

## THE CONCORDIA

## COURIER

INVESTIGATE. INFORM. IGNITE. INVOLVE.

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# Concordia students serve the community with College Corps

JOSEPH PANETTA  
SPORTS EDITOR

The College Corps program is a partnership with schools that allows students to serve as “fellows” who will serve in the community while earning money towards their tuition. Concordia has many students enrolled in the program, who will serve a total of 450 hours during the school year.

“College Corps is really the best of both worlds,” said Lucas Brawner, College Corps Assistant Director. “There is a huge emphasis on professional development and individual growth...while still giving and serving people who desperately need help around us. It's so much more than a job or a grant opportunity...it's a life-changing community here at Concordia!”

College Corps partners with multiple organizations, including South County Outreach, which helps people in Orange County struggling with food or housing insecurity.

“There's a lot of variety in my work at South County Outreach,” said Ryan Jertberg, a junior fellow. “Some days, I'm in the back of the food pantry processing and organizing donations. Other days, I'm at checkout or managing one of the freezers or helping distribute frozen foods to customers.”

South County Outreach also has a thrift store. “Even though it's not the pantry, it still directly supports families in need, and being part of that mission has been really meaningful to me,” said Chloe Greene, a senior fellow. “Each day looks a little different depending on what the store needs help with, but some of my main tasks include ringing customers up at the register, pricing and tagging clothing for the sales floor, organizing donations and counting inventory.”

The second organization that College Corps has partnered with is The Wooden Floor. The Wooden Floor is an organization that provides tutoring for kids who could use the extra help with their schooling. This is a great program for students who are interested in entering a teaching job or a similar field of work.

The final organization that College Corps is partnered with is Tanaka Farms, just down the road from campus. “Every day, we feed the animals, make sure they have water, and greet the customers that come in to look at the barn,” said Jessi Borton, a senior fellow. “Sometimes we have projects such as building or painting things, which are usually for the holiday events like our pumpkin patch or the Christmas light festival.”

Along with caring for the animals and keeping the farm “clean and presentable,” the fellows at Tanaka Farms also like to “greet and

teach people about our mission as a farm and about our animals,” according to Victor Juárez, a sophomore fellow.

Working with College Corps is a great opportunity for students to help save on their tuition. “I would recommend College Corps to students who don't already have their full tuition covered because the financial support makes a big difference as you're able to help others while also funding your education,” said Greene. However, she acknowledged that it may reduce financial aid for those already on it.

But College Corps is about more than tuition support, as Concordia students love to give back to their community.

“I would definitely recommend College Corps over a part-time job,” said Jertberg. “In my opinion, it's not only the more financially beneficial choice, but it also gives you the opportunity to serve your local community. Plus, you get to see the impact of your efforts reflected in the happy faces of the people you help.”

“For me, College Corps has been worth it because it connects my work to a real purpose, not just a paycheck,” said Greene.

Finally, the connections made with College Corps simply can't be beat as the students have developed lifelong relationships through their work with the program.

“It's a great opportunity to meet new people,” said Juárez. “I've personally met some of my closest friends in the program and enjoy working alongside them to improve the Irvine and OC community.”

“My favorite part of working with the other fellows has been getting to spend more time with them and making memories while being outside and working on the farm,” said Borton. “I work with a lot of my close friends, so being there does not feel like something I have to do, but something I want to do.”

“Heart,” said Brawner when asked what he looks for when recruiting fellows. “It can be hard for us to show up consistently and passionately at our host sites week in and week out, especially when school gets tough. Quite often, it's our fellows' hearts for others that keep our program going.”

For more information on College Corps, visit

<https://www.cui.edu/studentlife/career-services/college-corps> or reach out to Lucas Brawner at [lucas.brawner@cui.edu](mailto:lucas.brawner@cui.edu). The student interest form for those considering applying to be 2026-27 fellows is currently available on the /college-corps page.

## Sign-ups are open for Basecamp trip to San Diego

KAYLA REED  
CAMPUS EDITOR

The College Corps program is a partnership with Basecamp is headed to San Diego, and sign-ups are now open in CU Rec! The trip will take place over spring break, from Feb. 23 to 27. The five-day trip costs \$150 to attend, and spots are limited. Registration closes, and payment is due by Feb. 23, the first day of the trip.

Sponsored by CU Rec, which oversees all things recreational and active at Concordia, Basecamp is an amazing opportunity for students to explore new areas, relax and connect with fellow Concordia students. Basecamp San Diego will include time in Coronado, biking, hiking, zip-lining, beach time, kayaking, the Village, Liberty Public Market and more. This trip has something for everyone who loves the outdoors.

Junior History and Political Thought major Dylan Padilla said that the first time he went to base camp, “I went in knowing only two people, and I came out of it knowing everybody on the trip! I still talk to a lot of those people, and we hang out.”

Murphy Mears, a senior Sports Business major, said, “I am most looking forward to camping right next to the beach! I'm excited for beach volleyball, zip lining, kayaking and getting to know new faces.”

Mears has participated in multiple past Basecamps – and keeps coming back. Mears said, “I went to Yosemite last semester and Pismo Beach last year for Basecamp. A favorite memory of mine is seeing the sunset at Yosemite, as well as experiencing the farmers' market near Pismo Beach.” Basecamp gives students the opportunity to explore new places, both close to Concordia in Southern California and farther away – even out of state.

(Continues on p. 3)

# Come out for Suitcase Bingo Feb. 6, compete and win big!

STUDENT ACTIVITIES TEAM OF ASCUI

Suitcase Bingo is an annual Concordia event that brings together the fun competition of a classic game of bingo with high-stakes prizes to up the energy and competition in the room. Although at first glance this event might seem unexciting compared to the many other student activities on campus, such as the ever-popular Concordia Christmas or Fall Family Festival, the shorter time frame and high energy make it easy to fit into your schedule and a blast to attend. Student Ruby Hickie said, "This is one of our most laidback events, but it is still really popular."

During last year's Suitcase Bingo event, Grimm Hall was filled with students, with some even competing through an online Zoom version of the event. The large crowd of participants brought a lively sense of anticipation and excitement to the room. Student Leah

Yost said that she "loved this event last year because we all got to play together, so the energy in the room was super fun!"

The event works really well to foster a friendly sense of competition among the Concordia community, with everyone looking around the room to see whose card was the closest to BINGO. Last year, for example, there was a final showdown for the grand prize. Two competitors yelled "BINGO" in sync, so a fierce game of rock, paper, scissors was played to decide who would win the final prize.

This year's event takes place on Feb. 6, from 7 to 8 p.m., in DeNault Auditorium and is free to all Concordia students. Some of the prizes available to win include a Coffee Lovers Basket, a Disney Basket, a Fitness Basket and a Beach Lovers Basket. The baskets all have around a \$300 value; however, the grand prize basket includes a suitcase, hence the name "suitcase bingo," and a \$300 gift card to Southwest Airlines.

If the likelihood of winning a prize basket is what keeps you from coming to this event, it shouldn't. For those unsuccessful in the BINGO rounds, there are multiple raffles for participants to receive gift cards, and the odds of winning are better than you might expect. Heidi Bishop recalled the last Suitcase Bingo, and said she remembers, "Two of my friends won a prize, and I won one of the raffles for a gift card. Even those who I knew that didn't win had so much fun watching their friends' screens to see when they were close to winning. A win from someone you knew felt like your own name."

## Student leadership applications are open until Feb. 2

KAYLA REED  
CAMPUS EDITOR

Applications for student leadership positions for the 2026-2027 school year are now open on Handshake, Concordia's job finder platform, until Feb. 2 positions are available in a variety of roles and many are paid positions.

Most jobs will run from August 2026 to May 2027, though some begin over the summer. Some positions also require moving in early in August for training. Students who have a genuine desire to serve their peers and want to get involved on campus are invited to apply for one of these leadership positions.

Amanda Norris, the Associate Dean of Student Life, said, "Not only is it a great way to get involved on campus and create community, but it's also great professional development!" She also noted that the supervisors of leadership positions are always happy to help students through the application process. Norris said, "I don't want anyone to regret not applying. I am always happy to sit with students and answer questions about any of the positions."

Jobs available include Resident Assistants (RAs), ASCUI Leadership, abbey west Campus Ministry, FYE (First Year Experience Team), and more.

Resident Assistants provide leadership in the residence halls at Concordia by performing room checks (health & safeties), monitoring the common rooms and halls, hosting events, and helping residents sort out any issues. Sophomore Hannah Robinson, an RA in Sigma, said her favorite part of being an RA is "connecting with my residents, making new friends and hosting events for my hall."

ASCUI stands for the Associated Students of CUI and is responsible for representing the student body, planning events and promoting school spirit on campus. Senior Brody Collins, the current President of ASCUI, said, "My favorite part of working for ASCUI is the relationships I get to develop with the administration within our school. When you know the faculty here at Concordia, it provides a better perspective of how they desire the best for us in our time here. I also hold dearly the relationships with fellow student leaders I get to create over the year."

Norris said, "I love working with students and seeing their ideas for events, and I love seeing the growth from their early years in student leadership, paving the way to seeing them find the next generation to make an impact on campus and do the things that they did. It's really cool to see them blossom in that way. And I get to meet so many different students!"

Abbey west is the Campus Ministry center at Concordia, providing spiritual care to students. A variety of positions are available to help coordinate events on campus and oversee ministry across Concordia.

FYE is the first-year experience team, which oversees helping first-year students at Concordia get settled in and acclimated by hosting events where they can make friends and get to know Concordia. They are hiring orientation coordinators and PAL coordinators. These positions include hours over the summer.

CU Rec is also hiring intramural sports coordinators as well as Fitness Leads in the Fitness Center.

Interested in applying? For more information about available positions, visit Handshake and check out the jobs listed under Concordia's employer profile.



PICTURED ABOVE: ASCUI Team 2025-26  
-L-R Ian Stockes, Landon McIntire, Kyra Arnold, Tessa Ermling, Jai Viela, Brody Collins  
Photo courtesy of: ASCUI

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# Base Camp

(Continued from p. 1)

Basecamp was launched in spring 2022 with a trip to Bishop, California. Now in its fifth year of operation, past Basecamp trips have gone to national parks, coastal cities, deserts, lakes and more! Over fall break in 2025, Basecamp went to Yosemite National Park in central California. Other past trips have included visits to Santa Cruz, Big Sur, and Sedona, Arizona. These trips are an incredible (and cheap!) way to explore the outdoors and visit beautiful places alongside other Concordia students. Mears said, "Basecamp has given me an outlet to destress from school and work on friendships, identity and discover new places!"

CU Rec also has opportunities for

summer trips. Last summer, a group went to Hume Lake, California, to help set up for the Hume Lake Christian summer camp there, while exploring the beautiful scenery and bonding with friends.

Basecamp takes place every fall and spring break, so there are plenty of opportunities to attend over the course of time spent at Concordia. Basecamp San Diego promises to be an adventure-packed week that will not be one to miss! Sign up today in the CU Rec Fitness Center. Payment is not required at sign-up; it is due before the trip begins on Feb. 23.

For more information about the San Diego trip or future Basecamp trips, check out the CU Rec Instagram page at @cui\_recreation, or email the director at kryssa.mattson@cui.edu.



PICTURED ABOVE: CU Rec Hume Lake Trip  
Photo courtesy of: CU Rec



PICTURED ABOVE: Basecamp at Yosemite Fall 2025  
Photo courtesy of: CU Rec

# BASECAMP

## SAN DIEGO

FEBRUARY 23 - 27

\$150

SIGN-UPS OPEN JANUARY 12<sup>TH</sup> AT 7AM

IN THE CU REC FITNESS CENTER

\*\*LIMITED SPOTS\*\*

# Concordia's Career Center delivers a guiding leap from classroom to career

TYNA ROMOFF  
STAFF WRITER

The final years of college often come with an unspoken pressure: figuring out life after graduation. At Concordia, the Career Center helps ease the uncertainty by helping students prepare early, explore their options, and develop the skills necessary to succeed beyond college.

Mariah Lucas, Director of Career Development & Vocation, said, "The Career Center's approach to advising is grounded in openness, curiosity and optimism." Rather than pressuring students to have a clear path from the start, advisors encourage students to explore, reassuring them that uncertainty is a normal part of the process.

"We help students explore their options with curiosity while reassuring them they're on the right track and will figure things out," Lucas said. She added that the Career Center takes a holistic approach, considering the personal and life circumstances students may be navigating when making career decisions.

One of the biggest challenges Lucas sees among students is waiting until senior year to gain professional experience. While coursework is important, delaying internships or work opportunities can put students at a disadvantage when entering the workforce.

"Ideally, students should have one to two years of experience before graduating," Lucas said. The Career Center supports this goal by encouraging students to pursue internships, part-time jobs and other experiential learning opportunities early in their college career.

Career support is tailored to students across all majors through close collaboration with the staff members. Lucas explained that the Career Center works with academic departments to understand which skills employers in each field seek. She explained how they "reverse engineer" employer expectations so students are better prepared for the workforce.

A growing focus of the Career Center is helping students understand the importance of professionalism and first impressions. According to Lucas, employers are reporting that some students may struggle with basics such as eye contact, small talk, professional demeanor and phone usage during interviews. These factors can significantly affect students when making hiring decisions.

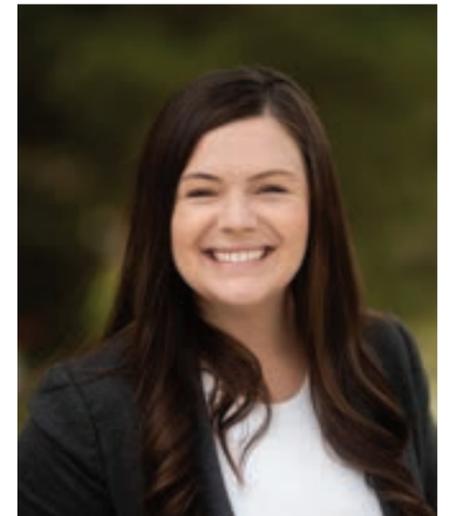
"First impressions are difficult to undo," Lucas said. She noted that some employers have shared examples of interviews ending early due to unprofessional behavior, such as wearing AirPods or using a phone during the interview.

Lucas added that these concerns reflect broader national conversations about workplace readiness. She noted that Forbes highlighted that 75% of companies find that their Gen Z hires may lack professionalism, motivation, organizational skills and communication skills. To combat these preconceptions, the Career Center offers mock interviews, workshops, one-on-one coaching, job search strategies and access to AI-powered tools such as Hiration.

Throughout the year, the Career Center hosts a wide range of events and workshops to prepare students for life after college. These events include resume and LinkedIn reviews, major exploration workshops, summer experience fairs, open house, and employer panels. The Career Center's next event, "What Can I Do With This Major?" is on Thurs, Jan. 29, at 2 p.m.

"I really enjoy getting the email of 'Got the job!' or 'I got accepted into grad school!' Most of them make me cry," said Lucas, "Because I am rooting for our students... they come in and share that they are nervous or anxious about applying, and we go through the resume reviews and mock interviews for it to all pay off and for them... it's really special."

By encouraging early preparation, professionalism and exploration, the Career Center continues to support students as they transition from college to their future careers. Learn more about the Career Center and the services available at [cui.edu/studentlife/career-services](http://cui.edu/studentlife/career-services).



PICTURED ABOVE: Mariah Lucas, and the Career Center help prepare students for their first jobs out of college  
Photo courtesy of: Concordia Career Center

# Spring competition is underway for forensics team

TIMOTHY WU  
STAFF WRITER

Concordia's forensics spring semester debate tournament began at Spring Camp Concordia on Sat., Jan. 3, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Speech team began on the same weekend.

Dr. Konrad Hack, Director of Speech and Debate, said, "There are 20 students in the forensics team this semester. We get in the van by 7 a.m., depending on individual tournaments, and tournaments start around 8 a.m., and a lot of them run until around 8 to 9 p.m." Hack added, "We go back to the hotel, then we do day two and sometimes day three."

It takes Anna Shatte, a Communication Studies major, typically a month to become familiar with the research topic and proposal while drafting her speech. She participates in the forensic side of Speech and Debate.

Shatte said, "Whenever I'm faced with an argument that I

disagree with, it is important to keep a level head and remember that you are doing a debate that is not meant to be emotional. You are here to argue your case with a fact; back it up with all the research that you have done." She continued, "If you have done good work, then your case will shine through, and you will obviously win the argument."

Overcoming tournament fatigue isn't easy for Shatte. "I think it is really important to keep team morale up, just, like, if the team continues to build each other up and just have a good community, then we can get over the fatigue of having long tournament days together," she said.

Benjamin Zoff is a freshman majoring in History and Political Thought and is on the CUI Debate team. He competes in the International Public Debate Association (IPDA) and the National Parliamentary Debate Association (NPDA). His next debate is at the Golden

Gate Invitational on Jan. 24 through Jan. 25.

Zoff's viewpoint after taking the Debate class altered his train of thought. "It has made me realize how easily, frequently, people can say something that is not the truth. Because in debate, there are a lot of people out there who can very persuasively articulate an argument," said Zoff. He continued, "That is not truthful, and they might not even believe it. So, it has made me realize what is or is not true because I know how easily it can be twisted and manipulated."

Concordia's Speech and Debate program has evolved significantly since its founding in 2007. It all started with one student who had never competed in the tournament before. The club later found five to six students. Concordia won the national championship in 2013.

Hack emphasized, "It is not easy to manage the personalities of different people on different things.

There are long days," Hack said. "There are logistics, there are a lot of things. At the end of the day, what students get out of it makes it worth it."

Despite the logistical juggling, Hack is optimistic about the team and talent lined up for future years. "There are a dozen freshmen on the team. They are good. They are really good," he said, "We got some juniors and seniors. But this incoming freshman class is very good. The returning folks are excellent. Every year, we get really good quality competitors."

"Two years from now, I would not want to be in another speech team in the country competing against these students," Hack said.

Students can find more about participating in the forensics team by contacting Professor Konrad Hack at [konrad.hack@cui.edu](mailto:konrad.hack@cui.edu). This year's competition schedule continues through the end of March.

## "Everyperson" is funky fun for everyone

REBEKAH MICHEL  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On Jan. 23, the walls of the Concordia Studio Theatre will transform into the newest nightclub on campus for their immersive production of "Everyperson." With an ancient text by an anonymous author, "Everyperson" conveys a timeless story of morality, the meaning of life, and the various deeds of life. Directed by Tony Vezner, Professor in the Theatre and Film Department, the show brings philosophical questions to life with wacky comedy, music and dance.

When transforming an ancient text for contemporary audiences, there is a fantastic opportunity for creative decisions from the cast and crew. The opportunity to explore new decisions has been especially appreciated by junior Theatre major Colin Wheeler. "What has been great has been how our director, Vezner, really was able to take this text and rewrite it in a way that is very fresh and modern. And since our director is also the script writer, we have a ton of freedom to add to or improvise during rehearsal. I personally loved that freedom

to improvise," said Wheeler.

As the show's title suggests, the character "Everyperson" represents all of humanity through the characters of Everyperson, Death and various other allegorical characters. Junior Theatre and English major Nicole Kramer plays the allegorical role of "Friendship" in the show.

The origins of "Everyperson" date back to an era of theater in England when only religious subject matter was seen as appropriate for the stage. "There is an irony in the fact that the original play was only allowed to be performed because it was so hyper-religious. It would have been historically by monks or members of the church," said Kramer.

Yet this text has been transformed into a kinetic nightclub setting with music, improv and vibrant costumes. "The costumes for this show enhance our ability as actors to portray our characters even more. There are a variety of different decades represented and disco lights, so the atmosphere of the production is so fun," said Kramer.

As the first show of the spring semester, the cast and crew have been working endlessly to bring this immersive production to life and create a lively atmosphere. "If there is anything they should expect it should be to dance dance dance! This show has so many interactive moments with actors and even with the space, as audiences are able to walk around as they please. I hope that people take away from this show a different perspective on what the performing arts can be and how they can interact with it can be wildly different," said Wheeler.

"Everyperson" will play the Concordia Studio Theatre on Jan. 23, Jan. 30, Jan. 31 at 7:30 p.m., and Jan. 25 and Feb. 1 at 2 p.m. Please note that due to the immersive element of this production, tickets to this production ensure standing room, with limited chairs available for seniors or those who need to be seated. To purchase tickets, please visit <https://www.simpletix.com/e/everyperson-tickets-231061> and use code CUISTU at checkout to receive complimentary student tickets.



PICTURED ABOVE: Experience an ancient story of morality brought to life in a funky setting with "Everyperson." Photo courtesy of: Concordia Theatre and Film Department Instagram

# Camille Beeson on bringing “The Diary of Anne Frank” to life

REBEKAH MICHEL  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As graduation quickly approaches for the class of 2026, seniors are assembling their final capstones, project, and showcases. For senior Theatre and English major Camille Beeson, a senior project means starring in an immersive production that blends music, theater, and history. “From The Diary of Anne Frank” combines The Concordia Sinfonietta ensemble, the music direction of Jeff Held, Assistant Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, and soloists Elizabeth Johnson (violin), Emma Whitten (organ), Yue Tang (cello) and Rebekah Michel (soprano) with Beeson’s creative storytelling to tell the familiar story of Anne Frank in a new artistic way.

The inspiration for this project reaches back to Beeson’s high school theater experiences. “I was actually approached by Dr. Held in December of 2024 and asked if I would be interested in doing this piece. I was so honored to be considered. Back in high school, I did a production of ‘The Hiding Place,’ which is based on the life of Corrie and Betsie ten Boom,” said Beeson. “Betsie ten Boom said, ‘There is no pit so deep that God is not deeper still.’ Her words have always stuck with me. This is why it is so important to tell stories of horrific darkness, because it is in the darkest depths that we most profoundly experience the love and grace of God,” said Beeson.

When tasked with portraying a recognizable historical figure, such as Anne Frank, Beeson conducted extensive research to effectively convey the message. “I have read not only Anne’s diary

but many other works written by authors of the time period, reimagining of Anne’s life, and modern research done regarding the mystery of their capture. Last semester, I had the chance to meet a Holocaust survivor, which was profoundly influential and informative. I have also traveled up to L.A. twice to visit the Museum of Tolerance, and learn from the Anne Frank exhibit there,” said Beeson.

However, her dedicated research did not end there. The next challenge became how to best honor Anne’s life.

“After establishing a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the facts of her life and the time, I began to develop the philosophy of my approach, which I wrote out in a paper looking at literary theory criticism, determining how to best honor Anne’s character, and present her to an audience. Then I approached her as an actress. I dove deep into her words and began doing my own journaling and clarifying the choices of my approach,” said Beeson.

The acting performance is only one of the elements that Beeson has had to juggle for this project. The performance includes a full orchestration by the Concordia Sinfonietta ensemble under the direction of Held. “The Concordia Symphony Orchestra is an incredibly dedicated community that is working so hard to master this extremely challenging piece of music. I have never seen a score with so much mixed meter. We have all wrestled together to clarify timing and pitch, in order to tell her story as truthfully as possible,”

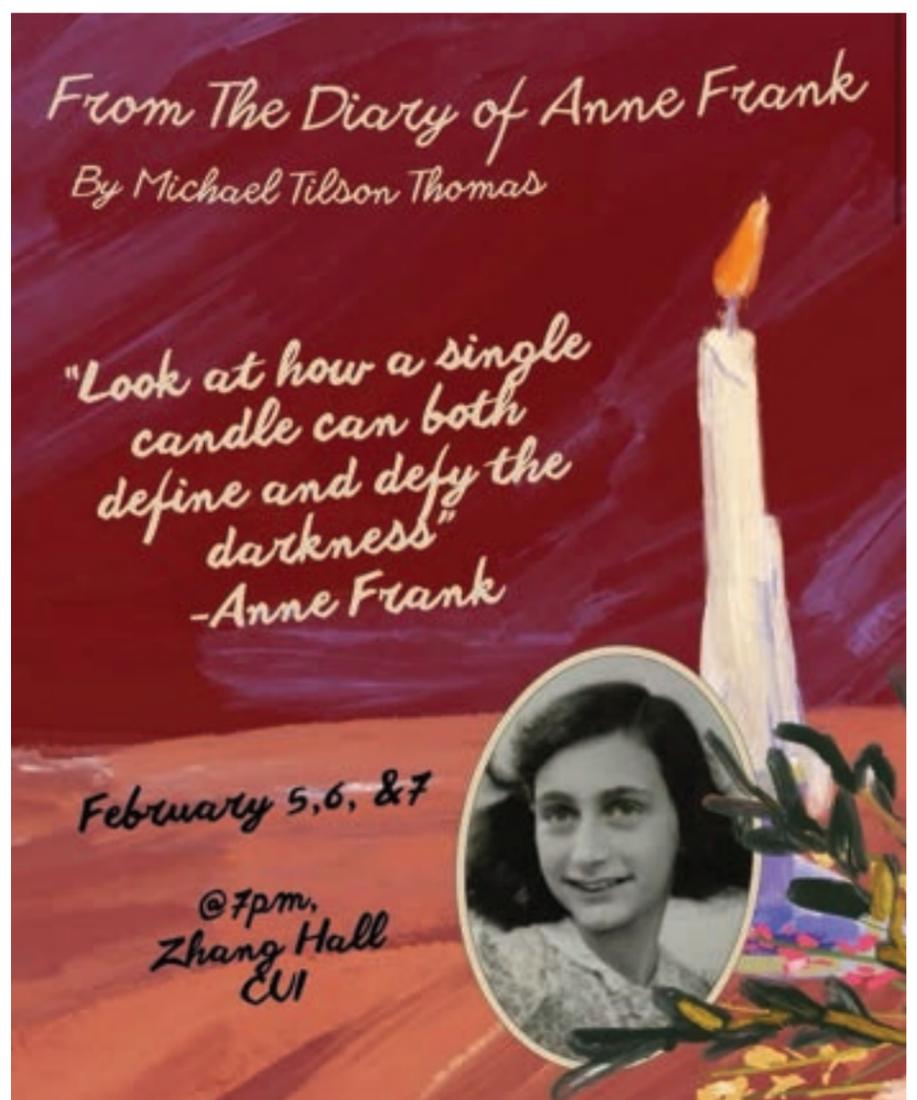
said Beeson.

While this is her senior project for her degree, “From The Diary of Anne Frank” holds a deeper meaning to Beeson’s philosophy as an actress and student. “Through my time at Concordia, I have clarified my artistic mission statement. I am a holistic storyteller, called to engage in the arts for the purpose of revealing more truth to the world,” said Beeson. She added, “But while we were ‘dead in our sin,’ God saved us. I feel so honored that my time at Concordia culminates with providing people an opportunity to wrestle with darkness through the childlike wonder and yearning for light. Anne’s hope inspires me, and I pray that through my embodiment of her, others would be encouraged, too.”

When asked what audiences should expect, Beeson added, “Audiences can expect to be faced with the gravity of darkness in

our world. I pray that in this discomfort, audiences would seek Christ as their refuge. That they would know ‘there is no pit so deep that God is not deeper still’ [Betsie ten Boom].”

“From The Diary of Anne Frank” will be presented at Zhang Hall in the Borland Manske Center on Feb. 5, Feb. 6, and Feb. 7 at 7 p.m. Note that due to the room’s small size, seating is limited, and tickets should be reserved well in advance. Additionally, ticketing includes general admission seating alongside premium seating for preferred sections. There will be no late seating. Please arrive 15 minutes before the 7 p.m. performance. For tickets or more information, please visit <https://www.simpletix.com/e/from-the-diary-of-anne-frank-tickets-232994>.



PICTURED ABOVE: Camille Beeson’s “From the Diary of Anne Frank” will be performed in Zhang Hall. Advanced tickets will be necessary.

# Grimm Hall showcases new student art

BROOKLYN PIETSCH  
STAFF WRITER

Art students are showcasing their work on the second floor of Grimm Hall South. The exhibit, entitled "Now I Know In Part," began on Wed., Jan. 14, and will be on display until Mon., Feb. 9. The exhibit features work by Concordia students majoring and minoring in both graphic design and studio art.

"The reason we called it 'Now I Know In Part,' is because we were trying to get the disciplines working together, and texts and images together," explained Professor Sara Fletcher, Associate Professor of Visual Arts. "Speech reveals a different facet of the story that [the artworks are] portraying," she continued.

The show "focuses on the interplay of writing and art, and the inspiration that artists can gather from the written word," said Chloe Robinson, a sophomore and one of the student-artists featured in the exhibition.

Many of the texts paired with the artworks include Bible passages and poems. "Visitors are encouraged to stop by the gallery hall and examine how artists have used writings to influence and inspire their works of art," Robinson said. The display of both side-by-side provides viewers with crucial insights into the art.

When the students began working on their pieces for the show around seven months ago, "We didn't quite know what we would get, but we were overwhelmed by how beautiful and diverse the works were and how they spoke to each other in an interesting way," Fletcher said. The pieces also encompassed a

variety of mediums, including oil and acrylic paint, watercolor, ink and digital art. There were even unique forms the art took, including several sets of multiple related works and decks of playing cards.

Some of the poems paired with the artworks are professional pieces from recognized poets, and some are from Concordia's *Aerie*, the university's art and literary publication. Fletcher expressed the art department's satisfaction with the showcase and desire for future collaborations. "We were so happy with this that we'd love to do it again and invite more broadly people who create in different disciplines, especially the writing discipline," she said.

"A large amount of the artwork is from senior art students who worked all last semester to create a cohesive series of artworks," Robinson added.

"Every semester," Fletcher said, "My final project for all of my classes except the senior seminar is a Bible illustration." Students choose a variety of Biblical texts to interpret artistically.

"My art piece is of Bezalel, and he is the first person the Bible ever described as being filled with the Holy Spirit," Robinson said. "He was an artist, and God gave him skills to build the tabernacle as described in the book of Exodus. My painting is an oil painting in the style of Vermeer. Not a lot of art has been made about Bezalel throughout art history, and I hope more people can know about him through my art."

Robinson's work is featured alongside another person's Biblically inspired artwork. "The

one that we placed it next to is [based on] the Song of Solomon, which is often not portrayed visually. That was inspired by the Book of Hours, but also by contemporary illustrations," Fletcher explained. The piece, called "The One Whom My Soul

Loves," is by Alexa Niko, a senior. Additionally, some of the pieces on display are personal works.

Fletcher added encouragement for students to visit the exhibit. "Not everyone walks up to that second floor...so we hope people can spend time just soaking it in."



PICTURED ABOVE: Official event poster featuring Robinson's *Bezalel* next to Niko's *The One Whom My Soul Loves*. Photo courtesy of: Chloe Robinson.



PICTURED ABOVE: One wall of the Grimm Hall hallway and its artwork. Photo courtesy of: Brooklyn Pietsch

## Celebrating and recognizing music with the 2026 Grammys

KIARA AZUMA  
LOCAL/GLOBAL EDITOR

The Grammys, known as "Music's Biggest Night," will take place on Feb. 1, streaming on CBS Television Network or Paramount+. The Recording Academy hosts one of the most anticipated and exciting nights for the music industry, celebrating artists and their music.

Popular Grammy categories include Record of the Year, Song of the Year, Album of the Year and Best New Artist.

The Recording Academy has nominated the following for Record of the Year: "D+MF" (Bad Bunny), "Manchild" (Sabrina Carpenter), "Anxiety" (Doechii), "WILDFLOWER" (Billie Eilish), "Abracadabra" (Lady Gaga), "Luther" (Kendrick Lamar with SZA), "The Subway" (Chappell Roan) and "APT." (ROSÉ, Bruno Mars).

The Song of the Year category has overlapping nominations from Lady Gaga,

Doechii, ROSÉ, Bad Bunny, Kendrick Lamar, Billie Eilish and Sabrina Carpenter. However, this category has also included "Golden" from the popular Netflix movie, "KPop Demon Hunters." This movie has become one of Netflix's global phenomena, ranking among the platform's top 10 movies for months. The songs from the movie, especially "Golden," have been loved by both children and adults alike.

The competitive nominations continue with the Album of the Year list: "DeBi TiRaR MaS FOToS" (Bad Bunny), SWAG (Justin Bieber), "Man's Best Friend" (Sabrina Carpenter), "Let God Sort Em Out" (Clipse, Pusha T & Malice), "MAYHEM" (Lady Gaga), "GNX" (Kendrick Lamar), "MUTT" (Leon Thomas) and "CHROMAKOPIA" (Tyler, The Creator).

The nominated artists and their music have been praised and loved by many, making this year's Grammys an exciting watch as people voice their opinions on who should win.

"I'm not super in tune with the

Grammys, but I feel like Tate McRae or Sabrina Carpenter might win a Grammy. They both have lots of popular hits and toured this year," said Katherine Doche, a senior. "I believe that Billie Eilish should win a Grammy. I feel like she has been robbed of a Grammy for many years," added Doche.

Jazzmin Perry, a senior, expressed her belief that Kendrick Lamar will sweep all the categories he is nominated for. Lamar has been nominated in nine categories, making him the most-nominated artist at the 2026 Grammys.

"I believe Kendrick deserves to win simply because he's managed to have so much commercial success in the latter part of his career with the release of 'GNX' without compromising the authenticity he's had at the beginning of his rap career, which is known to pigeon-hole artists," said Perry. "I don't think there's a generation that can say they've witnessed an artist cohesively make an album repeatedly dissing another artist, while celebrating the Black culture of Los Angeles, navigating relationships and commenting on the historical context of this country," added Doche.

Lamar appeared on headlines and across social media in 2024 during his feud with rapper Drake, which played out in music hits like "Not Like Us" and Lamar's Emmy-winning Super Bowl Halftime show in 2025. Lamar continued his impact with the surprise release of "GNX" at the end of 2024, and the album was seen as a tribute to the West Coast.

Among the highly acclaimed artists, new artists are also highlighted in the Best New Artist category. People are likely familiar with Alex Warren, who was on Billboard's Hot 100 for 47 weeks with his popular song, "Ordinary." Other artists include Olivia Dean, girl group KATSEYE, The Marias, Addison Rae, sombr, Leon Thomas, and Lola Young.

The 2026 Grammys also introduced Best Traditional Country Album and Best Album Cover for the first time, allowing more artists to be recognized.

For a full list of the nominations and categories, visit <https://www.grammy.com/news/2026-grammys-nominations-full-winners-nominees-list>.

# Comeback stories and big accomplishments entering the 2026 Winter Olympics

KIARA AZUMA  
LOCAL/GLOBAL EDITOR

Team USA athletes will take on the snow and ice at the 2026 Winter Olympics, running from Feb. 6 to Feb. 22. This year, the Olympics will be in Milano Cortina, Italy.

The Winter Olympics feature 16 sports, with the newest addition being ski mountaineering. Other popular winter sports part of the Olympics include figure skating, snowboarding, hockey, skiing and speed skating.

Multiple athletes on Team USA are returning Olympians, while others are making their exciting debut. According to the Team USA website, most athletes come from Minnesota, followed by New York and California. A notable athlete from California is Chloe Kim, from Torrance. She has won two gold medals in snowboarding.

“She is the first athlete to win titles at all four major snowboarding events—the Olympics, Youth Winter Olympics, X Games and FIS World Championships,” stated the Team USA website.

Some of the other highlighted Team USA athletes competing this year are speedskater Erin Johnson, who was the first Black woman to win gold at an individual event at the Winter Olympics; four-time gold medalist and hockey player Josh Pauls; gold and bronze medalist Lindsey Vonn for alpine skiing; and gold medalist Alex Hall, who was the first person to land a 2160 – six full rotations – in a skiing competition.

Figure skating is another popular Winter Olympic sport that has taken the headlines with the stories of Alysa Liu, Amber Glenn, Ilia Malinin and Maxim Naumov.

Liu won the U.S. National Championship in 2019 at 13 years old, making her the youngest skater to ever do so. She competed in the 2022 Olympics and retired shortly after at 16. However, she has made a comeback this year after two years on her own terms, securing a spot at the

Olympics after placing second at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships.

“My goal honestly is to hype people up and give them an experience, whether it’s negative or positive. I get to pick my own program music. I get to help with the creative process of the program,” Liu stated in an interview with 60 Minutes.

Glenn has become a three-peat U.S. Women’s National Figure Skating champion, earning her Olympic debut after 17 years of competitive skating. Malinin, nicknamed “QuadGod,” known for his quad jumps and backflips, will be entering his first Olympics following his fourth consecutive title at national championships.

Naumov enters the Winter Olympics for the first time in his career, after placing third at the championships. His success comes after a devastating loss a year prior, when both of his parents passed away in the American Airlines flight crash in Washington D.C. after the 2025 National Figure Skating Championships. Naumov was seen carrying a photo of his parents, who were also Olympian figure skaters, during the awards ceremony at this year’s championships and skated in their honor.

“We did it. We absolutely did it. God is good,” stated Naumov on NBC television following the announcement that he was going to the Olympics. “Every day. Year after year. We talked about the Olympics. It means so much in our family, and it’s what I’ve been thinking about since I’ve been five years old, before I even knew how to think or what to think... They’d [parents] say, ‘we’re proud of you, but the job’s not finished. We’re just getting started.’”

For more information regarding Team USA or the Winter Olympics, visit <https://www.teamusa.com/> and <https://www.olympics.com/en/milano-cortina-2026>.

# Men’s volleyball looks to take the world by storm

JOSEPH PANETTA  
SPORTS EDITOR

a good job of coming together and meshing as one unit.

UCLA, Hawaii, Stanford – these are the names that come up when talking about the top men’s volleyball teams. But after a huge win against Princeton, there might be one more name to add to that conversation: Concordia.

On Jan. 20, men’s volleyball not only beat the eighteenth ranked Princeton team but swept them, winning all three sets by a combined 10 points.

Junior Ties Cornelissen and junior Myles Henderson led the team with 13 and 11 kills respectively. Sophomore Paul Schulteis had 2 aces; redshirt sophomore Nathan Habermas and Cornelissen both had 3 blocks. Graduate student Aidan Case led the side with 26 assists, and junior Christian Galoppo and Cornelissen both had 7 digs.

This win will be a huge boost to the squad and hopefully a turning point in their season after a slow start.

“Obviously 0-2 is not how we wanted to start the season,” said freshman Matt Fisher prior to the two game win streak. “We have had so many moving parts with seven-plus new players and a whole new coaching staff. We have seen pieces of greatness from this team in the pre-season and even during the first two matches.”

Regardless of the start, Fisher did not lose confidence in his team. “We will hit our stride and make dents in the college volleyball world.”

That is exactly what they did: a clean sweep of one of the highest ranked teams in the country. This win will no doubt give the Golden Eagles confidence in their aim to make a deep playoff run this year.

On a team that has a lot of new faces, head coach Jon Girten has been working hard to get them cohesive and ready for the season.

“I think it’s just the resiliency,” said Girten when asked what stands out about his team. “Their ability to adapt, their ability to learn, their awareness that they know they don’t have all the answers and they’re willing to put the work in not only on the volleyball court but also mentally.”

The roster as a whole has done

“Being the only freshman has been an unexpected blessing,” said Fisher. “All of the older guys on the team have taken me under their wing and taught me the ropes quickly. As well, I had to come in and compete like I’ve been here before, because that is the standard.”

Concordia is sometimes seen as a small fish in big waters due to their standing as a Division II school in a Division I conference. However, the team sees this as a strength rather than a weakness.

“It would be crazy for me not to mention the strength of schedule our coaches have designed,” said Fisher. “We will be in some of the most hostile gyms in America, and those are going to be games I remember for a lifetime.”

The students have been showing up to the games in floods and the team will continue to need all of the support.

“The fan support we have gotten so far has been incredible. Keep a heads up for our games, we bring in some of the biggest universities and top ranked opponents to the CU Arena on a weekly basis,” said Fisher.

Come out to support the team at their next home game against Saint Xavier on Saturday, Jan. 24 at 5 p.m. Stay up to date on [instagram @cuimvolleyball](https://www.instagram.com/cuimvolleyball).



PICTURED ABOVE: Men's volleyball in action.

Photo courtesy of: Golden Eagle Dropbox

# Concordia basketball is in full swing

JOSEPH PANETTA  
SPORTS EDITOR

The thick of college basketball is underway as both Concordia teams look to make a push for the playoffs. The men's and women's teams are sitting just above a 0.500 record as we enter into the home stretch.

The men's team currently sits at 9-7, after a strong 5-1 start. This start includes an instrumental 75-66 win against Cal State San Bernardino.

"We knew it was going to be a gritty win and we came out here, and we battled..." said sophomore Kevin Haupt. "We weathered the storm, we fought as a team, and we did what we were supposed to do," Haupt added.

The men are averaging 71.1 points of offense per game, but their real strength this year has been their defense. They are averaging 68.8 points per game, which would be a school best in the Division II era.

Junior MaCarhy Morris and junior Kaden Minter lead the team in scoring with 17.2 and 14.3 points, respectively. Sophomore Nick Corbett has dominated the paint with 7.1 rebounds per game and seven total blocks on the season.

Redshirt sophomore Radek Homer has also been a well-rounded contributor with 4.9 points, 5.8 rebounds and 1.5 assists per game while also leading the team with 24 steals. Junior Marcellus Edwards is second with 23 steals.

Individual success, both among the starters and the bench players,

has been instrumental. "We all know that we all can [score]," said Haupt, "but we all love sharing the ball."

The men opened up their conference games on fire with a 4-0 win, but sequentially lost four straight. After a win against Jessup, they find themselves at 5-4 in conference play.

With a quick succession of games, including a trip to Hawaii, they look to complete their turnaround and compete for a PacWest Championship.

Make sure to support them at their next home game at 7:15 p.m. on Jan. 29, which will be their second matchup against Jessup.

The women's team has also been a defensive powerhouse, averaging 64.3 points against per game. This is thanks in large part to sophomore Genesis Hopkins, who has been named as the Defensive Player of the Week twice in a row this season.

"Defense is something I have always valued, and it's my favorite way to impact the game," said Hopkins. "Coach Collins has drilled into each player since August the importance of defense... Once I stopped worrying about the points I was putting up and focused on all the other ways I was impacting the game, my defense fueled my offense."

Hopkins is currently averaging 7.8 points, 9.1 rebounds, 1.5 assists, 1.4 steals and a whopping 2.7 blocks per game.

Freshman Asia Darcuiel leads the team in

scoring with 14.0 points per game. Graduate student Camryn Kiernan leads the team with 31, while junior Hannah Vela leads the team in steals with 25.

Senior Kayla Cabaccang has also been a great contributor off the bench with 21 assists and 6 steals in 12.9 minutes per game.

The team has key players from top to bottom, and the sky is the limit for them.

"I am excited to see all the talented people on our team keep developing," said Hopkins. "I don't think our team has reached our full potential and that we will be even more dangerous when we do. I am just looking forward to the time I get to spend with everyone on and off the court, and for many more upsets to come."

Despite their strengths,

the women still find themselves at 8-7, with Hopkins stating, "Our struggle has been our third quarter performance. If we can learn how to come out like our best selves after half, I see nothing stopping us from reaching all our goals."

They will look to do just that as they are coming off of a two-game conference winning streak. Come support our women's team as they aim to make the playoffs and compete for a PacWest championship.

The ladies' next home game is at 7:15 p.m. on Jan. 29 against Jessup University. Stay up to date with both teams on Instagram @cuimbasketball and @cuiwbb.



PICTURED ABOVE: Women's basketball brings strong defense to the season  
Photo courtesy of: Golden Eagle Dropbox