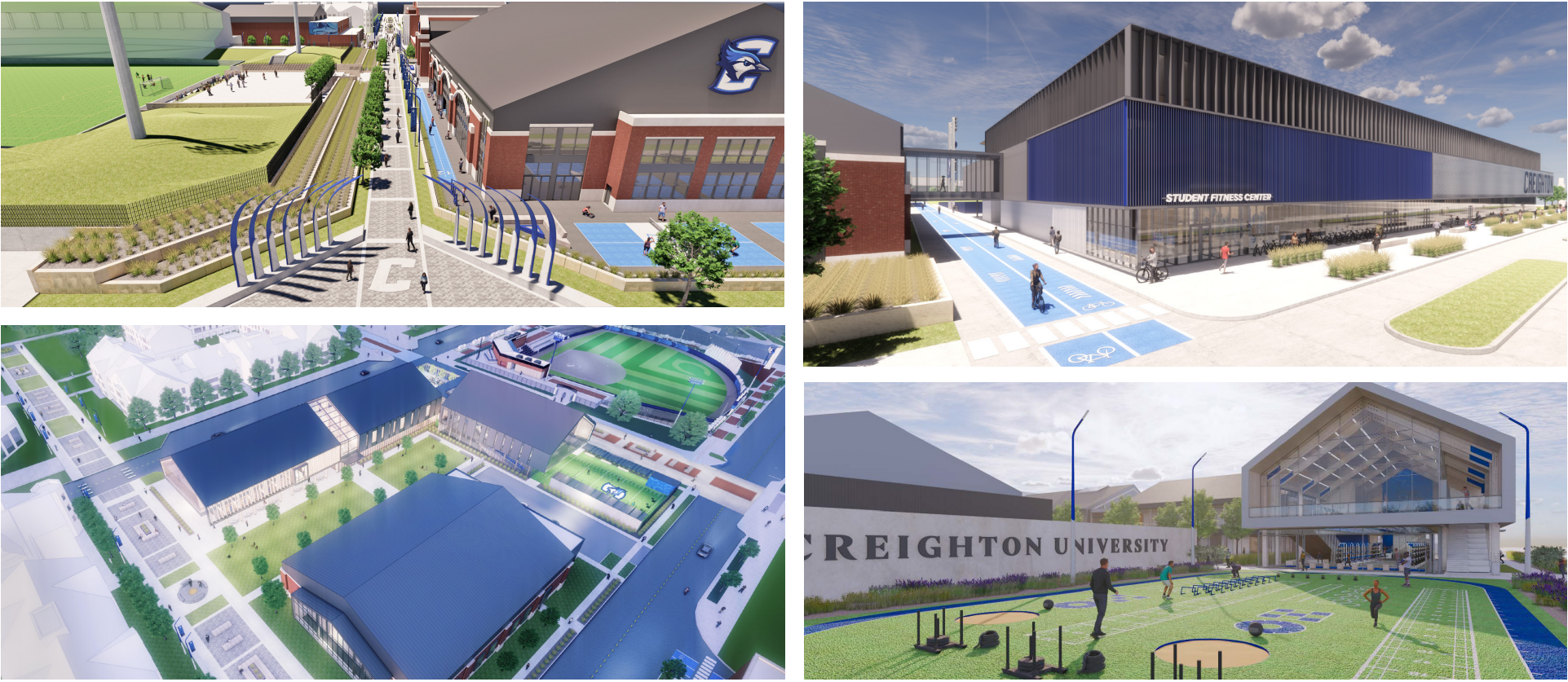


NEWS	SCENE	OPINION	SPORTS
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\$300 million gift fuels campus growth

Donor-funded ‘Fly Together’ initiative invests in CU’s future



Top left: The Jaywalk, (photo facing west), will connect campus to the nearby Builder’s District.  
Bottom left: The updated Athletic Village will accomodate Creighton’s 300 student-athletes.

Top right: Creighton’s new Student Fitness Center will cater to all students, staff and faculty.  
Bottom right: Sports Performance Center will designate space for outdoor training practices.

ABBIE GALLANT  
Editor in Chief

Amid ongoing construction of a new sophomore residence hall, the Creighton Quad and softball and baseball practice fields, Creighton University unveiled a \$300 million, donor-funded initiative set to transform its athletic and recreation facilities across a 12-block radius.

Backed by a historic \$100 million gift from the Heider Family Foundation — the largest gift in Creighton’s history — along with \$200 million from other donors, including C.L. and Rachel Werner, Larry and Linda Pearson and Don Scott, the Fly Together project, announced on Sept. 18, is entirely donor-funded. The investment will expand Creighton’s partnerships into the Omaha community and enhance campus facilities to meet the evolving recruitment standards.

“We’re proud to be in the urban core [of Omaha]. We can’t be more excited about the Gene Leahy Riverfront development ... Millwork Commons, Civic Square [and] of course, the Builders District, our neighbor on 17th Street. A lot’s happened in Omaha in this past decade, and we’re part of that story,” Creighton University President the Rev. Daniel Hendrickson, S.J., said at the press conference.

The Fly Together project involves 11 new or upgraded facilities and nearly 700,000 square feet of athletic and recreation space on campus.

To accommodate Creighton’s 300 student-athletes and the growing competition to recruit high-class athletes, Fly Together will fund construction of a brand-new sports performance center and a team facility; additionally, the project will renovate the D.J. Sokol Arena, the Ruth Scott Training Center and the McDermott Center.

Set to open by the summer of 2027, the Sports Performance Center will include spaces for nutrition, sports medicine, academic advising and sport psychology, as well as almost 10,000 square feet designated for strength and conditioning.

“We anticipate holding a groundbreaking ceremony for the Sports Performance Center before the end of the year. This is going to take the student-athlete experience to a whole new level,” McCormick Endowed Athletic Director Marcus Blossom said at the Fly Together announcement conference.

Other updates to Creighton’s athletic facilities will stretch across the current sports complex, with D.J. Sokol Arena and the Ryan Athletic Center gaining a new public concourse, media rooms, offices, training spaces, renovated locker rooms and an upgraded gymnasium, according to Blossom.

The McDermott Center will also receive a facelift. The men’s basketball practice facility will have a renovated atrium, lounge and locker rooms, along with new hydro-training spaces and practice courts.

Creighton’s softball and baseball practice fields, which are currently undergoing construction, will be the first two projects in the Fly Together plan to be completed. According to Blossom, the softball field is near completion and is set to open this fall, while the baseball practice field will be ready to open next June and serve as the College World Series’ official practice site.

Between the baseball and softball fields will stand a facility providing nearly 38,000 square feet dedicated to batting cages, locker rooms, team lounges and offices.

Each building on the east side of Creighton’s campus is part of what will become the Athletic Village. For Blossom and the other innovators of the Fly Together initiative, the Athletic Village will serve as a pathway to elevate Bluejay athletics on the national stage.

“Fly Together will enhance the student experience greatly. It will help us to continue to recruit some of the best student-athletes in the country and help us win against our toughest competition,” Blossom said in the announcement. “Our vision is to be the model program in the Big East conference, and Fly Together will help us realize this vision.”

More than just catering to the 300 student-athletes on campus, the Fly Together project plan appeals to the rest of Creighton’s students, staff and faculty by constructing a new Student Fitness Center across 17th Street from the Builder’s District — an urban district just to the east of campus.

“We know that students are not only seeking and searching for excellent academic programs, but a living environment that will support their active lifestyle. About 75% of our freshmen lettered in at least one sport in high school and many are looking for a competitive outlet and a sense of community upon arriving here at Creighton,” Hendrickson said during the press conference. “Fly Together offers top-tier spaces for student fitness, intramurals, club sports and the recently added Premier Club Sports program, which will provide students with an elevated level of intercollegiate activity.”

Across the Jaywalk — a pedestrian passage that will be constructed to unite Creighton with the Builders District — Creighton’s new 86,400-square-foot fitness center and the renovated Rasmussen Center will be linked by a skybridge. The fitness center will feature courts, training spaces, golf and yoga areas, as well as a lounge and café, while Rasmussen will add multi-purpose courts, outdoor pickleball and an indoor track.

On top of these campus-centered projects, Creighton and Kiewit will partner to expand the development more urbanely through the 10-block Builder’s District, adding an urban park, community space, hotel, retail, restau-

rants, entertainment, offices and 600 apartments.

Beyond bricks and mortar, Hendrickson said the heart of the campaign is scholarships investing in students’ futures by making a Creighton education more affordable.

“The scholarship [has] been the face of this campaign. We’ve raised nearly \$250 million dollars to get kids on campus who want to be here and they just can’t make it happen, but they’re coming,” Hendrickson said.

With so many changes coming to Creighton thanks to the Fly Together campaign — rooted in partnership and community with those surrounding the university — Hendrickson said Jesuit values align with this next phase of growth.

“Jesuit values are about partnership and community ... Jesuits first started building colleges and universities in the urban core, in the metro areas, to be near politics, to be near entertainment and to have a sense of leadership influence for its students and for its community,” Hendrickson said.

Backed by record-breaking gifts, the developing Fly Together campaign aims to reshape Creighton’s campus, athletic programs and engagement with the larger Omaha community. The project’s lead donor, Scott Heider of the Heider Family Foundation, said the initiative will elevate the university and transform the surrounding North Downtown area.

“What I would say to you, Bluejay Nation, what I would say to you, Omaha, ... and the state of Nebraska, I assure you that Fly Together will have this university flying at an absolute new elevation. I can assure you [that] the city of Omaha with [the] North Downtown area will never be the same. I promise you that. We’ll execute on both of those,” Scott Heider said in his speech during the press conference.



CU grad makes NY Fashion Week debut



PHOTO COURTESY OF DONOVAN MANN

Models show off MannMade Athleisure on the runway during the 2025 New York Fashion Week.

ELIZABETH JONES  
Editor in Chief

“The Lord has blessed me with a lot of energy,” Donovan Mann, a 2019 Creighton University graduate, said with a smile on his face.

That energy, coupled with hard work, is what helped Mann — who works a full-time engineering job at TD2 in addition to owning MannMade — take his clothing line to New York Fashion Week earlier this month.

His business, MannMade, is twofold: MannMade Skills Training is focused on basketball training for young athletes, and MannMade Athleisure is their clothing line.

MannMade was founded in 2021, and its focus for the first couple of years was just basketball training. Mann has had a passion for the sport since his childhood and even turned down a Division II collegiate basketball scholarship to attend Creighton.

The Dallas, Texas, native decided to attend Creighton over playing collegiate basketball because pursuing academics was important to him.

“I chose to use my brain instead of just focusing on using my body,” Mann said.

Still, the sport remained an important part

of his life, and he played on Creighton’s practice teams.

“I love basketball. ... I just wanted to be around the game,” Mann said.

This desire to be around the game is what eventually led him to start training kids and form MannMade; then, in 2023, MannMade expanded beyond the gym and entered the fashion sphere.

When Mann first reached out to a friend for help designing a MannMade logo, he didn’t know that it would lead to a clothing line or the opportunity to be part of the 2025 New York Fashion Week.

“I hit my homie up from high school. He used to design for Gucci. ... He sent me some designs. I loved them. I started putting them on everything,” Mann said. “And then everybody’s like, ‘Well, man, I really like that.’ And I’ve always been into fashion; like, I always try to dress nice — that’s just my thing. ... So, I’m putting it [the logo] on everything and everybody’s like, ‘I would buy that, I would buy that, I would buy that.’ So, I’m like, ‘Well, why wouldn’t I start selling clothes?’ And then, sure enough, two years later, we were at New York Fashion Week.”

The two years between starting MannMade’s fashion journey and getting to the Fashion Week runway didn’t come without hard

work. Mann spends his weekdays working eight hours at his engineering job and then training kids for three to four hours — and that’s all before he does his own weightlifting at the gym and runs his clothing line. He’s often up until 2 or 3 a.m. working on the athleisure and talking to manufacturers.

“I have to say that I’m blessed,” Mann said. “The Lord has blessed me, like I said, with energy and he’s blessed me with opportunity.”

Some of the opportunities Mann was blessed with this year were pop-up shops where he sold clothes in the Omaha, Gretna and Benson areas and sponsoring a team at the TBT Basketball Tournament, which was televised on ESPN.

Mann also credits Creighton for his clothing line’s success.

“Just on a national level, going to Creighton ... it’s in the middle of the country, [so] you meet a lot of different people from everywhere. And so, we were getting sales from all around the country ... and it just kind of created the hype,” Mann said.

Despite all of the time, energy and passion Mann has poured into his fashion work, he doesn’t remember exactly how he found the New York Fashion Week application. What he does remember is that he didn’t hear back for a few months, and he almost missed their call.

“They called me. I don’t pick up because I don’t have a New York number. I’m like, ‘Whose New York number is calling me?’ I think it’s a scam, but he leaves me a voicemail. ... So, I call him back. ... And he’s like, ... ‘This is real.’ ... We do a short, little interview, and then I get accepted.”

On Sept. 10, Mann got to model his own clothing line on the runway at New York Fashion Week. Alongside him was his partner, also modeling the clothing line, who he proposed to during the show.

He had been planning a proposal since January, and when he got accepted to New York Fashion Week, it just felt right.

“I hit the producers up, asked them, they said it was cool. I hit her parents up, got their blessing. And, yeah, the rest is history,” Mann

said, grinning.

The whole runway experience was one Mann appreciated.

“It was amazing. ... I felt no nervousness,” Mann said. “The energy in the room was amazing. I felt like we practiced enough. We were prepared. So it was just go out there and make it happen.”

Mann said the aftermath of his Fashion Week experience has been great.

“It’s been cool to see the support. ... I mean, [with] MannMade being out of Omaha, it’s like, ‘Okay, yeah, you can deal in the Omaha market. Maybe you can run the Omaha market, but how can you do on a global scale?’ And to be able to go to New York and really turn heads, ... that was really cool,” Mann said.

Settling back into his routine in the wake of his time on the Fashion Week runway, Mann is focused on continuing to build on MannMade’s foundation, even though he doesn’t know exactly where that will take him.

“Just growing at a nice scale, growing at the Lord’s pace. ... So, I say just keep building and keep going down the path that the Lord is leading me down, [and] we can’t be wrong,” Mann said.

And his advice for Creighton students and other young people?

“I’m just hopeful that my story inspires everybody else to put it in the work ... [and] stop being so set on one thing in their life. I just did New York Fashion Week and everything I did this last year. And if you would’ve asked me three years ago if I would be doing this, I would have told you no,” Mann said.

“So, I think that just letting the Lord lead you and following his path and being okay with not knowing what you want to do next — I think that’s huge. And then, for the young guys, for the guys that look like me and the guys that want to play sports in college or play pros: that’s not your only option. There’s so many more options you can take, and your brain is going to take you much further than your body would.”



Weekly Campus  
Safety Report

This is a selection of incidents chosen by the Editor in Chief and is not a comprehensive weekly report. The full report is compiled in the Daily Crime Log which anyone can access in the Public Safety office located at 2222 Burt St.

- 1

September 18 - 7:56 a.m.

Public Safety responded to a fire alarm in the Nadal Jesuit Residence. OFD responded and the cause was determined to be burnt toast.
- 2

September 18 - 12:03 p.m.  
(Not pictured)

Public Safety investigated an unlawful entry of the Boyne building. Public Safety discovered two damaged doors; however, it was undetermined if anything was missing.
- 3

September 20 - 2:36 a.m.

A vehicle was reported driving on the California Mall that struck two bollards at 24th and California.
- 4

September 20 - 4:47 p.m.

Douglas County Deputies detained a non-affiliate located in the locker room hallways of the Ryan Center. The party was issued a verbal Ban and Bar notice.



# University trims seven Jesuit values to six



JAKE LIMB/CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY MISSION AND MINISTRY

Students process into this year's Mass of the Holy Spirit with banners showcasing the university's updated six core Jesuit values, which Mission and Ministry recently condensed from seven.

SHELBY SEU  
Assisant News Editor

In the fall of 2025, Creighton University's Mission and Ministry office officially published an informational page on the my-Creighton website showcasing Creighton's core Jesuit values. Notably, the seven core values that many had been familiar with had been condensed into six core values, which Mission and Ministry will now refer to when sharing about the university, and this change was reflected on the website.

With goals of simplification and omitting nearly synonymous core values from the new list, the core value of "forming and educating agents of change" has been condensed into the value of "for and with others." According to Cynthia Schmerral, Ed.D., Mission and Ministry's vice president, the reasoning behind this condensing comes from the Rev. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., and his 1973 address "Men for Others." In that address, he said part of the responsibility of Jesuit education was to teach the topics of justice and how to become individuals for others.

"It's in the service of faith and the promotion of justice, which comes from that same time [1973 address] ... he said, if we are educating you to be men for others, we need to educate you to be agents of change. And so that's where I see 'agents of change' and being 'for and with others' as 'how can one authentically be for others if you're not advocating for justice?' And agents of change really are agents of positive change, right? Trying to foster, I would say, a world that more fully coheres with God's vision for humanity and the earth," Schmerral said.

Another alteration is condensing of "Ad Majoram Dei Gloriam" (AMDG) into the

"Magis" core value.

"'Magis,' you may well know, it's a tricky one because, when it literally translates to more, it's easy for us to think, 'Oh, I have to drive myself to do more, or somebody can use that as an excuse to put more on my plate' and that's not the 'Magis,'" Schmerral said. "Based on some of the research with it, it's what best facilitates the more universal good. In Jesuit terms, it's really what best serves the greater glory of God. And so 'AMDG' is kind of a Jesuit motto ... 'Ad Majoram Dei Gloriam,' [which is] Latin for the greater glory of God. So, trying to avoid having both 'Magis' and 'AMDG,' they're not extraordinarily synonymous, but they are deeply linked."

Condensing these values started with research that began in the spring of 2023. Schmerral discovered that many different organizations and programs within the university had adopted their own sets of core values unique to their curriculums.

"I created a spreadsheet and found that there were a variety of ways of referencing values: sometimes Ignatian, which would be in direct reference to [the] kind of things that flow from St. Ignatius, sometimes Jesuit, which would be a little bit broader, including Ignatian, but charisms within the Society of Jesus. Sometimes we were calling them charisms, sometimes values, sometimes core values. There were lists of seven, there were lists of eight, sometimes there were lists of four with particular programs. I know in some colleges, like for the College of Nursing, for instance, their certain values mapped to the curriculum, the Department of Education references certain ... I think they would call them Ignatian Charisms ... so, just a lot of variants," Schmerral said.

So, to create a more unified set of core Jesuit values between the university and Mission and Ministry's communications, Schmerral collaborated with many other Creighton organizations to finalize the selection and condensing.

"It was some conversations between myself and the president's office. Certainly, within the divisions, so including the Deglman Center, which [provides] kind of [a] deep understanding of Ignatian spirituality, Campus Ministry [and] the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice, so the various divisions within Mission and Ministry. And

then also some conversations with partners in UCOM [University Communications], given that they're in some ways helping to introduce our perspective students [and] our perspective faculty and staff to who we are as Creighton. So, there weren't students per se, which is atypical given a Creighton process," Schmerral said.

With the intention of creating a better introduction to individuals that are not familiar with the university, Schmerral hopes that this condensed list will spark further intrigue and encourage people to learn about the other Jesuit values that enhance Creighton's mission and purpose.

**"I feel like, you know, we have the flame that literally is engraved that says 'Go forth and set the world on fire' and I'm not sure any of those six are as close to that for me as 'forming and educating agents of change.'"**

**-Erika Dakin Kirby**  
Professor for Communication Studies

"I hope that in scratching off 'for and with others,' ... helps to introduce all of us to the idea of a well-educated solidarity. That it helps introduce all of us to being 'agents of change,' right. Or in scratching off 'a faith that does justice,' what does a faith that does justice in our context look like? Well, I hope that leads us to explore the Catholic social teaching and leads us into commitments to environmental justice as well, right ... So, I hope that it leads down trails," Schmerral said.

Yet, the condensing of the core value 'forming and educating agents of change' has sparked some debate among the university's community. For instance, a professor of communication studies, Erika Dakin Kirby, Ph.D., questioned whether its condensing may diminish the attention to the value's meaning itself.

"I feel like, you know, we have the flame that literally is engraved that says 'Go forth and set the world on fire,' and I'm not sure any of those six are as close to that for me as 'forming and educating agents of change,'" Kirby said.

Kirby also recognized that another concern

with the condensing of the core Jesuit values was the potential difficulty of resonation for those who do not follow a faith.

"If I don't see myself as having a faith tradition, will I look into what 'faith that does justice' mean[s] to understand that as a student at Creighton, no matter what, I should have the goal of going forth and setting the world on fire and being an agent of change?" Kirby said.

Previously, Kirby raised the question regarding the condensing of the core Jesuit values in a town hall meeting. However, due to being on Zoom, her question was not addressed during the meeting and was later discussed with Creighton University's President, the Rev. Daniel Hendrickson, S.J., and Schmerral. Nonetheless, it was during the town hall meeting that Kirby recalled Hendrickson referencing the value itself when answering other questions that were addressed.

"Father Hendrickson used the words of 'forming and educating agents of change' in the town hall when he was answering a question, like it just like sort of flowed out of his mouth, which is why — and maybe it really is that it's not the intro level, it's the next level — but then I just want to know like ... how are we making sure people get [to] that next level," Kirby said.

After being in conversation with Kirby and reviewing the concerns regarding Mission and Ministry's decision, Schmerral clarified that the list is meant to serve as an introductory reference page when sharing some of the core Jesuit values found within Creighton's mission and not to limit an individual's perspective to the six values stated.

"Absolutely all of these [values] and more, I would say, are expressions of the Jesuit mission. And so, I think [it] speaks to the challenge of [how] core values provide touchstones. They'll never speak to the fullness [of all Jesuit values]," Schmerral said.

Schmerral said she also hopes that this tool will provide an entry for new members of the Creighton community to utilize these values to better connect to the university and understand what they stand for.

"So, for one person, it may be 'cura personalis' that really resonates with them. For another person, it really may be the importance of 'reflection and discernment.' For another, it may be that commitment to being 'for and with [others],' right? ... But the hope is that everybody can find their entry point in that sense of connection with who we are," Schmerral said.



SAM GIANFRANCISCO/THE CREIGHTONIAN



# Bluejays show up to save lives

**JOSSY FETTE**  
Scene Reporter

Creighton University Medical School hosted a blood drive in the Skutt Ballroom, administered by the American Red Cross.

Students and potential donors were encouraged to register ahead of time through the American Red Cross; however, walk-ins were also welcomed and encouraged to attend the event, held on Sept. 16 and Sept. 18.

Joe Niemeier, a junior in the College of Nursing who donated blood on Sept. 18, said he thoroughly enjoyed his experience.

"It's been fantastic. I think the professionals know what they're doing, and they've done a fantastic job answering questions, and also making sure everything's done correctly," Niemeier said. "Everyone should donate blood."

Kealy Johnson, second-year medical student at Creighton, served as a coordinator for the blood drive. To encourage students to register for the blood drive, Johnson and other coordinators recruited students to register by tabling at Skutt and Harper. Additionally, the coordinators hung up posters, emailed Creighton's schools and communicated with the American Red Cross to ensure the event ran smoothly.

This was not Creighton's first blood drive with the American Red Cross.

"Creighton's actually a premier partner for the American Red Cross," Johnson said. "So, we're always trying to make sure they have one [blood drive] here. They reserve spots for us four times out of the year so that we can really keep our numbers up, because Creighton students are really good about donating blood."

This year, Creighton surpassed its goal of reaching 35 units of blood donated.

"On Tuesday, the 16th, it was looking like we were going to have about 40 units donated, which is really great," Johnson said.

Hannah Bohacek, a collections technician for the American Red Cross, worked as a phlebotomist at the blood drive at Creighton this year. Bohacek has worked at other



JONAH LAGRANGE/THE CREIGHTONIAN

**Jays gathered in the Skutt Ballroom on Sept. 16th and Sept. 18th to donate blood. The blood drive was administered by the American Red Cross.**

Creighton blood drives in the past, specifically at Creighton's dental school.

As a phlebotomist, Bohacek collects blood from donors.

"We have to follow a really stringent procedure to be able to collect it [blood] safely and to protect the blood supply," Bohacek said.

Bohacek also assists with educating the public about eligibility status and why it's

important to donate blood.

"This one is really a lively blood drive ... so we've had a lot of walk-ins, and everyone has just been amazing and, you know, been really excited to learn about the process too," Bohacek said.

The blood drive this year was viewed as a success due to its attraction to a variety of donors. The addition of walk-in donors allowed

for the American Red Cross to collect more blood than it would have if just relying on registrations.

"It's been pretty awesome; we've been steady all day. So, we get a lot of different people, and it's been really cool to see a lot of new donors come in, too. So, we've gotten a lot of new people coming in, so it's really exciting to see," Bohacek said.

# Circle K: purpose through service

**BEHLA SCHMIDT**  
Scene Reporter

At Circle K's annual Fall Day of Service, members from multiple schools in the Nebraska-Iowa district gathered for a day full of exciting events. Students from Creighton University, Midland University, Drake University and the University of Iowa met at the Henry Doorly Zoo to kick off the event, hosted on Sept. 20.

Students explored the Old Market area for lunch and then concluded the evening by volunteering at Open Door Mission Lydia House, a local homeless shelter in Omaha.

"I really enjoyed it. It was fun to get to know the people at Creighton that are in Circle K more and establish some friendships," Wil McAvoy, a freshman in the College of Nursing, said.

But the intention behind the event ran deeper than just pure enjoyment and a free lunch.

"Circle K International is a service-based club," College of Nursing sophomore Molly Esch, president of the Creighton branch of Circle K, said. "We do a lot of volunteering for the community within our school, as well as the local Omaha community."

The club's actions aim toward achieving the club's three main pillars: leadership, fellowship and service. Circle K's mission is to "live to serve and love to serve."

The Fall Day of Service event also offered students an opportunity to connect with new

people and spend time out in Omaha, while giving back to the community.

"It [Fall Day of Service] cultivates all of the tenets ... it shows you that you can have fun while serving others and that you're doing good things for the community," Esch said.

As students became better acquainted with one another at the zoo and during lunch, they were able to work as a cohesive unit when it came time to volunteer at the Open Door Mission Lydia House. During this time, some were tasked with serving a hot, nutritious meal to those at the shelter, while others helped staff prepare food for the upcoming week.

All hands were needed at Open Door Mission Lydia House, as it serves more than 5,360 meals each day to men, women and children experiencing hunger, according to [opendoormission.org](http://opendoormission.org).

As a result of these efforts, students from Creighton and the surrounding colleges were able to contribute to the vision of the organization, which is to meet the needs of individuals and families to help break the cycle of poverty and homelessness.

Vice President of Membership Leona Nguyen, a sophomore in the College of Arts and Sciences, said that she observed several of Creighton's Jesuit values while doing service, specifically "men and women for and with others."

"I guess we'll lighten up their day ... we make jokes with them ... we ask them how their day was. Show them that we care, and



PHOTO COURTESY OF AUDREY NELSON

**Creighton University's Circle K kicked off their Fall Day of Service where Jays go out to serve the Omaha community. Circle K explored Omaha and served at Open Door Mission Lydia House.**

that probably lightens their day," Nguyen said.

From the event, Circle K's members were driven to make a long-lasting impact in their community one action at a time.

"You can talk a lot about how you want to change the world, but going out and do-

ing the small things for others is what really changes the world. It [service] changes the circumstances for people on a big and small level, I feel," McAvoy said. "Just having that one conversation with that one person ... can help lighten someone's day."



# Eight seconds of glory, fame

## CHI Health Center hosts River City Rodeo



SAM GIANFRANCISCO/THE CREIGHTONIAN



JONAH LAGRANGE/THE CREIGHTONIAN

A rodeo clown (left) addresses the arena. The rodeo can be a dangerous job for people like a bull rider (right), who have to hold on for more than eight seconds to have their score counted.

### SAM GIANFRANCISCO Scene Reporter

When the buzzer goes off at eight seconds, it reverberates throughout the entire arena, so loud you can feel it in your bones. If everything has gone well so far, the cowboy breathes a sigh of relief, but he can't relax yet. While he may have successfully held on long enough to post a score, he now faces a different question: how does he get off a 2,000-pound bucking bull?

For over 78 years, Omaha has hosted a Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) rodeo event. Known today as the River City Rodeo, it's one of the last stops on the PRCA's regular season tour before the National Finals Rodeo, meaning these two nights can make or break a cowboy's chance of competing in Las Vegas.

Starting in 1947 as the Aksarben Rodeo, pro rodeo in Omaha has gone through various iterations over the past 78 years. In 1982,

the River City Roundup Festival was created, and the rodeo became a part of at the time. In 2003, the River City Roundup moved to the CHI Health Center and changed its name to the Pace Picante ProRodeo Challenge. At its peak in 2009, the River City Rodeo was the second-largest rodeo in the world behind the National Finals Rodeo. Local Omahans remember growing up with the rodeo around them.

"It was that little slice of time where the country came into the city. I have specific memories of seeing livestock being led down Center Street," Mary Ann Tietjen, Ph.D., the senior director of the Success Center, said. "It was a time for us to really all come together as Nebraskans, and kind of cheer on the event. I think it was something that definitely brought us all together."

In addition to the PRCA event, the rodeo hosts the High School Champions Challenge Rodeo. On the morning of Sept. 19, the best cowboys and cowgirls from high schools

across the Midwest went out to compete for scholarship money, adding up to \$5,000 in some events. The money isn't limited to being used for traditional education; it can be utilized for anything that promotes the betterment of the cowboy, which could include roping, riding or trade school.

As a PRCA rodeo event, the River City Rodeo features all seven main rodeo events. These events include bareback bronc riding, steer wrestling, tie-down roping, saddle bronc riding, team roping, barrel racing and bull riding. Cowboys compete for money in these events, and the top 15 cowboys in the world — by earnings — in each category will proceed to the National Finals Rodeo. In bucking events such as bareback bronc, saddle bronc and bull riding, the cowboys must hang on for eight seconds for their ride to count.

Eight seconds seems like a minuscule amount of time, but it's much harder than it seems. Of the 23 cowboys who competed in bull riding, only four riders managed to stay on for eight seconds. Even riders such as Wacey Schalla, the No. 2 cowboy in the world, were unable to hold on for the full eight seconds. However, on top of being a competition, rodeo is a performance. "The contestants are there to try to make money, but we're also there to put on a show. We have to make sure that people are entertained," rodeo clown Preston Broxton said.

Broxton, a rodeo clown from Louisiana, is an integral part of making sure this entertainment is delivered. Between cracking jokes with the announcers and keeping the audience entertained while transitioning between the events, Broxton and his team of bullfighters work in the seconds after a ride to get the cowboy to safety.

At its core, rodeo is a dangerous sport. Bulls and horses buck around in the arena, determined to get the cowboy off at any cost. Even after the ride, the animals may remain agitated.

Originally, the job of getting the bull away from the rider fell solely on the rodeo clown. In recent years, the job of rodeo clown has been split into two: the bullfighters who distract the bull, and the rodeo clown, or barrel man, who delivers comic relief. That isn't to

say that the barrel man doesn't also face danger from the bulls.

"I used to get into the barrel and try to get the bull to charge me, let him throw me around, until one time a bull got in there with me and broke my back," Broxton said.

Some of the people in the greatest danger are the cowboys themselves, often being violently flung from their animals and ending up right by their feet.

"First thing I try to do as soon as I hit the ground is get up and get out of there," professional bull rider Carter Hanson said. A native of Alcester, South Dakota, 22-year-old Hanson came in fourth with a score of 65, riding Kingpin from Cervi Championship Rodeo.

From an outside perspective, rodeo seems like a crazy sport for crazy people. In all honesty, that isn't too far off, but it has this way of hooking you in. It has the power to bring people from different backgrounds together, regardless of where they're from.

"I didn't grow up in rodeo. Probably didn't go to two rodeos before I was 25 years old. And now I do, you know, 100, 100 plus performances a year," Broxton said.

"If it's a dream, chase it, just try hard. I mean, I didn't grow up around all this and here I am riding pro bulls," Hanson added.

Whether it's a two-day PRCA event like River City Rodeo or a half-hour bull riding showcase in a small town in rural Nebraska, there's always going to be something to see. Rodeo clowns like Broxton keep you there from start to finish and make sure that the show runs smoothly. Cowboys such as Hanson may only spend eight seconds on that bull, but those eight seconds contain more action and emotion than most people will see in their lives.

"Maybe you'll go back to the rodeo, maybe you won't, but if nothing else, you learned or you experienced something new," Tietjen said, encouraging students to step out of their comfort zone.

"If you hear the word rodeo, go to it. Go see what it's all about. Go enjoy yourself. Leave your troubles at the door. They'll all be there when you leave, but you'll feel a lot better, and maybe they won't seem as heavy when you pick them back up," Broxton added.



JONAH LAGRANGE/THE CREIGHTONIAN

A cowgirl guides her horse around barrels in CHI Health Center. The River City Rodeo features events including bull riding, bareback bronc riding, steer wrestling and barrel racing.



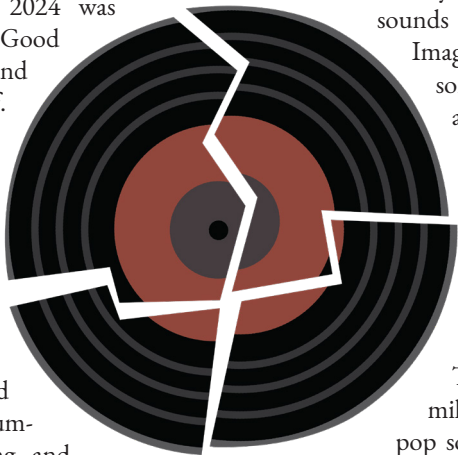
# Bummer summer for music

CHARLOTTE THAISETTHAWATKUL  
Opinion Writer

The past two summers have been filled with great pop hits. The year 2023 brought us “Boy’s a liar Pt. 2,” “Cupid” by FIFTY FIFTY, “Rush” by Troye Sivan, and the entirety of the Barbie movie soundtrack. Then, 2024 was “Brat” summer, featuring “Good Luck Babe,” “Espresso,” and the Kendrick-Drake beef. So, after two solid years of big summers for pop music, what did 2025 have to bring to the table?

Apparently, Benson Boone, Morgen Wallen and Alex Warren.

These songs might be fine on their own, but placed consecutively, the hits of summer 2025 make for a boring, and frankly, sad, monotonous slog of acoustic country pop that Rolling Stones writer Larisha Paul nicknamed “voice audition pop.”



They have modest instrumentals, basic drums and a guy “hooting and hollering,” as many critics on TikTok say. For me, these songs’ problem isn’t necessarily that they are vocally challenging, but instead how their music seems to be the audio equivalent of plain Cheerios.

“Ordinary” by Alex Warren sounds like a knock-off Imagine Dragons song, complete with a chanting chorus that harkens back to the 2011 stomp-clap-heh dark ages. “What I Want” by Morgan Wallen and Tate McRae is a milquetoast country pop song over a flaccid trap beat so bland and lifeless that it makes the Creighton water fountains taste like Evian.

Benson Boone’s “Mystical Magical” genu-

inely sounds AI-generated. It reminds me of AI-generated ‘80s fashion. It’s “Good Luck Babe” and “Pink Pony Club” without any of the camp and queer angst that made those songs so great.

There’s nothing different or edgy or exciting about any of these songs. They all sound similar and blend together into a dull flavorless oatmeal. Pop music is supposed to be fun to listen to, however the top hits of summer 2025 have felt like a chore to listen to.

What’s even more appalling is the lack of new music charting. Aside from the songs I mentioned, most of the summer charts were haunted by stale, year-old songs like Shaboozey’s “A Bar Song (Tipsy)” and Lady Gaga’s “Die With A Smile.” I find this disappointing, as plenty of artists released great projects over the summer, including Kesha, Addison Rae, PinkPantheress and Adéla. (Do yourself a favor and listen to Adéla’s debut album!)

Usually, pop music offers a welcome escape from the chaos of the world, but this summer it just sounded like background noise.

# Short story, big impact

ELIZABETH GRAVELINE  
Opinion Editor

About a year ago, I found myself in a rare and precious situation as a college student: an afternoon free — nothing to do and nowhere to be. After speaking to a friend about this, he gave me his collection of Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s short stories. I then spent the afternoon sitting outside reading “White Nights” at his suggestion. Eighty-five pages later, I came back to reality — refreshed yet emotionally unsettled by the story.

The benefits of reading are well-researched and well-known. If I told you that research consistently shows that reading keeps your memory sharp, helps you sleep better and improves your empathy, creativity and overall well-being, I’m sure you wouldn’t be surprised. Despite all this, the number of Americans who read for pleasure has fallen 40% over the last 20 years and continues to decrease by 3% every year, according to an article by The New York Times.

College students are in a particularly difficult situation when it comes to reading for fun. They are overworked and overstimulated. After a long day of sitting in class and hours in the library reading textbooks, the last thing most of us want to do is read even more. Yet, many of my peers complain about not having the time or mental space to tackle their ever-growing list of books to read, having lost their childhood love of reading.

That afternoon, reading “White Nights,” I realized a solution. Short stories could be the perfect compromise for our attention-deficient society. They can typically be read in a single sitting or two, making them an approachable, low-commitment alternative to longer novels. Think of it as watching a movie instead of diving into a multi-season show.

Short stories are usually simpler stories and lack sequels, often focusing on a single event or a series of related events. Unlike novels, they avoid the complex plotlines and numerous characters, demanding far less mental effort. When time is limited, short stories present instant literary gratification.

I used to believe short stories were an inferior form of prose, but since experiencing the aching mix of hope and heartbreak in “White Nights,” I now see their value. They show an author’s true skills by testing their ability to both entertain and portray literary truths in a limited format. Reading a short story allows you to test out an author’s writing style before diving into one of their longer works.

Dostoyevsky’s “White Nights” is a haunting and tragic love story. It was the first short story I read post-high school and remains one of the best I’ve read — true must-read of classic literature. Check out “First Person Singular” by Haruki Murakami, for a more modern perspective. It gives a great introduction to the award-winning author. For anyone with dark, introspective tastes, Edgar Allan Poe’s stories are an obvious choice. Many contemporary writers such as George Saunders, Zadie Smith and Kazuo Ishiguro have written short stories in addition to their well-known novels.

Low-commitment, time efficient, immediately gratifying, simple and entertaining — short stories could be our solution to the literary barriers of our generation.



# Study season survival guide

ADDY CROSSLEY  
Opinion Writer

We all know studying is not the most fun part of college, but it will eventually help us to get our degrees and pursue our careers. Here are some tips that will make studying more fun and help you to lock in for that upcoming exam.

First, set important reminders. It is crucial to get enough sleep the night before an exam. Eat food that will fuel your body before your exam or test, because the last thing you want is to be mid-test and realize you are too hungry to focus. Drink enough water throughout the day before and the day of the exam. Remember to take breaks, because you deserve to take the time to fully understand a new and challenging subject. Set realistic goals for each specific study session. And finally, reward yourself for locking in and studying hard by doing your favorite hobby, eating a snack, taking a nap or chatting with a friend.

One of the most important parts of ensuring your studying time is productive is taking well-made notes. However, taking notes can be confusing because of how different each subject is. To combat this, use colored highlighters to brighten up your notes and make them easier to engage with. Do not underestimate how useful it is to draw a diagram or a map on a whiteboard at the end of

your lecture to ensure you understand the concept you just learned.

Now that we have established crucial factors in preparing for your future exams and tests, let us get into how to study all the information you have learned. A couple of studying techniques are the Pomodoro technique, active recall, spaced repetition, Feynman technique, body doubling and the parking lot technique. Although there is not enough room to describe each of these techniques in detail, they encourage strategies such as breaking up your studying into timed intervals of studying and breaks, learning the content then teaching the material you learned and studying with a partner.

Some other basic tips are implementing flashcards for definitions, mind mapping, utilizing multiple techniques each time you study to ensure you do not get bored and minimizing distractions by putting your phone on “Do Not Disturb.”

When it comes to studying for your classes here at Creighton, it will be difficult and time



JONAH LAGRANGE /THE CREIGHTONIAN

consuming, especially when you are first trying to get into a schedule for studying. But your professors and TAs are there to help you. Find out when all your assignments are due to ensure you are not surprised by any of your exams or quizzes.

Overall, remember not to be too hard on yourself, especially at the beginning of the semester. Everyone is trying to get back into the swing of having to study again; you are not alone in your struggle, and you will find the note taking and studying strategies that work the best for you.

# Connection: today's lost art

TOMMY CARRAUX  
Opinion Writer

It is a fundamental part of the human condition to feel a burning desire to connect with others on the deepest level and to talk about the hard things with somebody without the fear of judgement. We all share this same passion for connection, so why is it so difficult for us to connect in today’s world?

To put it in simple terms, our society has stigmatized vulnerability. Being completely open with another person, with no barriers holding you back, has become taboo in the culture we live in. It is so fulfilling to have a conversation with your close friend about both your struggles and your mistakes. In those moments, you recognize the amount of trust they have in you, the struggles you might share and most importantly how

much that person values you as an individual, being ready to share their most fragile moments with you.

Connection has been stripped from us, monetized and sold as a commodity. When you scroll through social media, everyone is portraying their best self for others to see, void of flaws or imperfections. This strips our humanity away, as we begin to see people as impossibly flawless. And it isn’t just online. Even physical closeness has been reduced to monetary exchange. Apps like Tinder sell access to connection through “matches” that can be boosted for a price. Even our own vulnerability can be sold back to us through paid AI companions that give us the connection we crave.

We need to reconnect with each other and with ourselves. It is so difficult to be vulnerable in the world we live in, but that just makes it even more important. We have a

finite amount of time on this planet, and yet we spend it scrolling on social media instead of connecting with others on a human level.

It all starts with being vulnerable. If you’re having a tough time, reach out to a friend and talk to them about it. Odds are, they’ve been through a similar experience. You’d be surprised how similar we all are when we really open up to each other.

There aren’t many things that unite people quite like a desire for connection. Don’t be afraid of judgement. We all have flaws; they are what make us human. Human connection is a beautiful, powerful thing when you leave all prejudices and judgements aside.

If you’re willing to take the leap, to open yourself up to others and embrace vulnerability, you might begin to understand yourself and others in new ways.



# Late goal lifts Jays past Marquette



ALLY SEEVERS/THE CREIGHTONIAN

**Juniors Miguel Arilla, Edward Morales, Andrija Savic and fifth-year senior Omar Ramadan celebrate after redshirt freshman Brian Edelman taps in a pass from Arilla to give the Jays a 1-0 lead over previously unbeaten Marquette with just ten minutes remaining in the match. The goal came moments after Head Coach Johnny Torres was escorted off the pitch after receiving a red card.**

## ABBIE GALLANT Editor in Chief

Pandemonium ensued just seconds earlier, but when the whistle blew to resume play with 10 minutes remaining in the match, the 11 Bluejays on the field had a fire lit under them. Creighton Head Coach Johnny Torres had just been sent out of the stadium after being shown a red card. Fans were baffled and Morrison Stadium seemed simultaneously bewildered and in uproar. But, on the pitch, the energy turned quickly towards determination, and the players locked in.

For the first 80 minutes in the Big East opener between then-undefeated Marquette and Creighton on Sept. 19, neither the visiting Golden Eagles nor the Bluejays could break through the other's steadfast defensive efforts. But in this single minute, with intensity and emotions charging the air, chaos turned into an opportunity for the Bluejays on the pitch — and they seized it.

"We were on the ball, we were pressing them, so we needed the game to keep going. There was no point to stop the game, [and] stop the rhythm we were having," junior midfielder Miguel Arilla said.

That rhythm carried right into the restart, as just after the whistle following the sideline red card, Marquette committed a quick foul in Creighton's offensive third, setting the Bluejays up for a free kick.

Thus, a wall of Marquette players was the one thing that stood between Arilla, to the right of the ball, fifth-year senior midfielder Omar Ramadan, poised to the left, and Marquette's goalkeeper.

Both Creighton midfielders charged forward, but it was Arilla who struck, sending the ball spiraling off his left foot toward the right goal post. The stadium, raucous mo-

ments before, seemed to hold its breath as Marquette netminder Cameron Simpson stretched to make the save.

Simpson's fingertips grazed the ball, deflecting it to hit off the post and straight to the waiting feet of redshirt freshman defender Brian Edelman, who didn't hesitate to punch it in for the victory goal.

"One of the things that we talk about with our guys is, 'Hey, let's control the controllables. We can't control the weather, we can't control the ref, we can't control the wind. So, let's focus on what we can control and that's us and what we're trying to do,'" Torres said of Creighton's unshakeable focus. "My hat's off to our guys for staying in the game, staying on route and being able to play through some uncomfortable moments today."

But the drama of that minute was 80 scoreless minutes in the making. Leading up to the free kick, Creighton and Marquette found themselves at war with one another, each team searching hungrily for the moment the other team would lose focus, even for a second.

The two teams traded shots and saves throughout the first half, but zeros remained on the scoreboard by the end of the first 45.

As the second half began, the intensity ramped up, erupting into a flurry of attempts, with Creighton firing nine shots and Marquette seven, each threatening to break the stalemate.

In the 45th minute, Ramadan nearly broke the deadlock. The fifth-year senior found space at the top of the box and fired a shot toward the bottom-right corner, only for Simpson to react instantly, diving to squander the attempt and keep the score level.

The two goalkeepers traded impressive saves throughout the match, but a critical stop from redshirt freshman goalkeeper Matthew Hudson in the 77th minute once again

prevented a score change and set the stage for the Bluejays' late breakthrough.

The dangerous Marquette offensive sequence began with Golden Eagle midfielder Nico Pendleton slipping the pressure and making his way to the top of the box. Getting tripped up in the box, Pendleton lost control, but the ball was snatched up by one of his teammates, who took a shot from the left side.

The strike bent sharply, veering from what seemed destined to drift wide into a dead-on rocket toward the right post. But Hudson read it perfectly, springing low and swatting the ball out of danger with a decisive save.

"The fact that he [Hudson] was able to get to that shot was tremendous," Torres said. "We always say this about goalkeepers: if you have a goalkeeper that's going to make the save that he's supposed to make and make one or two that he's not supposed to make, it's going to be ... a good day for you. And I thought on that it was probably one that he wasn't supposed to make."

Hudson's five saves on the night proved critical to allow Creighton the opportunity for their late goal to be the deciding one, but Torres also said that the Bluejays' ability to execute strong and consistent back-tackling showed the mark of a well-executed defensive plan, one that would result in the Bluejays' fourth shutout in five matches.

"I think defensively we were pretty darn good tonight, in particular ... in regards to our back-tackling. I thought overall as a team we did a good job to back tackle and swarm the ball..." Torres said.

As the clock ticked ominously toward 90 minutes, every push forward tightened Creighton's hold on the match, and the red-card chaos combined with the decisive free kick finally broke the deadlock.

When the final whistle blew with a 1-0

score illuminated on the scoreboard in Morrison Stadium, the Bluejays not only secured their fourth clean sheet in five matches but also extended their win streak to four, capping an intense and hard-fought contest with three points.

"[I'm] so proud of our guys. They fought tonight. Marquette was a very good team," Torres said. "It was a back-and-forth. We knew they were very dangerous on transition, but I thought the guys dug in and did a good job to keep them away from our goals, but man, what a tremendous effort."

The performance, though, meant more than just another hard-fought win. Creighton's final home match before hitting the road again underscored how much the team has grown in just over a month. A team that once looked unsettled has found its footing, and the way Creighton handled the pressure in its Big East opener was proof of that transformation.

The Bluejay team that took the field on Sept. 19 against then-undefeated Marquette was not the same one that saw a 0-2-1 record in the opening week road trip. The team that took the field in mid-Sept. exuded confidence in themselves and their teammates, proved to have the offensive and defensive threats to tamp down any opponent and bought into the Creighton identity.

Progress — that's the theme this Bluejay squad has emphasized since the season began. With a fast-moving schedule offering countless opportunities to test themselves, Creighton has clearly demonstrated that growth. The next challenge will be whether they can carry this momentum onto the road once again.

Their next test will come quickly, as the Bluejays head to Illinois to take on conference opponent DePaul tomorrow.

# Hoyas top Bluejays in Big East opener

## EVA HUEBNER Sports Reporter

Creighton women's soccer took a loss to No. 20 Georgetown in their Big East opener at Morrison Stadium. The Bluejays fell to 3-5-1 overall and 0-1-0 in conference play, while the Hoyas moved up to 5-2-2 overall and 1-0-0 in conference play after the brawl on Sept. 20.

In the opening 45 minutes, the Hoyas turned up the pressure, putting the Jays' defense on lock and forcing both teams into an intense back-and-forth battle. Thirty minutes in, senior midfielder Tori Gillis drove the ball

in for a potential assist, but no one was there to finish. The Hoyas quickly flipped the field, sending a counterattack down to the other side with a shot straight to goalkeeper Alyssa Zalac.

In the 39th minute, Jocelyn Lohmeyer put Georgetown ahead 1-0 after finishing off a set piece, assisted by Henley Tippins. However, the Jays quickly evened the score at 1-1 in the 42nd minute, capitalizing on a foul kick. Freshman defender Olivia Sides initiated the play, finding sophomore forward Anna Bragg, who sent the ball in near the goal post, marking her second goal of the season in two matches.

"We talked a lot about just crashing the

goal, like gambling and just what-if, so I kind of just was like, let me just crash," Bragg said. "Olivia put a beautiful ball in and, yeah, I was just there."

The Hoyas returned to the pitch with even stronger momentum to begin the second half, jumping out to a quick 2-1 lead after Mary Cochran sent a corner ball to Tippins, who was there to head the ball in.

"Unfortunately, we came out really flat to start the second half," Walker said. "They came out with another level of energy, and we never matched it really, [and] we were second-best to pretty much everything in the first 10 minutes of the second half."

The Hoyas earned a 3-1 advantage in the

72nd minute and, despite the Jays' efforts to play on other set pieces, Georgetown wrapped the match with 16-6 total shots, 7-0 in corner kicks and a 5-2 advantage in saves.

"We have to get better, and we're going to have to do that really quickly because there are only four teams in the conference tournament," Walker said. "We've got to make sure we bounce back on Wednesday and get something on the road."

After a quick road trip to Pennsylvania on Wednesday to face the 6-3 Villanova Wildcats, the Bluejays return home to host Marquette tomorrow at Morrison Stadium. Kickoff is set for 4 p.m.



# XC posts top finishes in Lincoln

ALLY SEEVERS  
Sports Editor

LINCOLN, Neb. — Creighton cross country posted strong performances on both the men’s and women’s sides at the Woody Greeno/Jay Dirksen Invitational at Mahoney Golf Course. Building upon a pair of top-ten finishes in the Bluejays’ season opener on Sept. 20, both squads approached the meet as a chance to develop depth, experience and confidence heading into the heart of the season.

“It was a really, really good day for both men and women,” Head Coach Chris Gannon said. “We didn’t really back up training at all this week, so we just kind of trained through the week and had some good performances.”

On the women’s side, Taylor Rorick led the Bluejays with a fourth-place finish in 17:53.05 in the 5k, marking her second consecutive top-ten performance after finishing seventh in the Platte River Rumble on Sept. 5.

“My game plan for this race was just to build upon last [meet],” Rorick said. “I kind of just approached this as another workout, another opportunity to compete and see where I’m at as we continue to build toward Big East and Regionals.”

Returning nearly all runners from last season’s regional squad, the women’s team combined experience and fresh energy, helping to maintain a strong, consistent pack throughout the race.

“We kind of used last year as a stepping stone to continue to raise the floor and get better each day,” Rorick said. “Every race is a new opportunity, and this year our team has been working really hard. It’s such a supportive fun environment, and I think that that’s really starting to show in races.”

Rorick was followed by freshman Reyna Heisserer, who finished 20th with a time of 18:25.84, and Atlee Wallman, who crossed the line in 28th place at 18:37.92. Sophomore Alexis Leone and senior Anika Nettekoven finished just behind, with Leone placing 39th in 18:56.16 and Nettekoven 41st in 18:56.49, rounding out the Bluejay scoring pack. Creighton’s women’s team placed fifth out of 22 teams, finishing behind Missouri, Nebraska-Kearney, Wichita State and Northwest Missouri State.

“It’s probably the deepest team in school history,” Gannon said. “It’s been fun to see them just continue to develop, come together and work together as a unit. We talked a lot about that running together in packs and we saw that today.”

On the men’s side, freshman Owen Marett led the Bluejays, finishing 31st with a time of 25:23.87 over the 8K course. He was followed by fellow freshman Andrew Sauer, who placed 51st in 25:49.98, while senior Eli Moore finished 54th in 25:53.32. Sophomore Lucas Bossinger came in 59th at 25:57.74, while Sam Berlinghof rounded out the scoring five in 60th place at 25:58.71. The combination of youth and experience helped Creighton’s men secure eighth place out of 23 teams, ahead of hosts Nebraska and Nebraska Wesleyan.

“As the kids would say, Owen’s a complete dog. You know, he’s a complete stud. Andrew Sauer ran great, Lucas Bossinger ran phenomenal,” Gannon said. “And then when we saw what we were hoping to see out of a couple of those older kids today — Cole and Eli filling in and stepping up and closing some less scoring gap — that’s what the men’s team needs to be successful.”

Saturday also marked the men’s first 8K of the season, giving a freshman-heavy team the opportunity to practice pacing and pack running over a longer distance. Marett said the focus was on teamwork and finishing strong rather than individual times.

“I think it was interesting because it’s a lot of people’s first 8K,” Marett said. “We’re pretty freshman-heavy, at least right now, and Gannon’s been talking about he doesn’t know who our one is, who our seven is. So, we’ve been working on pack running a lot in workouts and practice. It was really important for us to get out together. I think we all sort of had time goals, but the biggest thing was that we wanted to work together to score well,” he said.

Both squads will return to training in preparation for the SDSU Classic on Oct. 3.

“We’ll be back into training for the next couple weeks and then get ready for South Dakota State, but it’s a really good place for us to be right now,” Gannon said. “We said all along this women’s team has a chance to be really good, and ... hopefully everything looks the way it needs to at the end of October.”

# Jays down Kansas



ALLY SEEVERS/THE CREIGHTONIAN

**Junior libero Sydney Breissinger wraps sixth-year senior Kiara Reinhardt in a celebratory embrace after a block kill from the middle blocker helps win a rally that lasted over 40 seconds. Reinhardt finished the match with five kills and four block assists to push the No. 18 Bluejays past the No.17-ranked Kansas Jayhawks in their second meeting of the season.**

LAUREN GAEDING  
Sports Reporter

No. 18 Creighton women’s volleyball (7-5) played with fierce determination in a 3-0 victory over No. 17-ranked Kansas (9-5) in the team’s final non-conference matchup of the season.

“I just thought [it was] a great team win. That’s a really good Kansas team that presents a lot of different challenges,” Head Coach Brian Rosen said. “Big block size, tenacious on defense, they pass so well. And I thought we served as hard as we normally do, and they were just in system a lot, which forced our defense to just have to scrap out plays and fight.”

To open the Creighton Classic, the Jays won 3-0 over South Florida, ending with a .297 attacking percentage, 38 assists, 40 kills, seven service aces, 36 digs and 12 blocks. Senior outside hitter Ava Martin led the team with 13 kills, hitting .480. Sophomore right-side hitter Jaya Johnson added nine kills and seven digs, while hitting .313 in her debut as a six-rotation player.

When the Jays faced Kansas earlier this season, on Aug. 31 in Madison, Wis., the match went five sets, ending in a 3-2 Creighton victory. This time, Creighton closed the match in three tight sets, 26-24, 25-18, and 25-22.

“Last time we [played], they took a set from us, and we ended up going to five,” Martin said. “We really wanted to come out and be strong and just finish this.”

The first set featured 27 ties and 10 lead changes, including a 5-0 run on Martin’s serve that put the Bluejays ahead 19-16. The set ultimately ended on a kill by senior middle blocker Kiara Reinhardt and a Kansas attack error.

In the second set, a 6-1 Creighton run capped by an ace from redshirt freshman Nora Wurtz helped the Jays take a 2-0 lead. In the final set, Kansas briefly led 21-20 before Creighton finished with a 5-1 run, highlighted by Martin’s ace and a final block by freshman outside hitter Abbey Hayes and Reinhardt to seal the sweep.

Despite Kansas coming off a five-game winning streak, the Bluejays stayed focused, adjusting offensive placement and rallying together on defense. They ended the match with 44 kills, 43 assists, 52 digs, six aces, and nine blocks on a .218 hitting percentage. Martin led all players with 18 kills and was named Tournament MVP, while Johnson earned All-Tournament honors, contributing a career-high 11 digs and matching her season-high with nine kills.

The team built up a strong foundation due to their tough preseason schedule, as well as their hard work in practice. Rosen highlighted the growth of the Jays’ new setter, senior transfer Annalea Maeder, and the connections sparked with Martin, who ended with 20.5 points.

“I think for all of us hitters, she’s [Maeder] really working to find the best set that we need and what is best for

us,” Martin said. “She’s a very selfless player, and I think we appreciate it.”

Rosen also praised freshman Hayes, who contributed seven points with five kills and four block assists, noting her joy and calmness even in tight, high-pressure matches like the one against Kansas.

“Her reach is amazing. I mean, she hits over any block, but even just her skill set since day one, she has impressed us all,” Martin said of Hayes.

Defensively, Creighton’s blocking proved vital. Junior libero Sydney Breissinger, playing her first full match at libero since 2023, recorded 17 digs and emphasized how their front-row presence helped limit long scrambles and maximize results.

“Our block did an amazing job today,” Breissinger said. “Like I think there were very few balls we were even having to sprawl out for because they were getting such amazing block touches”.



With their second top-25 win of the season, the Bluejays jumped to No. 16 in the AVCA Poll on Monday. Creighton will look to continue their strong start as they open Big East play tonight against Xavier at D.J. Sokol Arena. First serve is set for 6:30 p.m.