30 p.m. - Charleston City Hall

WEDNESDAY

Student Senate Meeting
 7 p.m. - 7th St. Underground,
 MLK Jr. University Union
 "Time Period Train" through Black
 History
 6:20 p.m. - Andrews Hall
 Basement

**YOUR EVENT COULD
 GO HERE...**

**OR HERE! CONTACT
 US TO BE INCLUDED.**

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

Fraternity mourns, celebrates influential brother

By Corryn Brock
Editor-in-Chief | @corryn_brock

Iota Phi Theta, Fraternity Inc. honored Kristian Philpotts, an Eastern graduate who was shot and killed on Jan. 12 in Urbana with a balloon release Saturday. Philpotts was an influential member of the fraternity and helped to revive Eastern's chapter after it closed in 1994.

Ian Davis, the fraternity's vice president and senior exercise science major, said Philpotts was essential to the chapter's revival.

"KP was the reason for the revival of our chapter Beta Gamma of Iota Phi Theta," Davis said. "For years he was on EIU campus promoting Iota by himself before he was able to bring new members in (to) revive the chapter in 2021 after being closed since 1994."

Davis described Philpotts as humble and self-motivated.

"He had so much love for our fraternity he did everything he could to make sure our org continued to grow," Davis said. "I think the most important thing people should know is that he was a motivated individual that was working toward a doctorate degree while, at the same time, doing his part to continue to grow his organization. A lot of people that knew him on campus knew that he loved his org and would always rep it wherever he went."

Iota Phi Theta President D.J. Jones, a senior digital media and graphic design major said Philpotts was a mentor to him.

"As far as Iota goes, we're going to keep the legacy alive for him and for everyone



ASHANTI THOMAS | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

D.J. Jones, a senior digital media and graphic design major, and member of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity Inc., shares memories of Kristian Philpotts and gets ready to release balloons in honor of him on Saturday afternoon.

who touched his heart," Jones said.

University President David Glassman attended the release and shared how he knew

Philpotts.

Glassman said Philpotts asked to meet with him when he was attending Eastern

to discuss bringing Iota Phi Theta back to Eastern.

Glassman shared that Philpotts told him he wanted to be a role model for other Black men at Eastern.

"The guy was about everybody, he wasn't about himself," Glassman said. "... I love that guy. He had such charisma and it was all about everyone else. And it was about making African Americans be proud and stand up and show that they got love for others. He was a cool guy."

Glassman said he missed Philpotts.

"When he graduated I wished him the best and I just can't believe the tragedy of life but listening to all you guys and everybody being out here today, that's special. He touched your lives, your fraternity and everything else. He made a big impact on me and that's why I'm here to celebrate him and his life today."

Members of other National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations were in attendance and shared their condolences with the fraternity.

Raven Ramsey, a senior construction management major and member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., shared what she hopes will come from the tragedy.

"It only, I would think, push us even further to keep doing the best that we can, keep on striving to be the best that we can ... I just want to encourage you guys to keep pushing forward, keeping his legacy alive and in general, do the best that we can."

Corryn Brock can be reached at 581-2812 or at deneic@gmail.com.

TRiO office specialist remembered as 'something special'

By Corryn Brock
Editor-in-Chief | @corryn_brock

A memorial service and balloon release were held Saturday to honor the life of Karen Easton, TRiO Office Support Specialist who died on Dec. 10, 2021.

Eastern students and employees spoke of their memories with Easton, remembering her as a woman who was always willing to help others and who never met a stranger.

One student remarked that he wondered if she ever had a bad day, saying he never saw her without a smile on her face. He added if it was not for Easton, he would not have found the services he needed for classes.

"If it wasn't for her, I wouldn't have found the help services that I need to get help on my homework, she was a huge, huge help," the student said. "I owe her the biggest thank you... I know it's sad she's gone but I think the most important thing is to be happy for all the time we got to spend with her."

Another student remembered her as "one of the most compassionate and empathetic people" he has met.

"I was blessed to know her for the short time I did ... I will miss her forever but I will always hold her in my heart," the student said.

A recent Eastern graduate who was involved with TRiO shared a story about her experiences with Easton and how helpful she was, saying Easton would bring her granola bars when she was working to make sure she was eating.

"Now I keep granola bars on my desk so I can be like, 'hey, you need a granola bar? I've got you.'"



ASHANTI THOMAS | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

From left to right, Maggie Burkhead, the director of TRiO Student Support Services, Nyjah Lane, a second year graduate student, Norri Hayes, a first year graduate student, and Yesenia Muruato, a second year graduate student, release balloons in honor of Karen Easton, who was an employee in TRiO Student Support Services, in the Library Quad Jan. 22.

Freshman undecided major Terrel Steele said she was eager to help him when he arrived at Eastern.

"I was new on campus, I had no idea what I was going to do, and, her, with that beautiful smile on her face, she was so eager just to help me out. I'm forever grateful

for all her hard work every day," Steele said.

Maggie Burkhead, Director of TRiO, said she was happy with how the service and balloon release went.

"Karen will truly be missed, forever in our hearts, but we're glad she's no longer suffering or in any pain," Burkhead said.

Burkhead said she is currently collecting money to go towards purchasing a brick in the Commemorative Courtyard near the Library Quad.

Corryn Brock can be reached at 581-2812 or at deneic@gmail.com.

Editorial

No sympathy from us for bad choices

We at the *Daily Eastern News* have written countless editorials and articles about the COVID-19 pandemic, masks, vaccines and other safety measures.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have tried to promote the most up-to-date scientific consensus on how to keep each other safe and, hopefully, get back to some semblance of normalcy.

After two years, we're fed up.

We're tired of the people around us who refuse to get vaccinated.

We're tired of going into public places and seeing hundreds of people still refusing to wear masks.

We're tired of seeing everyone go to parties on weekends, literally putting their fun above people's lives.

We're tired of everyone who, for whatever reason, is disregarding everything we've been told and putting themselves and others at risk.

This might come off as whiny to some of you, but it is genuinely difficult to care about this when it seems like everyone else has decided to move on.

Coles County, like the rest of the U.S., is reaching previously unseen numbers of COVID-19 cases.

This is not the time to be lax about safety protocols, but it seems like many students stopped caring months ago.

At this point, this isn't about mistakes or a lack of education.

Refusing to get vaccinated, barring legitimate medical reasons, comes down to willful ignorance and lack of care for your community.



Comic By Will Simmons

Out of everything, that's what's most exhausting.

We're tired of holding the hands of adults who continue to act like children.

After two years of this pandemic, after two years of scientific research on this virus, they're still making the choice to be susceptible to hospitalization or even death.

If you're still unvaccinated by choice, you're just making yourself look ignorant.

Grow up and do your part- you've been told this enough.

Social Commentary

Dear universities, how much does safety really cost?

I'm sure you're all aware that we're still in the middle of a pandemic. It doesn't seem like the pandemic will be wrapping up anytime soon, especially since we all still have to wear masks to class, events and even the gym.

I took a gap year for the 2020-2021 school year so I didn't have to pay thousands of dollars to only go to in-person classes two days a week. As much as I hated living with my parents another year, I at least thought it was better than living every day in fear and the inability to go out and meet new people.

To be frankly honest, I'm not sure if this school year is any better. Aside from COVID-19 cases being on the rise, there are so many impacts of the pandemic on the world we know today.

My mom, who is a teacher, told me that the coronavirus cases at her school took up ten percent of the population. And for a school with a decent student population, that's quite a big chunk of both students and staff.

What's worse is that I can tell how burned out she's getting. All she wants is for schooling to go back to normal.



Katja Benz

And I know that everyone is feeling that burn out too. We miss everything before the pandemic turned the world upside down.

I looked at the Eastern COVID-19 dashboard today. Between January 9 and January 15, there were 352 positive coronavirus cases between both students and staff here.

That's a little scary. I thought, and was hoping, that our numbers would be a bit lower.

I was hoping the number of cases

around the country and in Illinois would also be lower. Especially because I know I don't want to deal with the repercussions that would come around if things got as bad as they were almost two years ago.

And what freaks me out is it's almost like universities and colleges around the country no longer care that the pandemic is still a thing. Just like primary and secondary school educators, college and university personnel seem to be getting burned out.

At that point, it almost doesn't feel like I'm safe anywhere. It's not required to get the vaccine, and it wasn't required to do the shield testing when we returned for break.

Both of these things were expected of students and staff, even though I thought that the SHIELD testing would be required as a bare minimum.

I always took the word expected to mean required, even though that didn't seem to be the case. Which made me question the importance of student safety.

If universities across the country ar-

en't requiring the vaccine and trying to transition into a more normal college experience again, then how are students expected to stay safe?

They can't, and that's a bit of a problem. Even though everyone wants to go back to normal, we can't unless the pandemic is really over.

And we can't do that, unless less and less students choose to come to college. That, unfortunately, isn't an option in today's society.

I know this is a hard situation for everyone and all I want is to make it better, even though I've done everything I can to keep myself and others safe.

And I know many other people are being safe as well, but there's also a number of people that aren't.

Which begs the question of who has to compromise more: students having to compromise their health in order to get the education they need to live or universities who are unwilling to budge.

Katja Benz is a junior English major. She can be reached at 581-2812 or kkbenz@etu.edu.

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Social Commentary

COVID-19 should not be a political issue

Religion has been the driving factor of social cohesion for centuries. Empires and governments have been based on religious values and the mores associated with it. Religion is deeply seeded in the roots of human history.

Sociologist, Émile Durkheim, noted that religion was attractive to humans because it served many positive social functions. In his 1912 work, "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life," Durkheim identifies a few benefits of religion, I will only focus on 2.

1) Religion reinforces social unity and stability

2) Religion is a social agent and thus strengthens social order

In Durkheim's time, it was hard to imagine a power more unifying than religion. It is often thought that if religion ceased to exist, humanity would lose all morality and society would descend into chaos. And though belief in traditional religions has declined, today's brightest



Gisella Mancera

still question social stability in the absence of religion. How can society function without some unifying truth?

Religion is useful because it frames our reality. If everyone has similar beliefs, it creates stability and social cohesion. The internet, however, is creating global networks able to unify millions. In fact, people once ostracized can

now find large online communities who share the same interests. Yet, the internet is not just a place for social rejects, almost everyone, everywhere, logs onto an app to communicate with others. This is through the repetitive nature of headlines and memes. We have all developed a shared sense of the world. We can empathize with the stories of people on the other side of the globe and memes have given us a standardized humor, allowing us to share a laugh with others, simply on the basis that we assume they've seen what we've seen. People feel a sense of unity over the internet through interaction with mutuals and the ability to read and share the stories of those near and far.

One of the ways to build a cohesive society is to indoctrinate everyone with the same morals. In the past, religious condemnation kept people in line, subjects often obeyed tyrants on the basis that to disobey the king or queen was an act

against God. Today, global condemnation is possible as anyone with access to the internet can criticize you, as we've seen with cancel culture. In the past, one could move, leaving everything behind. In present times, the internet can globally broadcast one's failure for an indefinite amount of time, leading to an omnipresence of collective efficacy, or ability to thoroughly police people's actions.

This is not to say technology is replacing religion, rather they provide similar functions, so as religious beliefs decline, some of the deficits from this will go unnoticed as these social functions will transfer to online communities. In fact, religious beliefs may not decline at all, but the purpose of religion in society may shift as it becomes less critical to maintaining social order.

Gisella Mancera is a senior sociology major. She can be reached at 581-2812 or at gomancera@etu.edu.

Quote of the Day:

"And once the storm is over, you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person who walked in. That's what this storm's all about."

Bill Gates

Education

COVID-19 is a hindrance, but it is not an excuse

There is no doubt that COVID-19 has affected all of us in some way or form. We all missed life milestones and experiences. It has impacted how we learn and grow. One thing that will be impacted for years to come is education.

There are so many abnormalities that will be deeply rooted in young children's education that may not be uncovered until they are much older. There are also some things that are surface level. Perhaps a student must wait another year to pick out an instrument for beginning band. Maybe there was a big science fair that a student did not get to participate in.

One bigger problem, perhaps more behavioral, is students blaming COVID-19. They tend to use COVID-19 as an excuse. For example, a teacher may ask a student why they did not achieve a higher grade on an assignment. The student may



Ellen Dooley

blame it on online learning. There is no excuse. Unless the instructor is actively choosing not to hold virtual help sessions or office hours- there is no excuse.

My local junior college has been holding online classes for years before COVID-19. There are colleges that are completely online, and stu-

dents achieve their degree online. People have been online or remote learning for years. Now, does everyone succeed this way? Absolutely not.

Students who struggled in person probably struggled the most online. They lost all connections or progress made because of the lack of programs to help them succeed. They now just have a teacher on a screen telling them these strategies rather than being hands on in a one-on-one session.

The most important thing for those struggling in the time of learning with COVID-19 is that this is just a frame of time. This is not the end. This is just a hindrance of your overall journey. Yes, it is a very long list of synonyms for annoying, but you will overcome. If you keep in sight what is possible and what your goals are, you will survive this.

If we all used COVID-19 as an ex-

cuse, the whole world would stop. There would not be any progress in solving this worldwide pandemic. There would be no grocery store workers, no teachers teaching, or even doctors or scientists. This is just another bump in the road of life that we must endure.

The question is do you ride it out? Or do you swerve into a ditch? The choice is yours to make. You are in charge of how you deal with COVID-19. You are in charge of your education, success, and even failures. This has not been easy, but we have made it this far. If you can navigate through these challenging years, you can navigate the seven seas of the world.

Ellen Dooley is a sophomore special education standard major. She can be reached at 581-2812 or at emdooley@etu.edu.

QUESTION OF THE WEEK:

DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN IMPACTED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

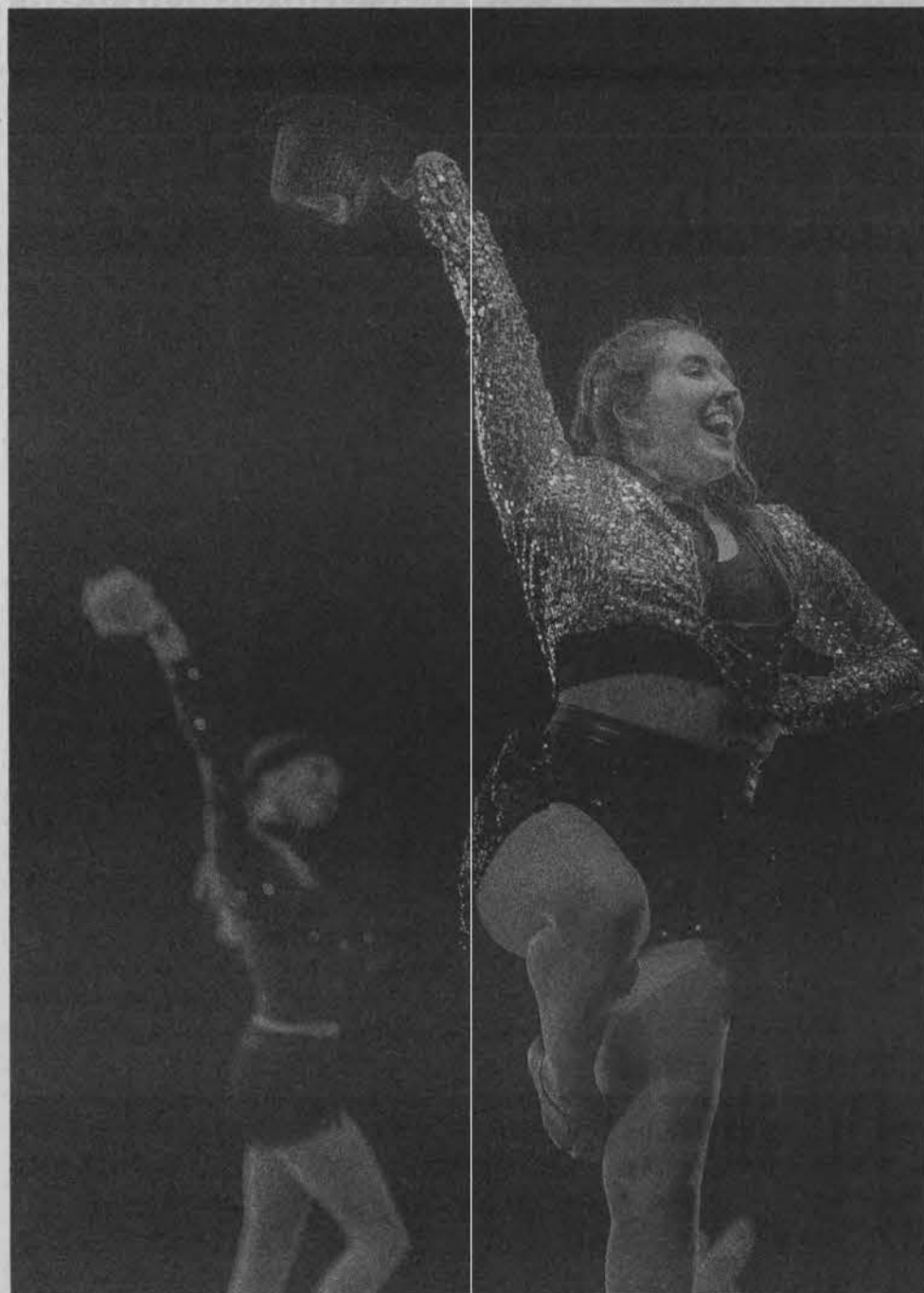
CHECK OUT DAILYEASTERNNEWS.COM TO SEE WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

Feature Photos: The 'Elements' of dance



ASHANTI THOMAS | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Madison Wall, a senior nursing major, performs a solo called "Backs to the Sun" to the song "Silhouette" by Aquilo, in the Doudna Fine Arts Center Jan. 23.



ROB LE CATES | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Kali Bolton, a senior mass communications major, stands on one leg and raises her hat during the song "Money" from Cabaret in the show "Elements" presented by the EIU Dancers. Bolton has been a four-year dancer and choreographer for the EIU Dancers and has danced a total of 10 years. The show took place at the Doudna Fine Arts Center on Jan. 23.



ASHANTI THOMAS | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

(Above) As her last performance as an EIU Dancer, Rebekah Magee, a senior psychology major, does a solo dance called "Summer Breeze" to the song "Girl Put Your Records On" by Corinne Bailey Ray at the theatre inside Doudna Fine Arts Center Jan. 23.

(Below) The Full Company performs "Floating" to the song "Don't Start Now" by Dua Lipa, featuring Lex Coniglio, a first year EIU Dancer member, and Kali Bolton, a senior mass communications major and fourth year dancer, for their Elements performance Jan. 23.



Eastern track, swimming teams continue seasons

By Adam Tumino
Sports Editor | @adam_tumino

The Eastern track teams and swimming teams are coming off weekend competitions with more coming up this weekend.

The men's and women's swimming teams participated in a meet at Wabash College over the weekend, with the men facing Wabash and the women facing DePauw.

Both teams lost their matchups, with the men losing 153-122 and the women falling 156-103.

The women's team collected four first place finishes, with sophomore Cydney Adams winning the 200 yard butterfly with a time of 2:24.21, sophomore Camryn Lewis winning the 50 yard freestyle with a time of 24.69, freshman Corinne Staneart winning the 200 yard backstroke with a time of 2:27.39 and freshman Kaylan Ottosen winning the 100 yard butterfly with a time of 1:00.68.

The men's team had five first place finishes, three of which came individually and two of which on relays.

Freshman Jacob Nichols won the 200 yard freestyle with a time of 2:03.27 and the 100 yard butterfly with a time of 54.66. Senior Jarod Farrow won the 200 yard breaststroke with a time of 2:18.57.

The men's 200 yard relay team of Forrest Baumgartner, Marshall Holt, Nichols and Dismas Dillon won with a time of 1:37.65.

The men's 200 yard freestyle relay team of Baumgartner, Nichols, Conner Colston and Dillon placed first with a time of 1:26.45.

Both teams will be back in action Jan. 28 when they travel to Carbonale to compete against Southern Illinois before hosting Valparaiso the next day at the Padovan Pool.

The track teams also competed over the weekend in the Indiana Gladstein Invitational. It was the first two-day invite for the Panthers this season.

Eastern had 21 different athletes earn top-five finishes in the invite, with seven earning top-three finishes.

Dustin Hatfield got the only first-place finish for the Panthers, winning the men's 3,000 meter with a time of 8:09.84, which ranks third in program history.

Jaime Marcos finished third in that same event with a time of 8:11.88, which ranks sixth in program history.

Richie Jacobo placed second in the men's 5,000 meter, Alicia Adams finished third in the women's 400 meter, Jেকেল Sußer placed third in the men's 60 meter hurdle, Adam Swanson finished third in the men's 800 meter and Elijah Skutt placed third in the men's high jump with a jump of two meters.

Both teams will compete against Feb. 5 at the Notre Dame Meyo Invite in South Bend.

Adam Tumino can be reached at 581-2812 or ajtumino@etu.edu.



ROB LE CATES | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Eastern senior Jarod Farrow competes in the 1000 yard freestyle against Ball State on Oct. 29 at Padovan Pool. Farrow finished with a time of 10:31.01. The men's swimming team lost the meet 161-95.



ROB LE CATES | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Eastern's Beanna Sheldon runs the women's mile at the John Craft Invite meet on Jan. 15 in the Lantz Fieldhouse. She finished with a time of 5:36.24.

Athletes of the Issue

JACOB NICHOLS



Freshman Jacob Nichols led the way for the men's swimming team against Wabash over the weekend.

Nichols placed first in the 200 yard freestyle with a time of 2:03.27 and the 100 yard butterfly with a time of 54.66.

He also was a part two relay wins for the Panthers, helping win the 200 yard relay and 200 yard freestyle relay.

LARIAH WASHINGTON



Junior guard Lariah Washington currently ranks fourth in the OVC in scoring, which she boosted by scoring 50 points in her last three games.

She scored 15 points against Murray State on Jan. 20, 21 against Southeast Missouri on Jan. 22 and 14 against Tennessee Tech on Jan. 24, with the Panthers going 2-1 in those games.

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Panthers off to 3-4 start in conference play

By Adam Tumino
Sports Editor | @adam_tumino

A loss to Tennessee Tech on Monday ended a two-game winning streak for the Eastern women's basketball team, dropping the Panthers to 3-4 in conference play this season.

Tennessee Tech improved to 6-2 with the win, putting them in second place in the OVC behind Belmont.

The Panthers are in sixth place, and all four of their conference losses have come against teams that are currently above them in the standings.

Offensively, the Panthers have been ranking near the top of the conference for much of the season, currently ranking second at 68.9 points per game.

Their defense is not ranked quite as highly, coming in at seventh in the OVC with 66 points per game allowed, but is still good enough to make the Panthers one of six teams in the conference with a positive scoring margin this season.

Their offense has been led by junior guard Lariah Washington, who looks poised to receive All-OVC honors for the third-straight season.

She currently ranks fourth in the conference averaging 15 points per game. She also ranks 14th in the conference in field goal percentage and 10th in three-point percentage.

In addition to Washington, each of the Panthers' other four starters are in the top 30 in the conference in scoring.

Forward Abby Wahl ranks 16th with 11.1 points per game, guard Kira



ADAM TUMINO | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Eastern guard Lariah Washington fights through contact to make a layup in the Panthers' game against Southeast Missouri Saturday in Lantz Arena. Washington scored 21 points in the game, which Eastern won 68-44.

Arthofer ranks 21st at 10.2 points per game, guard Jordyn Hughes ranks 28th with 8.6 points per game and guard Julia Bengston ranks 30th at 8.4 points per game.

Arthofer also leads the conference in assists per game at 4.6 and ranks third with 2.6 steals per game.

The Panthers' have a slightly softer section of the schedule coming up with four of their next five games be-

ing against teams below them in the standings.

They play Tennessee-Martin on the road Thursday. The Skyhawks are 2-3 in conference play this season and rank ninth in the conference in offense, scoring 50.7 points per game.

After that, Eastern returns home to play 5-2 Tennessee State before back-to-back game against Southern Illinois-Edwardsville, with Eastern host-

ing the first matchup.

The Tennessee State game will mark the midway point of the conference season.

They then travel to play a rematch with Southeast Missouri. The Panthers beat the Redhawks 68-44 in their first matchup on Jan. 22.

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Men's basketball team now 0-6 against OVC opponents

By Autumn Schulz
Assistant Sports Editor | @autschulz

The Eastern men's basketball team has played six OVC games this season and after their recent contest against Belmont, has dropped to 2-17 overall and 0-6 in the conference.

The Panthers are last in the conference for scoring offense, averaging 55.7 points per game. Junior guard Kejuan Clements leads the Panthers in scoring, averaging 8.9 points per game. Junior guard CJ Lane is close behind Clements, averaging 7.6 points per game.

The Panthers have scored a combined 155 points in their last three OVC contests with their lowest scoring games coming from their back-to-back games against conference leader Murry State.

Freshman forwards Rodolfo Bolis and Paul Bizimana led the Panthers during the Panthers' series against the Racers. Bolis had nine points in the first game and Bizimana had 22 points in the second game.

The Panthers are seventh in the conference for 3-point field percentage, averaging 35.6 percent per game, their lowest percentage was against the Racers with 39.1 percent. Sophomore guard Dan Luers leads the Panthers in 3-point per-

centage with 57.1 percent.

The Panthers are also last in the conference in field goal percentage with an average of 38.5 percent per game. During their last three games the Panthers had a combined 118 percent. Their second lowest percentage, 38 percent, came last Saturday when they dropped their contest to Southeast Missouri 87-58.

The Panthers were 19-of-50 from the field against the Redhawks. The Panthers had three players in double figures, Luers and Clements both had 14 a piece, Bizimana had 10 points.

Luers said that the team needs to focus on doing the little things right every day to improve their season.

"We just got to be more focused, I feel like, on doing the little things every day but I love the guys, everybody loves each other," he said. "We just got to grow as a team."

The Panthers have lost their last three OVC games by 20 points or more. Head coach Marty Simmons said that when the team is losing by a large margin, their main goal is to stick to their system.

"Just staying with our system. You know, not playing one-on-one, not taking bad shots, but playing with purpose," he said. "Playing within the confines of what

we practice on a daily basis and not just playing pickup basketball."

The Panthers have been battling many challenges within the last few weeks. There was a two-week overlay due to COVID-19 health and safety protocols and once returning to the court, the Panthers played seven to eight players at a time.

Sophomore guard Henry Abraham announced that he is entering the NCAA transfer portal. Abraham led the team in minutes played with 33.8. The Panthers will continue to be shorthanded for the rest of the season as Jermaine Hamlin is out with a season-ending injury.

The Panthers will have their seventh OVC contest Thursday night against seventh place UT Martin starting at 8 p.m. Simmons said that the team will focus on being healthy for the time being.

"We've got to get rested; we don't have a lot of time to prepare. We don't have a lot of guys that are playing, just taking care of their bodies, and getting the proper rest and fluids in their bodies. We did some good things out here today and we just got to try and build on those things."

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BY ROB LE CATES | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Eastern forward Paul Bizimana puts up a shot in the Panthers' game against Belmont on Monday in Lantz Arena. Bizimana scored 20 points in the game, which Eastern lost 90-56.