USM panel discussion aims to “change the game” for LGBTQA students in athletics

Emma James
Contributor

According to Sarah Holmes, coordinator for the Center for Sexualities and Gender Diversity, the conversation about LGBTQA students in collegiate and high school sports has not been common, but it should be, she said.

The USM Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine will host “Changing the Game: A Panel Discussion on LGBT People in High School and College Athletics” to try to start a more open dialogue between coaches, LGBTQA student athletes and their teammates.

“It’s a difficult conversation to start,” said Holmes. “In order to come out [as an LGBTQA person], you need to feel supported and welcome.”

Holmes agreed that at universities nationwide, including USM, the acceptance or lack thereof of LGBTQA athletes into the athletics community remains a hushed topic.

“There’s [sic] some very deep-rooted prejudices and feelings in this area,” said Bean. “Anytime you have a locker room situation and you have people who spend a lot of time together, they have to rely on each other and trust each other. They’re changing there every day and showering every day. It’s a little bit of a different dynamic than the average person might deal with.”

This dynamic, according to Holmes, makes the athletic “walk of life” for LGBTQA students more difficult than some other social settings.

“It’s a relatively new conversation in athletics, not just at USM but worldwide. It’s not a conversa-

See PANEL on page 4
USM divest group strives to gain more student support

Skyla Gordon
Free Press Staff

Despite a less than enthusiastic reception from students this fall, the USM branch of the student organization Divest UMaine plans to continue with its efforts this year to pressure the USM community and administration to support a system move to divest from fossil fuels.

Divest UMaine, a group of students, staff, faculty and alumni whose mission is to push for the university system to take a tangible move to show its support of the issue, USM, on its website, claims that it “supports sustainable development and stewardship.”

Since the group formed in December 2012, they have been endorsed by the Student Senate and have gathered hundreds of signatures on a petition to the University of Maine System board of trustees that eventually helped to open up the conversation between system administrators in a trustees meeting last spring.

Divest UMaine held two meetings last week to gather student interest and to discuss goals for the upcoming year. Their main goals are to persuade the board of trustees to immediately stop investing in new fossil fuel companies and to raise student awareness about USM’s involvement with the fossil fuel industry.

They are asking that USM, “immediately stop investing in any new fossil fuel companies, and divest what they currently do have invested in fossil fuels,” said Shaun Carland, a junior math and computer science major, and the president of the students for environmental awareness and sustainability.

“Divestment is the opposite of investment. It means getting rid of stocks, bonds or investment funds that are unethical,” according to go fossilfree.org, a website dedicated to the divestment from fossil fuels.

It is Divest UMaine’s firm belief that the continued use of fossil fuels will lead to irreparable damages to our atmosphere within a few centuries. They believe that climate change will ultimately make Earth a place where earthly forms of life will not be able to exist.

According to the group, the continued use of fossil fuels at its current levels will fundamentally disrupt or completely arrest the naturally-occurring self regulation of ecosystems, such as water circulation, climate and the polar ice caps.

“We’re changing the chemical composition of our atmosphere,” said Carland.

Divest UMaine’s priority for this year is to educate students about the potential dangers of fossil fuels. “We’re trying to help everyone realize that this affects them personally,” said Meaghan LaSala, a junior women and gender studies major. It’s about, “the survivability of the human species,” she explained.

They are reaching out to the University of Maine at Orono and the University of Maine at Farmington to collaborate on building a more system-wide awareness on the issue. They are also working with other student groups at USM to co-sponsor events about the environment and raise awareness to start a social movement.

They are attempting to join the two other Maine colleges that have already divested, the College of the Atlantic and Unity College, that have already divested from fossil fuels.

Divest UMaine is reaching out to the board of trustees to see if USM will follow their lead. According to Dick Campbell, USM Chief Financial Officer, the University of Maine System determines how funds are invested for USM, and as a result, any decision to divest would have to be made by the UMS board of trustees.

At the board meeting in February, trustees discussed the proposal to divest the UMS and to weigh any potential benefits or problems that decision might produce.

They are also working with the USM Board of Trustees to continue with its efforts this year to divest the UMS and to weigh any potential benefits or problems that decision might produce. They are reaching out to the University System of Maine board of trustees to see if USM will follow their lead.

According to Dick Campbell, USM Chief Financial Officer, the University of Maine System determines how funds are invested for USM, and as a result, any decision to divest would have to be made by the UMS board of trustees.

The board of trustees acknowledged the importance of the issue and agreed to reconsider investment.
Cryptogram

DO U OAHGKM KIDG
SUJ ZMAISG DGZI U
PHHA BYV, ZMH AHJYWZ
BDVMZ PH U OAUGF-DG-
JZHGD.

And here is your hint: Y = U

Sudoku

A sudoku puzzle consists of a 9 × 9-square grid subdivided into nine 3 × 3 boxes. Some of the squares contain numbers. The object is to fill in the remaining squares so that every row, every column, and every 3 × 3 box contains each of the numbers from 1 to 9 exactly once.
From PANEL on page 1

“Your dealing with human life. You don’t need to agree with it, you just have to respect the person,” said Bean. “Just a matter of simple respect and civility for the individual can go a long way.”

-Al Bean
USM Director of Athletics

Police Beat

Wednesday, Sept. 4

There’s a time and a place...
12:22 a.m. - Subjects in a vehicle just talking. - 17 University Way

All quiet on the Western front
12:37 a.m. - Wellbeing check requested on a student. - Subject located. - 37 College Ave.

Which ones aren’t reportable?
10:07 a.m. - Reportable two vehicle crash. - Brighton Ave.

Taxi service
12:00 a.m. - Subject transported to hospital following medical emergency. - Luther Bonney Hall

All the world’s a photo shoot, man and women only model
3:12 p.m. - Report of individuals photographing students. - Subjects spoken to by officer and left area. - Dickey Wood Hall

Helping hands on the Legislative branch street
4:08 p.m. - USM officer assisted with a traffic accident on Congress Street. - Portland. - Congress St.

Thursday, Sept. 5

Light it up!
11:47 p.m. - Verbal warning to operator for headlight violation. - 19 Campus Ave. at 116 School St.

Friday, Sept. 6

Poor sportsmanship
12:00 a.m. - Officer took possession of a bag of marijuana and issued a summons to Thomas Reagan, 19 of Gorham for possession of Marijuana. - baseball field, University Way

Fast talker
12:51 a.m. - Verbal warning to operator for speed. - Falcon Crest at Fort Hill

Verbal warning kind of night
10:06 a.m. - Verbal warning for stop sign violation. - Dickey Wood Hall

Deja Vu
1:30 a.m. - Verbal warning issued for speed. - 128 School St.

Thanks anyway
2:32 a.m. - Officer checking on an individual, all set. - Brooks Student Center

Scholastic interloper
4:00 a.m. - Portland Police assisted with a call on the Portland campus for a person who did not belong on campus. - Handle by Portland PD. - Sullivan Gym

Oh, trespass swiftly urged!
7:40 a.m. - Subject found in the building who was there all night. Trespass notice issued. - 88 Bedford St.

Clearly someone wasn’t in park...
10:59 a.m. - Two motor vehicle accident reported in parking garage. - 88 Bedford St.

Graffited forkift?
11:18 a.m. - Report of damage to a motor vehicle. - 28 Husky Dr.

Ready for a speedy exit
5:00 p.m. - Report of an unoccupied motor vehicle left running. Officer was able to secure vehicle and locate owner. - 16 University Way

Just this once...
5:01 p.m. - Warning to operator for stop sign violation. - Wichscamerger Center

Inside job
6:01 p.m. - Monitored security alarm point activated. Set off by staff member. All set. - Luther Bonney Hall

Police logs are edited for grammar and style. They can be found at usm.maine.edu/police/campus-crime-log.
I think that this is a really powerful grassroots movement that isn’t going anywhere.

- Meaghan LaSala

Junior, women and gender studies major

ement opportunities in the future as the research on fossil fuels becomes more developed.

When asked about the possibility of USM divesting from fossil fuels, LaSala said that she believes all universities will inevitability divest because of the hazards of fossil fuels and because of the determination of the groups involved. “I think that this is a really powerful grassroots movement that isn’t going anywhere,” she said.

However, student support of the idea at USM so far has been patchy, starting off at their first meeting of the year in Portland last Wednesday with only three people. In response to these uncertain circumstances, Carland maintained that he believed the issue will gain student support. “It’s hard to get anyone at USM to really care about something, they can be kind of apathetic.” However, Carland explained that he’s more concerned about engaging a dedicated core of students involved in the movement for now, but that he admitted that so far, working to publicize the issue at USM and elsewhere has been a learning experience, and he said that he plans to do more to get the word out about Divest UMaine events in advance for future events.

Despite the difficulties the student group has faced in bolstering student support at USM, Carland is confident that it is an issue that will eventually garner more attention at USM, the greater community and at other branches of the University of Maine System. “It’s going to be the defining issue of our generation,” he said.

auto, that the administration would like to do a little more,” Brodia said. He predicted that the administration would push for a three year contract, rather than the two year contract they have been working on and additional changes in health care benefits not part of the conversation previously.

“We know that the system has acknowledged that it does have the money... the faculty feel undervalued.”

-Eve Raimon

USM professor of English

From AFUM on page 1

Broida predicted, however, that this could just be the beginning of another round of negotiations. “I believe the administration would like to do a little more,” Brodia said. He predicted that the administration would push for a three year contract, rather than the two year contract they have been working on and additional changes in health care benefits not part of the conversation previously.

Curtis Willard, an undeclared sophomore and a first-time visitor at the Divest UMaine meetings, holds two jars of red jelly beans that Divest UMaine student leaders used to talk about levels of fossil fuel emissions at their Thursday night meeting in Gorham.

During the nine-week period on Oct. 25, 2012. UMPSA introduced the fact that, of those for other unions in the state, Connecticut has a higher credit rating than the UMS. As the report says of documents that were introduced as evidence to the proceedings, “the parties focus on parts of these reports that support their respective positions.”

The arbiters’ final recommendation, as set forward in the report, is higher than the UMS’s proposed raise of 0.7 percent retroactive from the 2012 fiscal year and 0.7 percent retroactive from 2013, but lower than both AFUM’s original request and the recommendation of the year’s fact-finding report. AFUM first requested a four percent raise in 2012 and another four percent in 2013, and then requested the salary increase recommended by the fact-finding report of a 1.5 percent raise for 2012 and another three percent increase for 2013. The recommendation of the Arbitration Board is for a one percent increase effective 2011 and a two percent increase backdated to the first pay period after Jan. 2013.

According to Broida, one factor which may speed up the timeline towards a decision is the fact that the state legislature has already put a budget package which includes funding for education. The package will be voted on in the upcoming November election. “There is good pressure on the administration to resolve the situation with the unions,” Broida said, speculating that it doesn’t look good for the UMS faculty to be working without a contract.

Without public confidence in the university system, Broida said, “the bonds may not pass.”

Associate Professor of social and behavioral sciences Christy Hammer became UM’s new AFUM president on July 1, succeeding the former president, Professor Ed Collum. Hammer said, in a statement to the Free Press, that it was difficult to find someone to take the position at this point in time, which Hammer described as, “a time of such dire circumstances for public higher education all over the country, including here in Maine and certainly at UMS.” Hammer expressed the belief that, “the work of faculty, while not seeming to be understood at all by the current Board of Trustees, is key to student success at USM and its worth fighting for.”

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USM exhibits “Visions of Persia” photography
The exhibit, part of a month-long series focused on Iran, aims to teach students about every-day life for Iranians there

“Most Americans here judge Iranians by the actions of their government and what they see in the media. Iranians are not all violent fundamentalist Muslims. Persian Visions hopes to achieve a better understanding of that.”

-Reza Jalali
Coordinator of Multicultural Student Affairs

things we learn at USM don’t fit into our major or minor requirements.

On the surface “Persian Visions” looks like a simple photography exhibit displaying Iranian art and culture. But upon closer inspection, the exhibit is deeply connected with USM’s overall mission – that USM connects the student body with the community at large and create a population of what Jalali calls “global citizens.”

“Not all learning takes place in the classroom, and we want to give students more than just a piece of paper,” said Jalali.

- Carolyn Eyler
Director of Exhibitions and Programs

USM is offering several other ways for students and the community to familiarize themselves more with Iranian culture with the theme of this semester at the Multicultural Center, “Let’s learn about Iran.” The photography exhibition will include an opening reception on Oct. 10 with Robert Silberman, a visiting scholar and curator of Persian Visions. On Nov. 6, there will be a free panel discussion on current events in Iran from 12 to 1:30 p.m. To end the series, there will be a concert by Kayhan Kalhor, a renowned Iranian musician, on Nov. 23 at 8 p.m. The series coordinators have many goals with the arrival of this event to USM. However one of these goals is directly connected with USM’s overall mission – that USM connects the student body with the community at large and create a population of what Jalali calls “global citizens.”

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The LGBTQA community at USM celebrated the beginning of the 2013 school year Wednesday night in Gorham by holding an ice cream social to welcome both new and returning students.

The event gave students a chance to mingle with other members of the LGBTQA community while learning more about the community as a whole.

“Feeling isolated because no one was really out,” said Sarah Holmes, coordinator of the Center for Sexuality and Gender Diversity, regarding her life on campus when she attended USM.

Since returning to USM, she has worked to make people feel accepted and given students a place to open up and be themselves. The goal of the the CSGD is to provide a safe environment on campus that allows students to get involved and socialize with others who identify similarly.

“We’re like a family. Everyone is really different, but a lot of similarities can be found,” said sophomore women and gender studies major Tai Infante.

The CSGD also seeks to educate students understand how they can get involved. Some students are involved in the Safe Zone project, meaning they participated in training to better understand the different definitions of gender identity and sexual orientation and are able to answer questions other students may have.

The general consensus among the students was that the LGBTQA social created a sense of family and community. Being accepted is not always the case, particularly for students transitioning from high school. Students are often victims of bullying because of their sexual orientation, which is why the CSGD takes action to make sure these students have a safe environment to express themselves in.

“It’s important for everyone to know that they are loved and supported,” said junior English major Caitlin Field, “because people don’t always feel that way, even when they are.”

This year, Holmes hopes to continue the conversation on LGBTQA issues on campus and discuss them in a more public setting, like next week’s “Changing the Game: A Panel Discussion on LGBT People in High School and College Athletics.” The panel, Holmes hopes, will lead to open up the dialogue between coaches and student athletes who identify themselves as LGBTQA and help to change the culture of homophobia in athletics both on and off campus.

Holmes recently sent an email to all those who have signed up for the USM pride listserv, regarding her life on campus since returning to USM, regarding her life on campus.

This year, Holmes hopes to continue the conversation on LGBTQA issues on campus and discuss them in a more public setting, like next week’s “Changing the Game: A Panel Discussion on LGBT People in High School and College Athletics.”

Another social will be held on Wednesday at the CSGD in Woodbury Campus Center from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. All are welcome and are encouraged to bring friends.

Arts & Culture
September 16, 2013

In Heavy Rotation
What caught the eyes and ears of our staff this week,

* Nas / Illmatic

I’ve been involved in the Jay Z vs. Nas conversation too much recently. A Hova supporter for life, some friends have been trying to get me more into Nas. While he’s had a back and forth career, Illmatic is one of the most poetic hip hop albums of all time. And he recorded it when he was only 20 years-old.

-Sam Hill
Arts & Culture Editor

Queen / Greatest Hits

There isn’t anything more upbeat than classic Queen. Whether you’re trying to run another mile, get your house clean or just cheer yourself up, Freddy Mercury is there to motivate you. Don’t stop me now!

-Ellie Spahn
Design Assistant

Pavement / Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain

One of those albums that’s good to put on if you don’t want to think much, not because it isn’t smart and interesting — it is — but because it’s got a harsh, unmelodic edge to it, creating a wall of sound that doesn’t leave room for much else. If you’re looking for a more song-like song, though, check out “Cut Your Hair,” it’s ridiculously catchy.

-Sidney Dritz
News Assistant

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We Are All, the debut full-length release from Portland’s own Forget, Forget, takes an indie-rock sound and layers it with vocals that sing of mental hardship.

Tyler Devos, the band’s vocalist and writer, sings of the experiences he has had and clients he has dealt with working at several group homes over the years. His lyrics seem to reflect feelings of institutional residents – they’re confusing, unorthodox and emotional. Some tracks, like “It’s My Illness,” show hope when Devos sings of a client who has expressed will to go to “meetings,” presumably to seek help. Others, like “Avril Lavigne Vs. The Firemen,” use incoherent statements to illustrate the incomprehensible language that is often associated with the chronically mentally ill. On this track, Devos sings, “the clouds gather over, and someone is calling your brain / It’s the firemen / The firemen have called to complain.” The value of this song is in the way the lyrics describe an individual without the use of abstractions. Devos does not describe emotions directly, he provides a description using examples that let the listener formulate an idea of who and what the song is about.

Forget, Forget’s instrumental work on We Are All is similar to indie-rock heavy hitters like Arcade Fire and Neutral Milk Hotel, but their sound also employs a grassroots production quality that is typical and often unavoidable for local bands with limited budgets. The songs are layered with distorted electric guitar, drums, bass, cello, violin, harmonized vocals and the frequent use of a synthesizer as a melodic instrument. With this many instruments, a song could sound cluttered at times, but each part is generally unique and adds a new texture to the music. The musicians in this band do not sound especially well trained in their technical ability, but the command they do possess over their instruments is used to full potential. Tracks are tight, dynamic and convey emotions that accurately reflect the lyrics.

Above all, We Are All is intensely interesting. The stories and descriptions that Devos shares are fascinating and offer insight into the experiences of institutionalized life, a world that is often unknown. The music is good, but it is nothing groundbreaking. Its value lies in its functionality. We Are All uses dependable indie-rock sounds to support the rich creativity and interesting storytelling qualities of Devos’ lyrics.

Devos leads with intensity of lyrics

Dan Kelly
Free Press Staff

West West Side Music

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A&C Listings

Tuesday, September 17
Leftover Salmon / Floodwood
Port City Music Hall
504 Congress St.
Doors: 7:00 p.m. / Show: 8:00 p.m.

Matt Shipman
Blue
650 Congress St.
Doors: 7:30 p.m. / Show: 8:00 p.m.

Wednesday, September 18
Toad the Wet Sprocket / Ryan Montbleau
Port City Music Hall
504 Congress St.
Doors: 7:00 p.m. / Show: 8:00 p.m.

Film: The Act of Killing
SPACE Gallery
538 Congress St.
Doors: 7:30 p.m. / Show: 8:00 p.m.

Thursday, September 19
The Barn Swallows
Blue
650 Congress St.
Doors: 6:30 p.m. / Show: 7:00 p.m.

Dogfish Bar and Grille
128 Free St.
Doors: 7:30 p.m. / Show: 8:00 p.m.

Friday, September 20
Hinder / Candlebox / Charm City Devils
State Theatre
609 Congress St.
Doors: 6:30 p.m. / Show: 7:30 p.m.

Delta Rae / Jillette Johnson
Port City Music Hall
504 Congress St.
Doors: 7:00 p.m. / Show: 8:00 p.m.

Film: Vacationland
SPACE Gallery
538 Congress St.
Doors: 7:30 p.m. / Show: 8:00 p.m.

Phantom Buffalo
Bayside Bowl
56 Alder St.
Doors: 6:30 p.m. / Show: 7:00 p.m.

The Burners
Blue
650 Congress St.
Doors: 7:30 p.m. / Show: 8:00 p.m.

Newpoli
One Longfellow Square
181 State St.
Doors: 8:00 p.m. / Show: 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, September 21
Anna Lombard / Pete Miller / Gunther Brown
One Longfellow Square
181 State St.
Doors: 8:00 p.m. / Show: 8:00 p.m.

Kyle Hardy Trio
Blue
650 Congress St.
Doors: 9:30 p.m. / Show: 10:00 p.m.

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Local Top 5:
Study spots on the Gorham campus

Caleb Lacy
Contributor

The fall semester is under way and, with it, comes that time honored ritual – studying. The problem is finding a spot where you can study without being interrupted by other people or your own Facebook urges. Thankfully USM has a number of perfect hideaways and study spots. So for your learning pleasure here are the top five study spots on the Gorham campus.

1) Gorham Learning Commons
Yes, the library is the best place to study. Who knew, right? The collaborative lounge section of the first floor learning commons combined with the silent study desks on the second floor combine to make this learning central for any student “Upstairs in the library [is] super cozy” said senior theater major Hannah Perry. The computer access and office supplies station make it perfect for projects and there are even rooms for group studying when necessary. But watch out when midterms and finals roll around, because this quiet study area quickly turns into mayhem as students try to “learn” on a tight deadline.

2) Russell Hall
The lobby of the Russell Hall has cafe style tables and chairs set up for the premieres of USM theater department performances, but they make great study tables on the off days. It’s a great spot away from the hustle and bustle of most buildings on campus, since it’s mostly used by theater majors between classes in the building. Theater majors are known for their gregarious nature though, so beware the rehearsals.

3) Corthell Hall
The basement of Corthell Hall is a relaxing place to get down to business and read those 50 pages of reading you’ve been putting off since last week. The lower rooms, while stuffy, tend to be left alone though you may occasionally catch some music majors practicing their skills in the sound booths. The music makes for lovely study music and keeps you away from fiddling around with your iPod every five minutes because it’s stuck on shuffle and you have to find the perfect track every other song.

4) Burnham Lounge
For those who live on campus the Robie Andrews Hall common area is a great spot to get away from the masses. During TV show premieres it can be over taken by viewers, but during the day the room is almost always empty plus its open 24/7. Even students from other dorms can key into the building during the day, so don’t be scared if you aren’t a Robie Andrews native. “I went to Burnham Lounge to pull all-nighters. Usually I was alone and I always brought a blanket to curl up with,” said senior theater major Ashley Rood. Don’t get caught sleeping there though! The RA’s don’t appreciate it.

5) Brooks Dining Hall
While the atmosphere may get loud from time to time the all you can eat food will keep your stomach from distracting you. Study for an hour, grab an apple for a snack. Study for another hour, grab a sandwich. Study some more, grab two more sandwiches. Food is brain fuel. USM Theater Alum Clarissa Bergeron-Lawrence suggests “I went to the cafeteria at breakfast, and studied there until lunch. Not too much noise, not too quiet. Food. Coffee.”

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Our opinion: Cutting physics is not the answer for USM

Last Thursday’s announcement that the physics department will be cut due to low enrollment may not have come as a surprise, especially after President Kalikow’s statement to the Free Press last week about how difficult the situation is.

Last week’s article touched on the issue of drastic cuts to faculty research, travel and scholarship funding, which seems drastic enough — research is even in the dictionary as a defining characteristic of a university (check Merriam Webster). What’s more bizarre than a university without a foundation in research? You guessed it — an institution that calls itself a university without a physics department.

Currently, there are only two public universities in Maine that offer a major in physics, the University of Maine at Orono and USM. Beyond that, there are the pricier and more elite options of the Colby, Bates and Bowdoin colleges. USM has already made its move to phase out its Physics Department and is now investigating other under-enrolled departments and degree programs to potentially eliminate, which begs the question, how many departments can a university cut before it ceases to be a true “university”? And beyond that, the question that seems to be looming now is, what’s next?

The idea behind the cuts seems to be that low enrollment means low interest in physics, but there’s another way of looking at those numbers. Is there low enrollment in physics because USM students don’t want a physics department? Probably not. There’s a chance that USM students aren’t choosing to study physics because USM because its deteriorating academic reputation? With the drastic rate at which whole departments are getting the axe, it’s hard not to understand why students are choosing other schools.

No one is saying that USM is cutting physics for the fun of it. There are budget shortfalls, especially in light of the tuition freeze, flat (but increasingly inadequate) state appropriation and consistently dropping enrollment rates locally and nationally. These problems do need to be addressed.

The tuition freeze is designed to help students stay in school, which is incredibly important. It’s also important to keep an eye on what school’s helping students stay in, though. As it stands, USM is an affordable school that keeps getting chipped away at academically, both little by little and, in cases like this, in giant slabs.

There is, of course, the fact that students don’t just pay for an education, we pay for the name on our diploma, and the university that just cut its physics department doesn’t sound so good. We understand the necessity to cut back under these financial pressures; however, we are concerned that this cut is both dramatic and ill-conceived. We cannot forget what is should always be at the core of a university’s mission – the good of its students, and USM students, even though sometimes we might not openly embrace physics, need such basic and fundamental elements of a well-rounded education.

It’s not too late to reconsider this decision, and we think it would be wise to do so. It’s not always quantity, but quality, too. A student to faculty ratio of 8 to 1 isn’t something to be ashamed of.

My name is Derick Arel; I’ve been a full time student of the University of Southern Maine for four years. I’m a non-traditional student in my 30’s, I love learning, and I deeply value my experiences at USM and the education I’ve received.

I’m a physics major.

I’m writing in response to what I’ve recently heard about the future of my department. I call it “my” department because I feel like the physics faculty has been a second family for me. I’ve grown so much with them that I can scarcely remember the person I was four years ago. The small dedicated faculty of this university’s physics department consists of some of the most influential and important people I’ve had the pleasure of working with, and each of them ranks among the best educators I’ve encountered. I cannot imagine a more rewarding educational experience than the one I’ve lived in the past four years.

And so it’s puzzling and nonsensical to me when I hear that the department is apparently no longer permitted to accept new students within the major and that the future existence of the department might be in question. This decision doesn’t affect my academic pursuits; I’m graduating this year. But it affects the institution which has shaped me, and I feel a responsibility to weigh in on the matter.

Physics is the most fundamental of the sciences. It represents the quest to understand the deepest attainable truths about reality and life. Further, physics is a foundational science which supports other departments such as engineering, chemistry, even biology. A university which removes its physics department is crippling its STEM fields in the same way that removing the English department would cripple the humanities.

The thing that makes a university different from a trade school is that it fosters departments which engage in the study and creation of big ideas. These are the philosophy departments, mathematics, the humanities, and the physics departments. All of these departments are attempts to make human beings more than the sum of their parts. They are arguably humanity’s most important project. What else is a university for if not to facilitate these most lofty of human endeavors?

That the physics department is small does not indicate a lack of importance. All physics departments are small relative to the size of their institutions. Physics is a difficult discipline and it takes a rare kind of student with deep curiosity and drive to pursue it. USM is THE university in the largest metropolitan area in our state. I believe this institution owes more to its community than to directly contribute to the erosion of the United States’ position as a world leader in scientific education and research.

I deeply hope this university’s administrators will reconsider the path it appears to be undertaking.
New “Teach” documentary is pure propaganda for the corporate-driven war on public education

Philip Shelley
Contributor

Last Friday night I watched Davis Guggenheim’s new “documentary,” Teach, which was broadcast in on CBS. Guggenheim, you may recall, is the filmmaker who brought us Waiting For Superman, the shameless propaganda-fest that signaled the full-on nuclear stage of the corporate-driven war on public education (also known as the education “reform” movement). The merciless and concerted attack on our public education system has four main goals: mass acceptance of online and technology-based learning models; an increase in privatization and charter schools; an increase in testing and assessment; and the deprofessionalization of teachers and the destruction of their unions.

But I was trying to be open-minded, and at first Teach didn’t seem blatantly evil (and that’s with my evil-o-meter turned all the way up) – just dull. Maybe, I thought, Guggenheim really is just a clueless hack, or maybe he felt bad for attacking teachers so viciously (and for directly pinning the blame for the education “crisis” on the corruption of teachers’ recalcitrant unions) in Superman, and was trying to be evenhanded with this warm and fuzzy prime-time portrait of four dedicated teachers. (In their review of Teach, the New York Times, apparently conditioned by Superman’s anti-teacher resentment, sniffed that “it’s nice to see four educators who care more about their students than they do about salaries or tenure.” Later in the same review, they grudgingly conceded that “while a documentary that looks only at the classroom is not going to give the full educational picture, no learning is likely to take place without a good teacher in the mix.”)

I couldn’t figure it out, but I knew that some entity (and a mysterious entity it was – in all the press and publicity leading up to the broadcast, the money trail was extra-vagadude) had paid to make this film and get it on network television, and it wasn’t because they thought teachers deserved a nice public pat on the back. So I waited for the big reveal.

Sure enough, after a dull first half, the evil came avalanching out of my television: impressive by the fawning press and misrepresentation of the facts that preceded the broadcast, by the faux teacher sympathy, by the use of disarming, style bro’ jokes, and sending viewers to the program’s companion website, hosted on producer Participant Media’s TakePart.com. Gradually, carefully, the program’s agenda was being revealed. Participant Media (also behind Superman) was started by Jeff Skoll, the ethby founder, and is currently run by Jim Berk, who prior to joining Participant ran Gryphon Colleges Corporation, which invests in and owns for-profit Education Management Organizations (EMOs for short).

The website proudly displays the Microsoft logo (the Gates Foundation was a major backer of Superman, and Gates himself has been an outspoken critic of teachers and an influential supporter of the reform movement) and features “action” pages with online tools, websites, videos with titles such as “Kids and Technology,” and lots and lots of material for the Khan Academy, the online learning company backed by Gates that has been getting a lot of slobbering publicity over the past couple of years, especially in the business and technology press.

Finally there was a long commercial for the Khan Academy itself and, more generally, “Free Online Education for Everyone.” This ad was sponsored by the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation, and according to their website, they have helped ensure that “more than 10,000 K-12 students across Idaho will become part of the nation’s first statewide pilot of the Khan Academy, the free, internationally recognized online education leader.”

A major coup. The foundation’s website cites the big four aims of the corporate education reform movement as their goals.

Khan himself is not reticent about publicizing his goal to “revolutionize” education globally, telling Forbes, “Now that there are these tools, where students can learn at their own pace and master the concepts before moving on, can we rethink this educational model that has been standard practice for hundreds of years?” Nor is he shy about expressing his anti-teacher, anti-union sentiment in line with Gates, The Walton Family Foundation, the Koch brothers, and Walden Media (run by creationist crank Philip Anschutz), and lobbying groups such as the Lumina Foundation, the New American Foundation, and the other main drivers of “reform.” “Teachers unions don’t act in the interest of most teachers,” Khan told the Huffington Post. “Many of the best teachers I know are being laid off because their unions value seniority over intellect, passion, creativity and drive.”

In the end I was really impressed by the coordination that got this Trojan horse on the air: impressed by the fawning press and...
Quick Hits:  The Huskies’ week in review

Sports Editor

Men’s Soccer
USM loses against Saint Joseph’s
The men’s team are still without a win this season, falling to Saint Joseph’s College 0-3 on Wednesday afternoon. The loss brings the team’s record to 0-4-1 overall.

Freshman goalie Adam Verreault and classmate Matthew Willis both recorded a save for the Huskies. Both contributed 17 digs.

The men’s team are still without a win this season, falling to Saint Joseph’s College 0-3 on Wednesday afternoon. The win ends their winning streak to 3-2 overall. Senior Natalie Harkins scored the game-winning goal in the fourth minute of overtime with the assist from senior forward Peyton Dostie. Freshman Kristina Rubico had 14 kills to lead the Huskies to victory while sophomores Renee Trottier and Jessica Garrett each recorded eight. Freshman Megan Nilson had 27 assists and three aces while sophomore Demi Ruder contributed 17 digs.

USM will next face Bowdoin College this Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Women’s Volleyball
Huskies win sixth straight game
The women’s team continued their winning streak to six, defeating Husson University 3-1 in a non-conference match on Tuesday evening. The win improves their overall record to 7-1.

Freshman Kristina Rubico had 14 kills to lead the Huskies to victory while sophomores Renee Trottier and Jessica Garrett each recorded eight. Freshman Megan Nilson had 27 assists and three aces while sophomore Demi Ruder contributed 17 digs.

USM will next compete against Unity College this Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Field Hockey
USM finishes in second place at UMF Invitational
The field hockey team stole the show against University of Maine Farmington, winning 3-2 in overtime on Wednesday afternoon. The win ends the Huskies two game losing streak and improves their record to 3-2 overall.

Senior Natalie Harkins scored the game-winning goal in the fourth minute of overtime with the assist from junior forward Peyton Dostie. Freshman Kristina Rubico had 14 kills to lead the Huskies to victory while sophomores Renee Trottier and Jessica Garrett each recorded eight.

Women’s Volleyball
USM @ Regis 7 p.m.

Women’s Cross Country
USM Invitational 11 a.m.

Field Hockey
USM @ Eastern Conn. St. 12 p.m.

Women’s Volleyball
Eastern Conn. St. @ USM 12 p.m.

Maine Maritime @ USM 4 p.m.

Men’s Soccer
USM @ Mass.-Boston 1 p.m.

Women’s Soccer
Mass.-Boston @ USM 1 p.m.

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