

Students adjust to using Brightspace



brightspace
by D2L

As the spring 2023 semester began, many students noticed a change in online learning platform for some of their classes.

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The Blockchain revolution



Interest in blockchain, the technology that underlies the cryptocurrency industry, has grown significantly in the last few years, and what was once considered...

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Alec Baldwin Charged with Involuntary Manslaughter



Actor Alec Baldwin is being charged with two counts of involuntary manslaughter for his role in the death of Cinematographer Halyna Hutchins on Oct. 21, 2021.

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Coach Strickland leads transitional period for Men's Basketball



Following a promising 2021-22 campaign that saw the Sharks place among the top three in the Northeast Conference (NEC), the LIU Men's Basketball team underwent major changes...

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LIU Spirit teams win National Championship



Courtesy of Adam Rubin

BY ANDREW SCARPACI

SPORTS EDITOR

On Friday, Jan.13, the LIU Cheer and Dance teams won the 2023 Open Spirit Program Game Day National Championship, held at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex in Orlando, FL.

With a score of 184.1333, the Sharks won the competition over St. John's University and South Dakota State. The Gameday-Spirit Division-1 Championship at the Universal Dance/Cheer Association (UDA/UCA) Nationals was the first time the two teams and LIU's mascot "Finley the Shark," all com-

peted together for a common goal.

Cheerleading Head Coach TJ Bettineschi talked about the growth both teams made by working together.

"It was a huge adjustment for not only cheer, but dance as well. On Fridays, all of us were in the gym together. Our fight songs weren't even the same, so we had to take choreography from dance and cheer, find a happy medium and recreate the entire fight song, which for a university should be one and the same, but it was not even remotely similar. So we went from having nothing similar to winning a national championship together, and it was incredible," she said.

Dance Head Coach Kristen Greto assured the groups were fully confident in their abilities to work together and make it happen in their first competition together.

"It was a blessing in disguise. Coach TJ and I just hit it off right away. She came to me with the idea, she knew about this category. It was really awesome to see it all come to life.

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Lunar New Year massacre devastates Southern California

BY JENNA MELMAN

STAFF WRITER

Eleven Asian American seniors were killed, and nine were injured as a result of a shooting at Star Ballroom Dance Studio in Monterey Park, Calif. The shooting took place on Saturday, Jan 21. at a Lunar New Year's Eve celebration.

At around 10:22 p.m. on Saturday, the shooter opened fire inside of Star Ballroom Dance Studio, less than a block from where a Lunar New Year festival was held. There were 100,00 attendees at the park for the festival, but the shooter did not come for them.

While the shooting was initially thought to be an act of xenophobia, it has been revealed that the gunman himself was Asian. He was an unstable 72 year-old man named Huu Can

Tran who most likely opened fire thinking of his ex-wife. He later killed himself with his own self-made gun at a SWAT scene.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was called earlier on to find and identify the subject.

About a half an hour after the attack, the shooter went into another ballroom studio, Lai Lai Ballroom and Studio in nearby Alhambra. He went with the intent to kill more people, but was disarmed by police.

On Sunday at about 10:20 a.m, police saw a white cargo van in Torrance, a city south of Monterey Park, and heard a single gunshot. They found Tran inside, dead from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Tran was a very troubled

man, and that could've led to violence. He had no close friends or family, and was a landlord. A former tenant shared that Tran "always complained that instructors were speaking evil about him or trying to do something bad about him. I'm not quite sure if those things were true, but he always complained. He thought those instructors (at the Star Ballroom Dance Studio) were not friendly to him, and tried to sort of expel him from the group."

However, his clearest memory of Tran was waking up 15 years ago to the sounds of Tran and a woman he knew only by sight arguing in the street.

"You could see the plates flying, the plates were crashing into the street, and he was yelling at her." *continued on page 3*

Horoscope

what do the stars have in store for you?

Aries

March 21 – April 19

It's time to let go of power within your relationships. Although you bring excitement to all situations, be wary of people feeling the need to distance themselves due to your heavy energy. When it comes to your career path, you will be experiencing satisfaction if you continue with what you're doing.

Cancer

June 21 – July 22

Soon, Cancer, there will be many difficult changes for you. This will be a transitory period in the most groundbreaking sense. You will come to realize that your past beliefs are no longer relevant, and you will have to reevaluate your perceptions. Even though it's hard, continue to stay positive through this.

Libra

September 23 – October 22

You have been experiencing a deep dissatisfaction with the way you're living your life. In February, you will come to terms with this and take the transitory steps to change it. This may mean leaving toxic relationships/friendships, choosing peace over money, or changing your major. Leave what's familiar.

Capricorn

December 22 – January 19

Do you have a clear vision of your life path? Tap into your higher learning and higher power. You may learn that your vision is not as clear as you thought, and it's time to re-evaluate. Or you may learn that you were right all along, and you will gain more clarity on ways to achieve this vision.

Taurus

April 20 – May 20

February will be a month of setting good habits and focusing solely on big goals, Taurus. For success in any area of life, you must lay down your foundations. Keeping focus and staying consistent, no matter how hard or boring, is the key to achieving those long-term goals. Keep going!

Leo

July 23 – August 22

You have been on a long, tumultuous emotional journey. In February, you will find some closure after many ups and downs you've been dealing with. Maybe you are struggling to find purpose. You will find comfort again. In terms of work and finances, success and positivity is coming your way soon.

Scorpio

October 23 – November 21

Very soon you will have a breakthrough moment, Scorpio. Don't overthink or over-analyze any situations in your life, because with due time you will know the truth. What's done in the darkness always comes to light. Honest communication is key right now. Be truthful as well.

Aquarius

January 20 – February 18

Here is your reminder that life will always be cyclical, Aquarius. Life comes with just as much good as bad. If you are in a negative period right now, have faith that you will move upwards soon. If you are in a great period, remember to never take it for granted. Take change as a learning experience.

Gemini

May 21 – June 20

Throughout the month of February and beyond, you're going to have a lot of tough choices to make. Whether it's in the realm of relationships, school opportunities, or career opportunities, you're going to feel stuck between many different options. It's important to just make a decision and stick with it.

Virgo

August 23 – September 22

You're going to feel very motivated to accomplish tasks and live your life to the fullest. You may have travel opportunities soon (and you should take them). Balance your energy, ambition and enthusiasm with realistic views. Your actions do have consequences. Watch for burnout.

Sagittarius

November 22 – December 21

February is the month to get in touch with your femininity. You should be able to express this side of yourself. Connect with the beauty that surrounds you, and you will find that peace and happiness comes naturally. Remember to feel comfortable, take care of yourself, tap into creativity, and be sensual.

Pisces

February 19 – March 20

Pisces, you need to rest. Maybe you are burning yourself out, or maybe you are going through a lot. Either way, be sure to take care of yourself and rest in the ways you need to. Continuing to push could result negatively for you. Strength and clarity will come in a quiet environment away from everything.

By Emma Thibodeau

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"You could see the plates flying, the plates were crashing into the street, and he was yelling at her."

It's safe to say Tran was a cautionary individual, and violent. Every weekend, Tran could be seen coming out of his house dressed in his finest clothing. He was always going out to dance," the tenant said. "Otherwise, we didn't see him much."

His ex-wife of 40 years danced too and they would bump into each other sometimes. Tran contacted the Hemet, Calif. Police Dept. this month, alleging his family tried to poison him 10 to 20 years ago. The allegation was never investigated, police said, because Tran never presented any proof to back up his claims. Tran made his own rifle, granting him the power to destroy life as an at-risk individual. Authorities said they also discovered "hundreds of rounds" of ammunition, to feed a magazine-fed assault-style pistol. This shooting was the nation's fifth mass killing so far in 2023. There's the snowballing effect of copycat shootings, which inspires young men to follow in other shooters' footsteps.

"Before, if you wanted to find other people to celebrate mass shootings with, that was pretty difficult. But now, you can find entire online communities," Jonathan Metzl said.

Other students feel similarly to Metzl.

"Gun control needs to be regulated. There was even a case of a dog that killed his own

owner. There was a rifle in the backseat with the safety off of the rifle, the dog stepped on it and that was the end of it... we should follow in the example of so many other countries with stricter gun laws," sophomore nursing major Olivia said.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, people of Asian descent have been targets of hate crimes. Former President Donald Trump came under scrutiny when he used the term "Chinese virus."

Some specific incidents by civilians include: A truck driver throwing and spilling a fast food drink on the back of an unassuming Asian woman. In another, an individual told an Asian-American man waiting for a bus "You're infected China boy, you need to get off the train" and then attempted to pull the man out of his seat. A 22-year-old white man killed eight people including six Asian-American women in a spa in Atlanta, Ga. last year. Michelle Alyssa Go was pushed to death in front of a subway train in New York. Christina Yuna Lee was followed and killed in her home. GuiYing Ma died after being bludgeoned by a rock, and there was a brutal beating of an unnamed 67-year-old Filipino grandmother.

83 percent of Asian American parents are concerned that their children may be bullied because of their race or ethnicity.

Yi Yan, a junior and musical theatre major from Hong Kong shared that "It's terrifying to me because I'm not used to the gunshots, in my country we can't use guns, so it's scary that it's

so near me right now (shootings in America) and it is especially terrifying because it's in the Asian community, and it's been said to be safe to be in the community with your own people around you. I'm scared because the safe place is no longer safe."

Starr, a student at Post, said "It's very concerning how there are so many mass shootings, like you have to now worry about where you're going, is it safe....and the stereotype of Chinese people bringing COVID is completely unfounded."

Monterey Park council member Thomas Wong, who represents the district where the shooting took place, said his community was shocked, saddened and "on edge."

"Instead of celebrating and bringing family together to look forward to a hopeful and prosperous new year, we're starting it off with a senseless tragedy," Wong told NPR.

A massive memorial is expanding outside the dance studio, the community is really coming together to mourn, pay the dead proper respects and take care of the bereft families of the victims. At a memorial held on Monday each dead dancer had an arch erected to honor their memory. These dancers were parents and grandparents, dancers and dreamers. Their names will live on.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), FBI and the Los Angeles District Attorney's office are still looking into the attack.

Students adjust to using Brightspace

BY EMMA ROBINSON

CO EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As the spring 2023 semester began, many students noticed a change in online learning platform for some of their classes. LIU began the transition from Blackboard to Brightspace for some courses, and will fully transition by fall 2023.

LIU information technology (IT) describes Brightspace on their website as reliable and accessible for both students and professors alike.

While the two platforms are similar, students dislike the sudden transition without notification from the university or IT department.

"I truly don't mind [Brightspace] that much, but I wish students were sent some sort of instructions and tips on how to use it," sophomore business administration major Emily Anderson said. "I had no idea we were even switching over until I walked into my first class that semester. I had thought some of my professors just hadn't posted a syllabus yet, but turns out they had- on a completely different platform. I thought most professors understood how Blackboard works, so I'm curious why LIU wants to change now."

Students do not like the transition occurring

throughout the semesters rather than all at once between school years.

"I think we should have transitioned between academic years (spring-fall) because it would have given everyone more time to adjust and learn the ins and outs of the new system," Anderson said. "I don't think this was the worst time to switch, but it wasn't the best, either."

Professors are also getting used to using Brightspace as their classes begin, and the transition has not been seamless.

"I've noticed a lot of professors aren't sure how to streamline the look of their classes. I've seen a lot of empty files, example paragraphs, and repeatedly posted things," Anderson said. "On my end, I've noticed, unless you know the name of the app, the website itself doesn't give you notifications for things being posted or homework being due."

Brightspace also has a class progress dashboard so that professors can compare each student's performance in the course.

Anderson recalled one of her professors struggling with the new website the first week of classes.

"I know one of my professors was confused and unable to take attendance the first day

because he couldn't find where he uploaded the roster, and another new professor needed help just to log in," she said. "I hope it's easier for them to use because I have had teachers run into issues with Blackboard before as well."

While students aren't aware of all the different features Brightspace has that Blackboard doesn't have, a calendar feature and more efficient mobile app, called Brightspace Pulse, are available.

"I think it's a bit more intuitive compared to Blackboard, but very similar," Anderson said. "I haven't noticed any new or changed features, just a different layout."

The transition of some classes being administered on Blackboard and some administered on Brightspace has caused annoyance for some students.

"I would rather all my classes be on one platform," junior digital marketing major Jessica Morse said. "I don't like having to switch back and forth between Blackboard and Brightspace."

Overall, students and professors are becoming accustomed to the format of Brightspace and how to use it as the transition moves towards completion.

Alec Baldwin charged with involuntary manslaughter

BY ALIYA COUILLARD

STAFF WRITER

Actor Alec Baldwin is being charged with two counts of involuntary manslaughter for his role in the death of Cinematographer Halyna Hutchins on Oct. 21, 2021.

During an unscheduled rehearsal on the set of the movie “Rust,” Hutchins instructed Baldwin to aim the prop gun he was holding at the camera. While Baldwin was doing so, the gun independently, according to him, fired, killing Hutchins and injuring Film Director Joel Souza.

Before any of this occurred, the gun was checked by the props assistant and Armorer Hannah Gutierrez-Reed. She examined the gun, which held what she believed to be fake bullets that contained no live ammunition. She was also charged with two counts of involuntary manslaughter.

After examining the gun, Gutierrez-Reed handed it over to Assistant Director and Production Safety Coordinator David Hall. She claims that she intended to check the gun again, as safety protocols call for, however, Hall never called her back to check it before they began their unscheduled rehearsal. Hall pleaded guilty to negligence in order to not face trial.

Sophomore nursing major Nozila Djavvarova expressed her thoughts on what she views as the unjust nature of the charges.

“I don’t think [the charges] are fair because

he didn’t know and he was under the assumption that it wasn’t loaded,” Djavvarova said.

Other students find themselves to be conflicted due to the complexity of the case.

“I think it’s a complicated case,” sophomore data analytics and finance major Christian Gonzalez said. “There was no way of him knowing that he would kill someone, even if he did pull the trigger, he had no idea there were actually bullets in there. He thought that everyone had done their job right.”

Involuntary manslaughter is defined as an unintentional killing that results either from recklessness or criminal negligence, and Gonzalez believes that no one is above the law.

“I guess yes. He would be guilty because it was involuntary,” he stated.

Hutchins’ family filed a lawsuit against Baldwin, which has since been settled, for unsafely handling a weapon.

Freshman accounting major Marcello Passante does not necessarily agree with the lawsuit.

“I mean yes, [they were right in filing] because he did commit it, but I can’t really see how valid it could be because he was set up. Nothing is supposed to come out of a prop gun when you shoot it,” he said.

Djavvarova puts herself in the shoes of Hutchins’ family, but also has similar opinions to Passante.

“It was right on their part. I think if I was the family I would also do that as well, but I do think that it’s wrong he’s in trouble because

he didn’t know that [the gun] was loaded and thought it was a prop, so I feel like it wasn’t justifiable,” she said.

However, students did agree with the charges placed on Gutierrez-Reed.

“She said the bullets were blanks and they weren’t blanks so yes, I also believe that she is guilty,” Gonzalez said, but not without mentioning Hall’s negligence for not calling Gutierrez-Reed back to examine the prop.

Passante shares similar opinions, but also theorizes a bit.

“It could have been swapped out potentially. If she did check it and didn’t thoroughly examine it then 100 percent she deserves it, but it really depends on what actually happened,” he expressed.

One of the questions that has yet to be answered is how did real ammunition get on a film set.

“I feel like they should look into it more before they charge,” Gonzalez commented about this unanswered question. “Someone needs to go to jail, but not someone who did it by accident.”

Passante feels that whoever let live ammunition on set should be charged.

“If that didn’t happen, then nothing else would have happened,” he explained.

There are some big holes in this case and further investigation may be necessary.

The charges brought against Baldwin and Gutierrez-Reed hold a potential prison sentence of between 18 months and five years.

Students react to the growing possibility of a nationwide TikTok ban

BY SAMANTHA SCARLATOS

STAFF WRITER

TikTok can be considered the app of the century. Whether a user or not, there’s no doubt almost everyone has seen a video or two. Much like the popular social media platform from 2017, Musical.ly, it allows anyone to post up to three minutes of footage, which can be made either private to followers only, or public. This app has 100 million users in the United States alone.

Within the last few years, consideration of banning TikTok has been growing stronger from the U.S. government because of its links to the Chinese government. This is because the parent company, ByteDance, collects and holds the data users provide. Many people are worried about China’s ability to gain access to American data through this software that they own.

It is suspected that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) can control what content U.S. users see by filtering out things that “expose” certain countries. Poor treatment and harsh conditions of people in places that need help are being blocked from American accounts.

Aside from this, the CCP can access Americans’ personal information.

Freshman business major Ava Schlapa uses TikTok and has a public account. She has concerns about the safety of her data on the app.

However, most people do not pay attention to the risks we face when adding something to their phones. Most people do not thoroughly read the terms and conditions beforehand, and some do not review them at all.

“I don’t read the terms and conditions. I just scroll and agree,” Schlapa said.

If the government decides to ban the app from U.S. devices, that means some users may struggle financially, since their main source of income is from creating TikTok content.

“It would greatly impact those who make money off the app and they would need to seek other options,” Schlapa said.

During former President Donald Trump’s last moments in office, the clock was ticking for TikTok’s ownership to be handed over to the U.S. government, but then his term ended. President Joe Biden has enforced security laws against certain apps. It has been banned on federal devices for some time now, and even public universities and schools are

banning the app on school devices and WiFi networks.

Freshman nutrition major Mia Colangelo is also an active user of TikTok, having a public account. She disagrees with the measures being taken to control usage of the app.

“I don’t think it’s fair for universities to ban TikTok because it’s either the whole U.S. that bans it, or not. You can’t just exclude certain people from the app,” Colangelo said.

Many apps collect data from users to help companies produce more products that’ll retrieve even more data. There is no way to escape the collection of data besides avoiding the app entirely, which many privacy activists are aware of.

Schlapa speculates on ways users can regain control over their privacy while using social media.

“We could minimize our usage of the app, and maybe there’s a way to make international versions of the app, like the United States’ owned TikTok,” she said.

Privacy and security are an everlasting concern for users of social media platforms such as TikTok.

Second season of “Ginny and Georgia” released

BY ALYSSA SPAGNA

STAFF WRITER

Netflix’s hit show “Ginny and Georgia” is a coming of age teen drama that is just bursting with laughs, cries and plot twists. Netflix finally came out with a second season that was long-awaited by fans in Jan. 2023. The first season came out in early 2021. At the end of season one, the main character Ginny and her little brother Austin were seen fleeing from their new home in Wellsbury after finding out just how dangerous their mother—Georgia—was capable of being. Fans of the show were eager to find out what could possibly happen next. This series has rave reviews, some of which come from students here at Post.

Junior veterinary technician major Kaitlyn Cucolo was absolutely enthralled with season two of the show and watched all 10 episodes in five days.

“I was super excited for season two,” Cucolo said. “I’ve been waiting for almost two years for it to come back, and when it did, I had to start it immediately.”

This show teaches many valuable lessons to young teens and dives into topics not normally seen in a show that is portrayed as a comedy. It touches on self harm, depression, anxiety, abuse and even murder.

“Between Ginny’s self harm, Georgia’s secret past and all of the drama between MANG, Ginny’s friend group, it is definitely something to watch,” Cucolo said.

Plot twists are a huge component of this

series, which is part of what makes it so addicting to watch. Viewers never know what could happen next. In the first season, viewers never see Austin’s father, Gil, who is in jail for embezzlement. This season, they finally meet him and he is nowhere near the father figure Austin has been searching for.

Fans of the show were shocked by this revelation.

“The biggest plot twist for me was when Austin’s dad came back and was threatening Georgia. He is insane and seeing the flashback episodes of him abusing her and controlling her was horrible,” Cucolo said.

Junior fashion merchandising major Kayla Acevedo was also shocked by some of the plot twists in this season.

“I think the biggest plot twist was the part when Georgia essentially kills Cynthia’s husband. I was completely in shock because I never expected her to do that,” she said.

While some episodes deal with heavier topics, the writers try to keep the rest of the content lighthearted.

“My favorite part of the season was probably seeing Ginny so vulnerable with her dad. I feel like we don’t see daughters being vulnerable with their dads enough, so I thought that was beautiful,” Cucolo said.

Acevedo shared her appreciation for the depiction of Ginny and her mother’s relationship.

“My favorite part was when they had the bachelorette party for Georgia in the cafe,” Acevedo said.

This scene was especially charming because

Ginny was showing her appreciation for her mother Georgia, even though they’re going through tough times as a family.

Fans’ love for the show begs the question of whether there will be a third season. Some are certain there will be.

“I think the show definitely progressed and will be a good segue into the third season. There is still a lot to explore but I think we were able to find out a lot more important information. I believe Ginny and Georgia will be renewed for a third season because many people are interested in the show and it ended on a cliffhanger. That makes people want to see more,” Acevedo said.

Some fans are just hopeful they’ll get to see more of these characters they’ve grown to love and want to see them at their best.

“Fingers crossed this show is renewed. I would like to see Ginny and Marcus back together, Ginny moving in with her dad full-time and Austin staying with Georgia’s new husband Paul. I would also like to hear Georgia’s inner thoughts on what happened at her and Paul’s wedding,” Cucolo said.

Fans of the show strongly recommend watching “Ginny and Georgia.”

“I would recommend this show to others by saying that it is very heartfelt, binge worthy and it keeps you on your toes,” Cucolo said.

“It’s a coming of age show with a dark twist. I would and have recommended ‘Ginny and Georgia’ to many people,” Acevedo said.

Both seasons of “Ginny and Georgia” can now be streamed on Netflix.

Reintroducing the SWSA club to campus

BY GRACE PARK

STAFF WRITER

The Social Work Student Association (SWSA) is an organization on campus that helps students by providing information for volunteer and community service opportunities. The SWSA also assists students with navigating the challenges that come with being a social work major.

The club takes part in a variety of volunteer activities. These events range from toy drives, toiletry drives, providing mental health resources and more.

“The work towards being a social worker is a lot of information to learn so my goal and purpose is to be that support for all of these students by educating them, providing them with resources, giving them tips and tricks and connections, how to do things and where to go and who to talk to,” president of SWSA Arly Cisneros said.

SWSA aims to be a network for students that want to volunteer.

“The club takes pride in providing resources to our club members about volun-

teer opportunities and service events,” vice president of SWSA Lauren Barrett said. “We want to connect the club members with outside resources and give back to those in need.”

The club had been inactive in previous years, so Cisneros sought to revive it in 2022 with support from faculty advisor Dr. Gifford and Promise student clubs and organizations coordinator Stephanie Lowe.

“The most memorable thing that has the biggest impact was being able to get this club started again and being recognized by the school and having helped agencies,” Cisneros said.

Although the SWSA is primarily focused on students majoring in social work, many events are also open to the general public.

The SWSA will hold its second Narcan training meeting on Zoom on Monday, Jan. 30, from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

When a similar event was held the previous year, the SWSA helped approximately 200 individuals get certified in the distribution of Narcan, a nasal spray used to counteract or lessen the effects of opi-

oids.

“We had so many people that wanted to do it for this semester that we opened up to the public - everyone on Long Island, not just LIU students and staff,” Cisneros said.

“Narcan training is important because it could potentially save a life. I feel with every going on regarding overdose and drug use lately, it is something that can come in handy at any given moment. I think it’s important for people to get certified even if they are not involved in social work because the more of us that are certified, the more lives we could potentially save,” Barrett said.

After training, participants will be given a two year certification card and a Narcan kit.

The SWSA club will hold more social work related events throughout the semester. The club meets weekly on Tuesday nights, starting Feb. 7, at 7 p.m. on Zoom.

To join SWSA or learn more about their upcoming events, follow them on Instagram @liu_swsa or their Facebook page LIU Post Social Work Department.

The Blockchain revolution



Screenshot of NFT

BY EMMA ROBINSON

CO-EDITOR IN CHIEF

Interest in blockchain, the technology that underlies the cryptocurrency industry, has grown significantly in the last few years, and what was once considered a concept directed towards the finance industry is now being used extensively around the world.

Blockchain is a shared, immutable ledger that enables the recording of transactions and tracking of assets in a business network. The development of blockchain has become an important tool to provide users with a high-tech method of validating data that cannot be edited or changed. Those who validate the transaction – “proof of work” – are rewarded with a token, for example a bitcoin.

A class for business, finance, accounting and marketing students, taught by professor Manoj Dalvi, in fall 2022 explored the use of blockchain as a ledger by creating an NFT. Students in Dalvi’s class became immersed in researching and applying concepts of this technology to learn how the future of technology and business will change.

Non-fungible tokens (NFTs) are digital assets that have an authentic certificate. They use the blockchain network for verification of ownership. Examples of NFTs include art, music and games.

“An NFT, put simply, is a digital asset that can’t be copied,” senior finance major Luke Gifford said. “For example, if you upload an image and make it into an NFT, you can sell that image to one person and that one person can say they are the only owner. And if someone were to take a screenshot of that image, they have a screenshot, but not the ownership of the artwork.”

NFTs were first created around 2013 when people began trading digital assets other than Bitcoin on the Bitcoin blockchain. In 2022, the NFT market generated approximately \$24.7 billion worth of organic trading volume.

“With the introduction of NFTs and cryptocurrency, blockchain creates a virtual database and collective proof of ownership that provides. It will eliminate a lot of the issues and logistics of, let’s say having a paper

deed to a house or something of that regard,” senior finance major Jesse Wells said. “Let’s say your driver’s license gets lost. It’s a lot of steps to get that back. However, if you put it on Blockchain, you can show that you own it and that it’s yours without having to go through those extra verification methods ... I think that’s why this will be a big part of our future.”

Dalvi had his class collaborate with professor Patrick Aievoli’s digital industries class to create the design and storyboard of the NFT. Professor Rich De Rosso created the video and animation with his design program for the NFT, which is formatted like a GIF.

“Ironically, I had just done my LIU podcast on NFTs and Crypto about six months before Dalvi came to me with this request,” Aievoli said. “NFTs are basically a digital provenance for artwork. Where in the analog world provenance is a sheet of paper that details the ownership of a piece of art, now NFTs and Blockchain are that path to digital validity.”

Aievoli’s class focuses on experiential learning, for example, creating digital content for non-profits like Habitat for Humanity and the Tesla Science Center at Wardencliff, and so taking on creating a design that will become an NFT further diversified the portfolios of the students in the class.

Dalvi noted that blockchain is being used increasingly worldwide.

“For example, title to agricultural land in India is being put on blockchain; and smart contracts are being used to direct government assistance to farmers when there is a drought,” Dalvi said. “If you buy salad, or you buy a bunch of bananas, you will know exactly what farm it has come from because of blockchain.”

Part of why NFTs have become so relevant is the movement for more control over online experiences and increased security through blockchain technology. As the technology develops and society popularizes using blockchain, it may become common practice to list documents, artifacts and more online. As blockchain technology becomes more accessible, it can have an even bigger influence in different areas of the economy for many years.

“Financial assets are changing and people are trying to stay on top of and in front of the wave to get traction of these concepts,” senior finance major Jack Adams commented. “NFTs were something that was very new, but we started to see people that were essentially nobodies making serious money. There’s an individual known as Beeple who has sold a compilation of his artwork for \$69 million because someone wanted it and paid that much for it. So once that bombshell hit the news, people started saying “well, I want

to do that.” And people started to understand it ... I think people making money on it is driving the social aspects of it ... It’s something that students in our business program should really get a grasp on. We should understand it and be ahead of the curve.”

Dalvi’s class spent the semester working on creating their NFT and researching how to list it online to sell. The students that worked on creating the NFT praised the experience because of the practicality and importance of what they learned.

“The process was quite simple in practice, it took a lot of logistics to get through,” Adams said. “There were three major steps. After getting approval of any photos that we would take on campus and approval of photos we could use from the marketing department, we handed off what our plans and ideas to the graphic design department and Pat Aievoli had his students make up a design for us. As this was happening, our class researched what it would be like to list this NFT on a marketplace for sale. We started with gathering data and information on which marketplaces were best and what they differ in and which kind of currency we wanted to accept for payment. When the NFT was produced, we listed it on a marketplace called “Rarible.” It’s similar to making an eBay ad. There’s a picture, there’s a description, there’s a title, and it’s for sale.”

For Dalvi, the interdisciplinary approach to this project is the most important aspect because his students were able to diversify and strengthen their knowledge of blockchain and other technologies that are becoming increasingly relevant. By being exposed to NFTs, Dalvi’s class learned about so many cross sections, including Web 3.0, blockchain and cryptocurrencies.

“There can be courses [outside of finance], like history and fashion merchandising, that can be constructed to explain how the latest technology can be used in that particular field,” Dalvi said. “For example, if an author wants to write a book, instead of going to a publisher to get it published, the author can just put it up as an NFT and say only 100 people can read it. The entire system is changing as we move to Web 3.0, a peer to peer system, and students should be aware of the opportunities it will create for them as blockchain and smart contracts are widely adopted and accepted.”

Blockchain is a major disruptor, disrupting not only the financial services industry, but other industries all over the world. Blockchain is enhancing the value chain. As this technology transforms society on a global scale, it is essential for individuals to learn how to integrate this new system into their fields of work and life, as the future progresses towards digitalization for every discipline.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY RICH SIRIO
@BELLABEAUTYPHOTOGRAPHY



Arizona Senator sets up the Grand Canyon state for an interesting 2024 Senate race

BY ALEXANDER MOUSA
CO-EDITOR IN CHIEF

In the 2018 midterm elections, Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (I-Ariz.), then a congresswoman, pulled off an upset win in the race for an open U.S. Senate seat in Arizona, a state that had not sent a Democrat to the Senate since 1988. Sinema, who once was a left-wing, self-described socialist, ran on a platform of moderate democratic policies.

At the time, Arizona was seen as a red state. Democrats only had won a presidential election there once in modern history, and statewide races typically favored Republicans. Sinema ran her campaign on being an “independent voice” for Arizona in Congress. This strategy worked, as Sinema defeated her challenger, then Rep. Martha McSally (R-Ariz.), 50 percent to 47.6 percent.

As Sinema entered the Senate in 2019, Democrats were in the minority. She voted in line with Democrats most of the time, but after the 2020 election gave Democrats a majority of 50-50, with Vice President Kamala Harris (D) breaking the tie,

Sinema became a very powerful member of the Senate, as she voted against Democrats position on some legislation, causing the legislation to not pass. A notable, and very scrutinized example of this, was Sinema voting against a \$15 minimum wage.

After receiving backlash from many of her Democratic colleagues, Sinema announced in December that she would be leaving the Democratic party, and registering as an Independent. Sinema is now the third independent member of the Senate, joining Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Sen. Angus King (I-ME).

Sinema has been facing a potential primary challenge for her 2024 re-election. Rep Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.) had been considering a run for the Senate seat. Many pundits pointed out that due to Sinema’s low approval rating, she would lose a primary. A poll by Data for Progress showed that among Democratic primary voters in Arizona, Sinema had a 19 percent approval rating. Sen. Mark Kelly (D-Ariz.), the state’s other senator. Had an 83 percent approval rating. The

disparity between these numbers put Sinema in trouble, and likely pushed her to run as an Independent in 2024 instead.

Sinema may be trying to do what former Sen. Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) did when he lost his Democratic primary in 2006, and then later won the General election as an Independent. Connecticut, however, is a smaller state, and made this win easier.

If Sinema does run as an Independent, she could risk splitting up the Democratic vote, and handing Republicans an easy victory. This is a concern that many Democrats have raised, however polling has shown that Sinema may not make much of a difference. A recent poll showed that a race between Ruben Gallego (D) and Kari Lake (R), would have the candidates one point apart with or without Sinema.

Time will tell if Sen. Sinema can pull off this win. Arizona has a large number of Independent voters, and these voters could deliver a Senator with their party title a win.

Valentine's Day Crossword Puzzle

Fit each word in the box into the puzzle below. There is only one correct place for each word.

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roses	romance	sweet
date	hugging	flower
card	candy	love
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Giants shock football world with impressive season

BY BRADY CAMPBELL

STAFF WRITER



The New York Giants went well beyond expectations this year, finishing 9-7-1 in the regular season, followed by their first playoff win since the 2011-12 season. Entering the 2022 National Football League (NFL) season, the Giants were at the bottom of the barrel. The franchise hasn't had a winning season since 2016, when they finished 11-5, before falling in the Wild Card round to the Green Bay Packers.

Their record from 2017-21 was tied with the New York Jets for a league-worst 22-59. In that period, the team went through turmoil in the front office, coaching and team. When General Manager Joe Schoen and Head Coach Brian Daboll were hired following their time in the Buffalo Bills organization, the fanbase was cautiously optimistic.

The 2022 NFL Draft marked the beginning of the new regime, and the team selected defensive end Kayvon Thibodeaux and offensive tackle Evan Neal with the fifth and seventh overall picks respectively. Even with a good draft class, many fans tempered their expectations.

Junior broadcasting major Brendan Kaufman was caught off guard by the Giants' fast start.

"I did not expect them to win many games. I thought that they would be picking high in the draft," he said.

While Kaufman was not expecting much from the team, junior broadcasting major Perry Balsamo was more optimistic.

"The expectations going into this season were a little bit better than the previous years," Balsamo said. "I don't think anybody really expected them to have a winning record."

Questions still surround quarterback Daniel Jones and running back Saquon Barkley heading into the 2022-23 season. Both have been injured for portions of their young careers, and when they have played, they have not been explosive. All eyes were

on them as they both are set to become free agents during the 2023 offseason. Facing a lot of pressure from the media going into the season, both of them responded with the best seasons of their career.

Jones threw for a career-high 3,205 passing yards and 15 touchdowns, the second most in his career after his rookie season in 2019. Meanwhile, Barkley had a career high in rushing-yards this season with 1,312, while also scoring 10 touchdowns, the second-most since his rookie season in 2018.

Kaufman believes the Giants should resign both of their offensive weapons.

"They should definitely bring them back, but I don't think they should be giving Daniel Jones Lamar [Jackson] money. He should be getting more of a Derek Carr type of contract," Kaufman said. "For Saquon, I don't know what they should give him because the second contract for running backs is always a bit shaky."

After an ugly ending to the season when the Giants fell to the Philadelphia Eagles 38-7, some began to question their value to the team once again. However, with an unexpected playoff berth and victory, this put the team ahead of schedule in their rebuild.

Balsamo believes in the culture the new regime has instilled hope for next season.

"Daniel Jones and Saquon Barkley are the heart of the team right now. Hopefully, they stick with the team because the organization seems to be focused on them," he said. "When healthy, both of them can perform. We have seen it this season, and I think it was enough to influence the front office."

Both Balsamo and Kaufman believe that the new faces brought in will help bring the franchise back to a high standard of football.

"They have been able to win games," Balsamo said. "They played more aggressively this year than they have in the past. Whether it's going for it on fourth down or going for a two-point conversion, at least they are showing that they actually want to win games."

Though this is a great start to the rebuild, the Giants still have a lot of holes to fill. Despite lacking talent in many areas, the Giants were able to overcome that in their 31-24 Wild Card win against the Minnesota Vikings. However, these holes were displayed in the blowout loss to the Eagles a week later.

Kaufman believes that finding more depth will help the Giants become constant contenders for years to come.

"They have an okay offensive line, but they need more depth. They should probably go for a weapon or a tackle in the draft or free agency," he said. Their defense has been all right, but realistically, they need more talent."

Balsamo put an emphasis on being able to win games against their division rivals.

"During the regular season, they didn't beat the Eagles or Cowboys once, and that definitely hurt them later on, especially mentally in the playoff game with the Eagles," he said.

On Wednesday, Jan. 25, the NFL announced the nominees for their yearly awards. Brian Daboll was nominated for the Coach of the Year award, given to the coach that brings the most out of his team.

Many believed throughout the season that Daboll was a favorite for the award, and that still holds. The other two coaches nominated, Kyle Shanahan of the San Francisco 49ers and Doug Pederson of the Jacksonville Jaguars, have also had incredible seasons with their teams.

Kaufman feels that any of them could win, but Daboll should be the favorite.

"Daboll should probably win. If not him, then Shanahan. I think they both had excellent leadership throughout the season," Kaufman said.

Balsamo agrees, as he has a clear hopes for his favorite team's head coach.

"Daboll should definitely win. With the expectations coming into this season for the Giants, he completely blew it out of the water and shattered everyone's expectations," he said. "I don't think anybody thought that they were going to make the playoffs and even advance through the Wild Card."

Barkley was nominated for the Comeback Player of the Year award, given to the player that has the best season after returning from injury or a benching.

Both Kaufman and Balsamo could see Barkley winning the award, but believe it should go to Seattle Seahawks quarterback Geno Smith.

"[Barkley] didn't have that bad of a season last year, and he was only hurt for a little while, so I don't think that's worthy of winning. Plus, there is a much better candidate in Seattle right now," Kaufman said.

Balsamo added, "I know he has dealt with injury in the past, but if you're going to win the award, I feel like you have to have a monster gap between the one season to the next in terms of production. He performed great this year, but I don't think he should win."

No matter what expectations people have, the NFL has proved time and time again that anything can happen from one season to the next. If any team proved that this season, it was the Giants. After coming back to upset teams like Tennessee, Green Bay and Baltimore, they were finally starting to turn heads. Although it will still take time for them to get the complete respect and trust of the media, the league and most importantly, the fans, they have shown the league that they could be a team to be reckoned with in future seasons.

Coach Strickland leads transitional period for Men's Basketball

BY JOE FRESCOTT

ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Following a promising 2021-22 campaign that saw the Sharks place among the top three in the Northeast Conference (NEC), the LIU Men's Basketball team underwent major changes prior to the 2022-23 season.

It started with the coaching staff, as after the departure of Head Coach Derek Kellogg, the Sharks found their replacement in NBA veteran and local basketball legend Rod Strickland.

Strickland, who was named the 15th Men's Basketball Coach in LIU's Division 1 history on June 30, 2022, played 17 seasons in the NBA, including two years with the Knicks. His 7987 career assists rank 13th all-time in the NBA. Following his retirement from the NBA in 2005, Strickland worked in various administrative roles in collegiate basketball. Before joining LIU, Strickland served as the program director of recruitment for team Ignite of the NBA G-League for the past four years.

Strickland spoke with Sports Co-Editor of the Seawanhaka Joseph Simile about what led him to take the Head Coach position.

"It's a great opportunity, I've never been a Head Coach before, and it's always been in the back of my mind. Obviously, being in Brooklyn, with me being from New York is a big piece in the puzzle," Strickland said. "Having the opportunity to coach in my hometown, being around family and friends, I have a lot of relationships here in New York, so it's comfortable. It just felt right."

When transitioning to LIU, Coach Strickland brought along three assistant coaches with a plethora of experience: Chris Thomas, Shasha Brown and Maurice Hicks.

With only one returning starter, this year's roster has relied on its strong freshman class and transfer student-athletes.

With sophomores Marko Maletic and Andre Washington leading the team in scoring, redshirt sophomore Jacob Johnson has proven to be the most complete student-athlete on this young Sharks roster. In an interview with WCWP, the 6'5" guard recalls his recruiting experience.

"I was originally recruited by Coach Kellogg. When Coach Strickland came in, I was leaving my other school a little late, and he gave me a call. He gave me a chance to show what kind of player I can

be," Johnson said. "Luckily, we got a great coach in Coach Strickland who called me, talked to the assistant coaches, and they instilled in me that they believe in my game."

The University of Missouri-Kansas City transfer has lived up to the expectations thus far, averaging 11.0 points per game, third most on the team, along with a team-leading 5.8 rebounds per game.

Johnson isn't the only underclassman that has stepped up this season, as freshman Guard R.J. Greene has also solidified himself as a vital part of Coach Strickland's rotation. Averaging 8.1 points, 3.7 assists, and 1.1 steals per game, the Bronx native has shined in his first season at LIU.

With the duo finding success, Johnson credits the coaching staff for their ability to thrive so far this season.

"It is super special. It goes to the way that both of us, me and RJ [Greene], are being used on the floor. It has been really good. We get to show different aspects of our game and show why we are meant to be here," he said.

The Sharks started their season with eight of their twelve non-conference matchups on the road. Facing ranked opponents such as the former No.1 team in the country, the UConn Huskies, to playing in front of over 12,000 people at the Fiserv Forum Arena, this young program had its work cut out for them in the early part of their season, as they started the year 2-10 in non-conference action.

Despite the team's early struggles, Greene cherished the experience that these tough road opponents provided.

"It was crazy. I dreamed of playing at UCONN, Marquette, and St. John's, which was packed. You can barely hear what your coaches are saying," Greene said. "It was a great atmosphere."

The pinnacle of the Sharks' experience this season came just over a month ago, on Dec. 29, 2022, when they made their long-awaited return to the Barclays Center to face the team that knocked them out of the NEC tournament last season, the Wagner Seahawks. A tradition that spans 10 years, LIU returned to host a conference rival at the home of the Brooklyn Nets after a two-year layoff due to the pandemic.

Although they would fall short in their semi-finals rematch, Johnson felt it was an unforgettable experience.

"It has been really cool to be able to go there. It is a crazy experience to walk in there and be able to look around and see

all the jerseys and know all the great players who have played there and be able to show what we can do," he said. "So it has been really special."

With conference play well underway, LIU has found limited success in Coach Strickland's first season. The Sharks currently sit last in the NEC with a 1-9 conference record. Despite the underwhelming start to the season, Johnson is confident in the team's development.

"The work we have been putting in in practice, finishing, working on our shoots and stuff like that, every day we come in here and get better," Johnson said. "We have, of course, one of the greatest players of all time, one of the greatest finishers of all time, as a coach, so we have been able to learn from him, see different angles and learn a lot."

Greene shares Johnson's faith in the team's improvements and growth.

"I think we have improved on our ball handling, being able to dribble the ball, handle the pressure, and be leaders," he said. "But I want to improve upon being more vocal as a leader and leading my team."

With only six more games left in the season, the goal remains the same.

"Honestly, we just want to win games. We had a really tough non-conference schedule. Being able to be sharpened by the best teams in the nation and then come to our conference and play against these guys is definitely an honor," Johnson said. "We are just going to come out and do whatever it takes to win."



Courtesy of Donny Chiarel

LIU Spirit teams win National Championship

BY ANDREW SCARPACI

SPORTS EDITOR

It was just a giant production and to see it all come together on stage like that, I was just in awe,” she said. “It was a beautiful performance, and I think the cheer team, the dance team, and the mascot all collaborated so well and got along so well. So that made the process easy and seamless as well. We all had that one common goal. We all said we want to win this, to show them who LIU is, and we did that.”

Mackenzie Daly, a graduate on the cheer team, reaffirmed the group’s efforts to prepare for Nationals.

“We would separately cheer and dance for practice, and then each week we would have a few practices with dance and the mascot, where we would put the things that we have been working on separately into one combined routine,” she said. “When we worked together with dance, I think that’s when we had our most productive times because we could see the full picture and see what it would look like on the Nationals match, so we were very grateful that we were able to practice with them.”

Daly has seen tremendous growth in the program, being one of the few Sharks left on the roster who also competed during the final stretch of the Pioneers era.

“The program has changed immensely from my first year not being Division-I. We didn’t do UCA nationals either, to winning five years later. That’s insane. I feel like we really stepped up to the plate in such little time,” she said.

Sabrina Giugliano, a junior on the Cheer team, believes the team put together an incredible showing that kept up with the competition.

“Even within three years, when I first came here, they competed in the Game Day category and All Girls, but I feel like the skills in both those categories have grown in the last three years,” she said. “We’ve grown as a team with the skills that we’ve been able to put on the mat, and the attitude and drive, has increasingly gotten more and more ambitious.”

With one more year left at LIU, Giugliano still has high expectations for the program’s growth.

“I wish to grow in the next year and hopefully defend our title if we have the opportunity to compete in this category again and just come out with the routine as a team while getting closer and stronger together,” she said.

Sirena Brown, a senior on the Cheer team, is proud of the tremendous accomplishments this team has produced, all the way from when she started as a freshman when the Sharks’ program was brand new.

“We just really wanted to work hard. It was all new, and we were all trying to grow together. So we just wanted to put our best foot forward,” she said.

Brown will always cherish her time here at LIU, and feels winning this championship could not be a better way to round out her career on the LIU Cheer team.

“I look back now as a senior, obviously winning is great, but when I look back on the season and the past three seasons, I think about the laughs and a lot of the bondings we’ve done as a team,” she said. “Just to have that win on top is just like a cherry on a sundae.”

Caleigh Kellerman, sophomore Co-Captain of

LIU Dance, describes the work put in throughout the school year for when opportunities to compete for themselves arrive.

“We practice all year round. Since the national championship we won was primarily palm-based, we started with palm technique right when we started practicing in the summer,” she said. “We kept practicing it all the way through football season, and then we’ll dive into it during intercession when we have practice every day, twice a day for long hours.”

Kellerman feels this is just the beginning, and there is so much more left to succeed over her remaining years at LIU.

“I want to grow in jazz, my flexibility and confidence when dancing jazz. I think that as a team, we can push forward further in hip-hop, jazz and palm,” she said. “This doesn’t stop here. It’s great that we won the national title, but it’s only up from here, and I think that we will be able to grow as a program and achieve more, and make further history with the program with the right work ethic and attitude.”

Allison Soltys, senior Co-Captain of the LIU Dance team, exemplifies the positive emotions displayed by everyone who took part in the journey when it was announced LIU won the Division-I National Showcase.

“I cried. I literally cried. It was just an amazing feeling, and everyone was shaking and happy with so much joy. It was just amazing,” she said.

Following the Sharks being announced champions on stage, the emotional roller-coaster was described as “disbelief,” “crazy,” “relieved,” “shock” and “honor” by athletes on both the Dance and Cheer teams.

Coach Bettineschi confirms she felt similar emotions when it was all over, and celebrating could finally take place following all the hard work.

“It was so stressful. We had to go twice, we came out of the semi-finals in first place, and when I found out we were in first place, I was stressed because that’s the hardest spot to be in moving into finals. So they just simply had to do exactly what they did in the semis one more time,” she said. “I was able to watch it from the side and kind of like communicate to them mid-performance, and as soon as it hit, I just started crying to the point where my girls, who had just finished their routine, looked to the side and saw me falling and they were yelling from the stage. It was really cool.”

Coach Greto had a similar takeaway following leading her team to victory.

“I was jumping up and down, squeezing my assistant coach’s arm, watching the girls and their faces light up. I saw Finley running all around the stage, and it was so cool,” she said. “I won my senior year in college, and I felt exactly how I felt that time in 2016. This is the feeling I felt, and I’m so excited for them to feel that way as well.”

Greto competed for four years with the St. John’s Dance team, one of the schools competing against the Sharks down in Orlando.

“That was also bittersweet. I’m always rooting for St. John’s as well. They got second, and we got first. At the end of the day, you support each other, and it’s all

subjective,” Greto said. “You never know what could happen next year, but it was definitely interesting to compete against my alma mater.”

Greto believes this is not only influential for Dance and Cheer, but the LIU Sharks Athletics program as a whole.

“I think it’s a huge accomplishment. It shows LIU what dance and cheer do and what they’re capable of. It really puts us on the map. I hope that people recognize this win because it is a really big accomplishment for these teams,” she said. “These awards don’t get handed to you. You have to put in the work. That’s what these teams did, so I hope that athletics acknowledges it and realizes these kids and these athletes are working hard, so I’m excited for years to come and to get all of that support.”

Bettineschi had a similar sentiment, understanding what must still be done to prove why LIU deserved this honor.

“It’s a huge win. It’s not a win just for cheer or dance. It is a win for the entire spirit program. Right now, we are currently the best spirit program on any sidelines of a football game,” she said. “We set out to do this goal, Coach Kristen and I worked so hard together to make that become a reality, and it’s really cool to have that.”

This is Bettineschi’s first year coaching at LIU, and she could not be more thrilled with how quickly this program moved under her leadership, using the help of watching other top Division-I schools that they have been able to witness while traveling with LIU teams.

“I was on the field at Toledo, watching across the field, seeing what their coach was doing, seeing what their team is doing, and I was able to take a few things they did and implement it in a two-hour season, and it proved to be very beneficial,” she said. “That was a great opportunity that we got to travel for that game, and as a coach, it was awesome to see how much I could grow before our first home game.”

Greto, a professional dancer for the Brooklyn Nets at the Barclays Center, appreciates the luxury of being able to coach the upcoming talent in the dancing world, watching them perform just down the road at the Steinberg Wellness center on the Brooklyn campus, along with Post.

“It’s awesome, and it’s the best of both worlds. I get to pass on a lot of my knowledge to the younger dancers. Between Post and Steinberg Wellness Center, seeing the girls dance at the basketball games there, it’s such a joy,” she said. “I will say it’s a lot on my plate, a lot to juggle, but because I love them both so much, it makes it that much more worth it.”

Bettineschi has one final goal going forward.

“Defending the title because what we did was different and unique, and Coach Chris and I studied hard for it, trying to find ways to make LIU stick out and what can we do differently that would score high,” she said. “Now we have a target on our back, and we shaped the way the division is going to look moving forward into future years. It’s staying ahead of the other teams and constantly thinking of new ways to impress the judges, score high and defend that title.”