

“Juno was the wife of Jupiter and Queen of the Gods. Iris, The Goddess of the Rainbow, was her attendant and messenger.” – Thomas Bulfinch



IRIS



HAPPENINGS IN THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AT CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

IMPORTANT DATES & EVENTS!

- **May 4 @7:30p:** Central iPad Ensemble Performance (Davidson Hall)
- **May 4 & 8 @10am:** Finals Lemonade (Student Center Lobby)
- **May 5 2:00p-6:00p:** Culture Fest 2026 (see page 3)
- **May 5 @7:30p:** “Music Down in My Soul”, Final Spring Choral Concert (Welte Auditorium)
- **May 8 10:30a-12:30p:** Excellence in Teaching Awards Ceremony (Memorial Hall)
- **May 8:** University Research and Creative Achievement Day (AIH & Std Cntr)
- **May 10:** Last Day of Classes
- **May 11 @5pm:** Student Award Ceremony (Alumni Hall)
- **May 11-17:** Final Exam Period
- **May 16:** Spring Commencement
- **May 17:** Spring Commencement (inclement weather date)



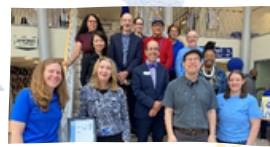
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commencement
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FROM THE DEAN’S DESK

Dr. Gilbert Gigliotti

Way back at the end of last summer a couple months into my interim-ity, Central President Toro held an executive leadership team retreat. At the event, the featured speaker was Dr. Miguel Cardona, former U.S. Secretary of Education and proud Central alumnus. He talked about trends, etc, but he also said something that resonated with me: “Your calendar is your values.” In my time as Interim Dean of CLASS (and I’m very excited for the chance to begin working with Dr. J. David Macey, our new dean, on 24 July!), I’ve tried to live by that – so, at every opportunity, I went to the events that are important to CLASS students, faculty, and our programs, and I also met one-on-one with many, when they knocked on my door. The chances I missed were most likely due to conflicts with meetings (the *many* meetings, I learned!) that deans attend. In short, thanks to all of you here at Central (and beyond) for letting me share a bit of time with you!



In Case You Missed It



DR. BARRINGTON & ENG 310 VISITING THE DEAN'S OFFICE TO VIEW THEIR WORK



THEATRE DEPARTMENT'S STAGE COMBAT CLASS



**SPRING 2026:
ACCEPTED STUDENTS DAY**



**CLASS TAVERN - CELEBRATING
250TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICA**



**DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINOLOGY
& CRIMINAL JUSTICE
MOCK INTERVIEWS**



SPRING 2026: OPEN HOUSE

INTERESTED IN GIVING TO CLASS?

**TEXT 3300 TO 41444 OR
SCAN THIS QR CODE!**



Your donations support students' attendance to various conferences and events, fund scholarships, and supports classroom equipment needs. We are grateful for your support!

MAY CLUB MEETINGS & EVENTS!

Africana Students Organization (ASO) Meeting: May 4 & 11

- **When:** 7:00pm to 10:00pm
- **Where:** Africana Center (Marcus White)

Arab Student Council: May 6

- **When:** 4:00pm to 6:00pm
- **Where:** Philbrick/Camp Room (Std Cntr)

Black Student Union Meeting: May 5

- **When:** 6:00pm to 7:00pm
- **Where:** Africana Center (Marcus White)

Book Club Meeting: May 5

- **When:** 3:00pm to 4:00pm
- **Where:** Marcus White Living Room

Criminal Justice Club Meeting: May 4

- **When:** 3:15pm to 4:15pm
- **Where:** RVAC 209

Devil's Den @ 10: May 7

- **When:** 10:00pm to 12:00am
- **Where:** Semesters Cafe

French Club, Finals Study Session: May 5

- **When:** 3:00pm to 4:00pm
- **Where:** Student Center

Latin American Student Organization (LASO) Meeting: May 5

- **When:** 1:00pm to 4:00pm
- **Where:** Latin American, Latino, Caribbean Center (EB Library 408)

Muslim Student Association General Meeting: May 7

- **When:** 6:00pm to 8:15pm
- **Where:** Philbrick Camp Room (Std Cntr)

Philosophy Club Meeting: May 6

- **When:** 3:15pm to 4:15pm
- **Where:** Willard-DiLoreto Hall, W207

Pre-Law Society General Meeting: May 4

- **When:** 3:00pm to 4:00pm
- **Where:** 1849 Room (Std Cntr)

SGA Senate Meeting: May 6

- **When:** 3:05pm to 4:05pm
- **Where:** Travelers Lecture Hall, RVAC 105

Sociology Club End of Semester Social: May 6

- **When:** 2:00pm to 3:00pm
- **Where:** Philbrick/Camp Room (Std Cntr)

The Recorder Weekly Meeting: May 4

- **When:** 3:00pm to 4:00pm
- **Where:** The Recorder Office



Come experience a vibrant celebration of diversity at Culture Fest 2026! Enjoy an afternoon of performances, cuisines, music, and community.

MAY 5TH, 2PM - 6PM

Location: Student Center Circle
Rain Location: Alumni Hall

Barbenheimer Syndrome

The Creation of Cultural Spectacle at the Box Office



Dr. Yeojin (Julie) Kim



Dr. Carolyn Jacobs



Dr. Karen Ritzenhoff



Dr. Anna Young

On April 15, students and faculty gathered for a Central Authors event featuring the work of CLASS faculty. Communication's Drs. Yeojin (Julie) Kim, Carolyn Jacobs, Karen Ritzenhoff, and Anna Young shared their transcendent project, *Barbenheimer Syndrome: The Creation of Cultural Spectacle at the Box Office*. Alongside other Central faculty, including Dr. Darshani Lakmali Jayasinghe (English), Associate Dean Dr. Kate McGrath, Dr. Susan Gilmore (English), and Dr. Walton Brown-Foster (Political Science), these faculty truly came together to create a thoughtful and unique publication.

The book, which features a cover designed by a Central student and is comprised of chapters from a variety of contributors, began with a symposium in the fall following the movie releases. The authors were moved by the diverse perspectives of the other faculty in the room and by students' emotional connections to the films. Compared to other volumes and journal issues on the "Barbenheimer" phenomenon, this one looks at the two films together, rather than separately, to ensure that they could truly comprehend the "symptoms" of this "syndrome".

The chapters of the book discussed the many ways in which these two movies - both separately and together - functioned as a representation of society, specifically related to topics such as misogyny, capitalism, geopolitical power, race, American history, masculinity, gender, collective trauma, postwar foreign policy. Notably, *Barbenheimer Syndrome* not only analyzes the films' impact on the United States but also around the world, particularly in countries like Ukraine, South Korea, and Japan where feminism is a more sensitive social issue.

The authors are excited for the conversations that are stimulated from their work: it is important to the authors to have readers consider the relationship between the identity and reception of *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer*, to understand the difference in such monumental moments.

CONGRATULATIONS!!

We would like to send our best wishes to the CLASS students who are graduating! We are so proud of your accomplishments and look forward to seeing what you do next!

We also congratulate *all* CLASS students on the incredible work they continue to do each semester!

THIS MONTH'S SPOTLIGHTS

By: Emma Farrow and Olivia Tuohy



FACULTY: PEGGY BLOOMER

Dr. Peggy Ann Bloomer, Assistant Professor of Art & Design at Central Connecticut State University, has been awarded the highly competitive James Marshall Fellowship from the University of Connecticut's Archives & Special Collections. The fellowship supports innovative research and creative work utilizing the renowned Northeast Children's Literature Collection.

Dr. Bloomer's project was recognized for its originality and scholarly significance, particularly in its engagement with archival materials related to visual culture, photography, and storytelling. Her work explores the evolving role of images—from early photographic processes to contemporary digital and AI-driven forms—in shaping knowledge, perception, and communication.

As part of the fellowship, Dr. Bloomer will conduct on-site research in UConn's archives and collaborate with collection specialists to further develop her interdisciplinary research-creative practice. The project contributes to her ongoing work at the intersection of design, media studies, and the humanities, while also enriching her teaching and student engagement at Central.

This award highlights Central's continued commitment to faculty excellence, research innovation, and the integration of creative practice with scholarly inquiry.

STUDENT: AALIYAH BROWN

Aaliyah Brown is a senior pursuing a bachelor's degree in Criminology and enrolled in the 5-year Accelerated Master's Program, with a minor in Spanish and an undergraduate certificate in Racial Justice. Her passion for social justice began in the classroom and has continued to grow through her leadership as President of the Black Student Union from 2024 to 2025, where she focused on fostering a supportive and inclusive space for Black students on campus.

Beyond her academic and leadership roles, Aaliyah is deeply committed to supporting first-year students at Central as they transition from high school to college. She has served as an Orientation Leader for the past two years and has been actively involved in the First Year Experience (FYE) program as a Peer Leader. This past year, she further expanded her impact by taking on the role of Student Coordinator for the program.

In her free time, Aaliyah enjoys reading and collecting books—especially works by Black female authors—writing poetry, listening to music, going to the movies, and spending time with her puppy, Zola.

Aaliyah is excited to graduate this spring and will continue her academic journey in the Accelerated Master's program in Criminal Justice. While pursuing her master's degree, she will also gain professional experience as a Graduate Intern at the Central Student Center. She plans to complete her master's degree in Spring 2027.



ALUM: COURTNEY REHMER



Courtney Rehmer, a 2018 graduate of Central, earned her degree in Psychological Science with a minor in Community Engagement. As a student, Courtney was involved in helping students through her role as a Psychological Science Peer Tutor and began her involvement in CLASS as a CLASS Peer Advisor. In 2021 Courtney returned to Central as a University Assistant in the CLASS Dean's Office, where she was recognized for her strong work ethic, creativity, attention to detail, and commitment to supporting the campus community through all capacities.

In recognition of her dedication to Central and positive contribution to the university, Courtney was appointed to her current role as Administrative Assistant to the CLASS Dean in March of 2022. As the Administrative Assistant, she plays a vital role in the day-to-day operations of the Dean's Office, providing structure and adaptable support while helping to coordinate a wide range of events and programs for the Central community.

In her free time, Courtney loves reading, doing crafts, and spending time with her family, especially her dog Roscoe! She is currently looking into joining a bowling league with her sister for the Fall.

Courtney is known for her reliability, positive spirit, and commitment to creating the best experience for all students, faculty, and staff. Central is extremely fortunate to have Courtney in the CLASS Dean's Office, she is a key contributor to everything the department is able to do!

DEPARTMENT: JOURNALISM

The **Department of Journalism** is one of the smaller departments on campus, but its students are busy in the classroom, professional newsrooms and the world. One of the most active departments with short-term courses abroad, this month the department is preparing for yet another **course abroad**, this one to Florence, where students will report on the challenges of overtourism and sustainability, creating content for multimedia. In 2024, the students were in the rainforest in Brazil, reporting on climate change and other issues for a TV news magazine that ran on Newington community TV and won a **Crystal Pillar**, the college version of a regional Emmy, from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Professor Darren Sweeney, who runs our broadcast news sequence, won an Emmy for his own work that night, too.

Journalism education is a **unique blend of academic study** into the theories, history, ethics and legal aspects of journalism applied to the hands-on practice of communication issues to the general public. This also means studying academic subjects as they live in the real-world, the workings of government, technical aspects of climate change, and all the perspectives and data underlying policy and other debates of the day. Journalists navigate interdisciplinarity each day.

Dr. Vivian B. Martin has chaired of the department since it started in 2013. The department has three fulltime tenured professors, including Martin, a former newspaper and magazine writer; **Professor Darren Sweeney**, a broadcast journalist and meteorologist, most recently for NBC30; and **Dr. Theodora Ruhs**, who worked in television news. The department hosts the Robert C. Vance Endowed Chair in Journalism and Mass Communication, which is held by **Aimee Crawford**, a longtime sports journalist at ESPN and *Sports Illustrated*, hired to build on the major's sequence in sports journalism and create an interdisciplinary minor in sports studies.

Creating journalism for the public is critical to training in the journalism departments. Students produce a regular newscast and will produce a live show for the gubernatorial and midterm elections in November 2026. In Spring 2026, students in the Editing class helped produce the **department's first sports magazine**. The department's students and alumni are in every newsroom, in some cases several of them in the same company, in the state, Western Massachusetts, Boston, and scattered around the country.

Increasingly, journalism students are finding that their skills are in demand in many industries. They're getting work as social media managers for healthcare, finance, and in other areas. **Alumni** recently started positions with companies such as Berkshire Hathaway Home and Electric Boat.

The department reaches into the **community** with events such as its high school journalism conference and the Sports Film Fest (May 7). With communication skills high on employer lists as a priority, students in most majors can benefit from journalism courses.

“To paraphrase one of my doctoral advisers, James Carey: journalism and democracy are different words for the same thing.”

- Dr. Vivian Martin,
Department Chair & Professor



scan to check
out the
department
online!



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