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# THE DAILY PRINCETONIAN



Wednesday, April 26, 2023

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Newsletter by **Michelle Miao**

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## Music event brings up another debate about event sponsorship



**The Effron Music Building**

Angel Kuo / The Daily Princetonian

Good morning!

On April 12, the James Madison Program and the Department of Music co-sponsored the campus event, “Dvořák’s Prophecy and the Vexed Fate of Black

Classical Music.” Guest contributor Peter Christian critiques the focus on white composers, arguing that given Princeton’s stature, it has a “**responsibility to perpetuate offerings that align with its values and mission.**”

Christian voices opposition to the speakers and their handling of Black classical music. Christian says that the Department of Music’s collaboration with the James Madison Program was “concerning” and asks for greater awareness of the University’s choice to “**uplift voices of white hypocrisy** to the detriment of its proclaimed goals of diversity and inclusion.”

This debate is a continuation, in more academic terms, of a larger debate about the choice of speakers and events by departments, which was most prominent when Palestinian writer Mohammed el-Kurd **came** to campus in February. Department and University officials highlighted different programs’ right to host events and speakers of their choice, while Christian notes that attendees might perceive an institutional endorsement of the event.

**READ THE GUEST CONTRIBUTION→**

*Analysis by Olivia Chen*

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## **Today’s Briefing:**

**The evolution of mental health leaves at Princeton:** The ‘Prince’ presents an overview of the past ten years of mental health-related leave of absences at Princeton. The findings show **students’ satisfaction with the process has changed** dramatically since the mid-2010s. While past cases included high profile negative experiences with the **University’s mental health services**, a Department of Justice review and University-wide changes have led two current students who spoke to the ‘Prince’ to **report markedly better experiences**. Justin Chae ’24, who took leave for a year, noted obtaining a mental health leave is a “very smooth process.”

**READ THE STORY →**

**Princeton union members join in Rutgers strike:** After a nine-day strike was suspended last week, **contract negotiations continue between union members and administrators at Rutgers University**. While Princeton and Rutgers have historically rivaled, shared objectives between the universities’ unionized groups have now brought those calling for change together. Rutgers strikers’ demands included **increased wages, race and gender equity, and the use of salary scales**. According to Rebecca Givan, the president of an organizing union AAUP-AFT, the call is for “a better Rutgers.” Members of Princeton Graduate Students United (PGSU) have been

following the strike, and **many joined those striking on the picket lines** “to stand in solidarity with [their] academic neighbors.”

**READ THE STORY →**

**Princeton High School walkout:** Princeton High School (PHS) students **walked out of afternoon classes on Friday, April 21**, protesting the recent removal of Principal Frank Chmiel. His termination marks the fifth principal in the last four years. No explanation for his firing was offered. According to Elizabeth Semrod, a parent present at the walkout, **Chmiel was “loved and adored by the students.** I don’t know one parent or one student that’s not behind him.” The walkout drew over 75 students and parents who marched from **PHS to the district building** holding signs and shouting slogans that expressed their support for Chmiel.

**READ THE STORY →**

**ProCES and LENS create service opportunities:** The ‘Prince’ investigates how **the University supports students’ engagement with service** by examining two programs, ProCES (Program for Community-Engaged Scholarship) and LENS (Learning and Education through Service), that are designed to expand students’ commitment to service in class and during the summer. **Both offer programming that aim to increase student exposure** to immersive learning and service through expanded resources and courses. ProCES involves a new format for courses, while LENS has rebranded existing opportunities for summer service under a new website and program. Jonathan Rosenberg ’25, **who benefited from increased funding from the creation of LENS**, told the ‘Prince’: “I was able to choose an internship that I liked, as opposed to one that was simply the highest paying.”

**READ THE STORY →**

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**OPINION | The collapse of compact theory should mean statehood for Puerto Rico**



**Whig Hall, where PDP held initiations in 2021**

Angel Kuo / The Daily Princetonian

Guest Contributor Ignacio Arias '25 **addresses the question of Puerto Rico statehood following a talk given by Eduardo Bhatia '86**, a visiting professor in the School of Public and International Affairs. Arias notes that while Bhatia addresses the politics of Puerto Rican identity, the “cultural question is often overstated.” Arias maintains that the **main question for Puerto Rico** is whether or not Congress is willing to grant statehood. One barrier to statehood is “compact theory,” which suggests that Puerto Rico became sovereign upon gaining Commonwealth status. Weighing statehood and independence, Arias writes: “Statehood is not the panacea to all of the island’s woes, but **it will best equip Puerto Ricans to promote their interests** and fully participate in national affairs.”

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**MORE FROM OPINION:**

**Ronen Shoval's position as a lecturer at Princeton is deeply concerning:** Princeton professors Eldar Shafir and Uri Hasson **criticize the appointment of Ronen Shoval as a politics lecturer at the University.** They point out Shoval’s history as a founder of an ultranationalist Israeli group that has “waged campaigns of intimidation and harassment against prominent human rights organizations, academic departments. . . , and scholars across Israel for years.” Shafir and Hasson emphasize that Shoval’s appointment to lecturer status is particularly concerning, as he **“is now free to use his University affiliation to further advance his hateful agenda.”** Shoval, invited to Princeton by the James Madison Foundation, is now teaching a

freshman seminar at Princeton. “As faculty, we are embarrassed. We call on the University and its departments to **reflect on who exactly we want to bring to teach our students,**” Shafir and Hasson write.

## **READ THE GUEST CONTRIBUTION →**

**It's time for Princeton to contextualize students' GPAs:** Assistant Opinion editor Henry Hsiao '26 **calls on the University to provide median grades for each course** alongside students' earned grades on their transcripts. Hsiao writes that these median grades would put a student's performance in a class in the context of overall course performance. “**This method**, also adopted at other colleges, will give a fuller account of a student's academic circumstances, the nature of their coursework, and their relative successes, to clarify what may seem at times arbitrary and random,” he states. This proposal can protect against misinterpretations of student grades. Hsiao believes that this system **will not only benefit students**, but will also help faculty members adjust courses as needed, as well as give potential employers and graduate school admissions committees more information about student performance.

## **READ THE COLUMN →**

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## **At your leisure**

- **CARTOON:** **The Daily Struggle** by Contributing Cartoonist Aysu Turkay
- **DATA:** **The Data Blog: Unskewing average GPA**
- **SPORTS:** **'Frustrated and exhausted': The impact of concussions on Princeton student-athletes**
- **PODCAST:** Listen to the latest episode of **Daybreak**, The Daily Princetonian's daily news podcast.

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*If you have any feedback or concerns about today's newsletter, please email [managingeditor@dailyprincetonian.com](mailto:managingeditor@dailyprincetonian.com)*

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Today's newsletter was copy edited by Naisha Sylvestre and Bryan Zhang.  
Thank you.

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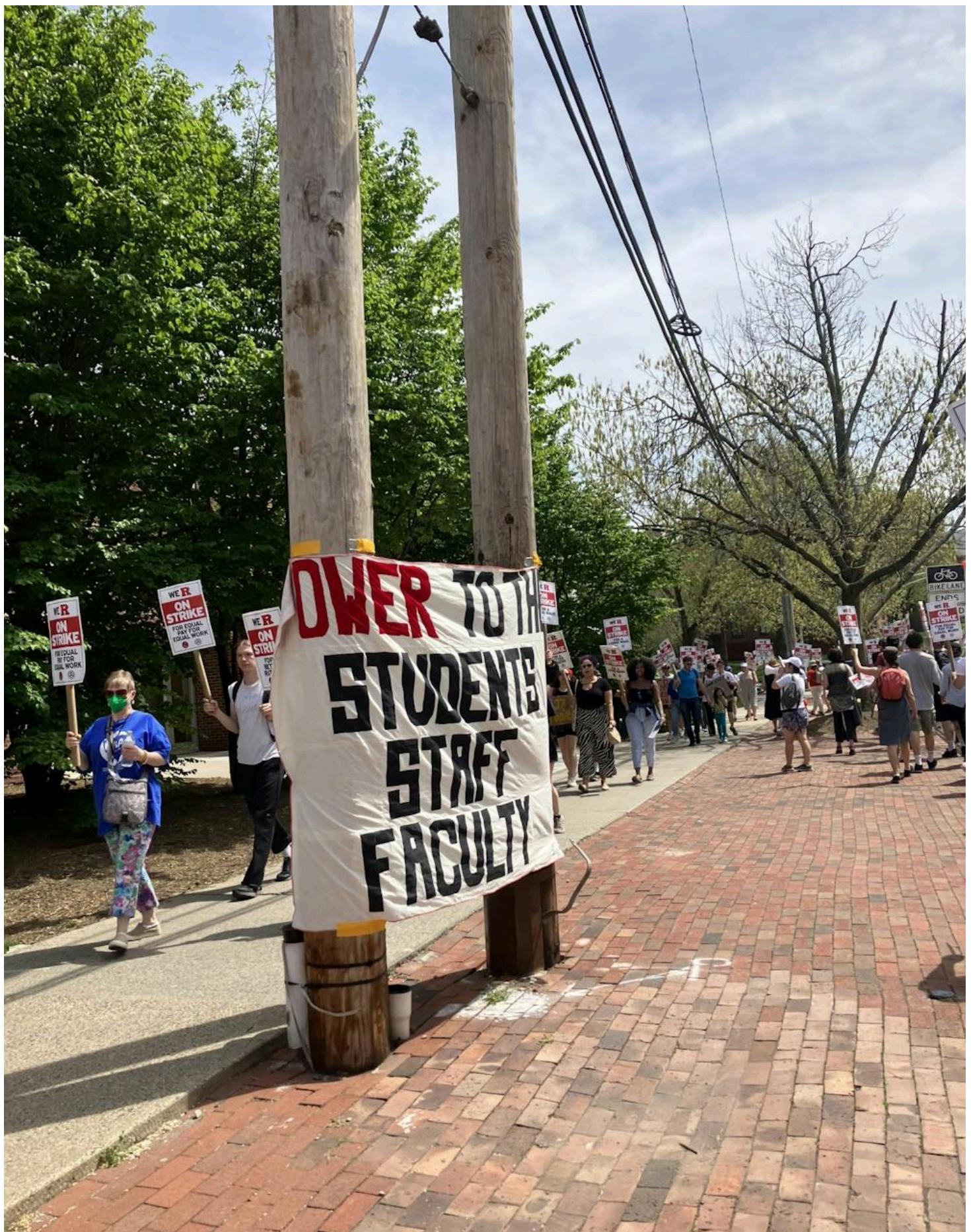
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**NEWS**

## Princeton grad students support employee strikes and protests at Rutgers





Courtesy of Abby Leibowitz

**Tess Weinreich** and **Lia Opperman**

April 26, 2023 | 12:26am EDT

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Contract negotiations continue between members of three employee unions and administrators at Rutgers University after a nine-day strike was **suspended** by the union last week. A fourth union of administrative employees are holding their own **protests**.

While Princeton and Rutgers have been **historic rivals**, shared objectives between the universities' unionized groups have now brought members of the institutions together. Representatives from the Princeton Graduate Student Union (PGSU) were seen at Rutgers protests. The universities lie 20 miles apart.

The three organizing unions of the strike are the **Rutgers Adjunct Faculty Union**, the **AAUP-AFT**, and the **AAUP-BHSNJ** — representing part-time lecturers, full-time faculty, graduate workers, postdoctoral associates and counselors, and faculty in the health and sciences departments, respectively. Collectively, these groups comprise over 9,000 members of the Rutgers community.

Rutgers unions' demands echo those raised recently by graduate and postdoctoral groups at Princeton University. A semester-long push for unionization from PGSU this spring resulted in over 3,000 graduate students — a majority of the graduate student population — **signing** union cards. The union card campaign started following a **rally** of over 150 people in Scudder Plaza. The group has not voted to affiliate with a national union yet.

Strikers' demands included increased wages, race and gender equity, and the use of salary scales. According to Rebecca Givan, the president of AAUP-AFT, the call is for "a better Rutgers."

In response to a request for comment, Rutgers University spokesperson Dory Devlin referred the 'Prince' to the university's most recent statement on the matter, **issued** on April 20.

"We continue to be in daily negotiating sessions and believe that we are coming closer to agreements every day," the statement reads. "Our focus right now is on reaching an agreement beyond the framework agreed to on Friday and supporting our students' continued academic progress."

Members of PGSU have been following the strike at Rutgers, and many joined those striking on the picket lines "to stand in solidarity with [their] academic neighbors."

"I found it really inspiring and joyous to see the level of support and camaraderie among workers across all parts of Rutgers and the wider NJ area at these events," Tim Alberdingk Thijm, an organizer of PGSU, wrote in a statement to the 'Prince.'

"I think we're all looking forward to them winning a final tentative agreement that meets members' needs, including those of Rutgers' graduate workers, who like many of us lack sufficient salary guarantees, overtime protections for TAships and access to affordable quality housing," Thijm added.

In addition to recent unionization efforts from the PGSU, postdocs at Princeton [published](#) an Open Letter in Jan. demanding for improvements to postdoc compensation.

Princeton responded by [increasing](#) the minimum salary [from \\$54,840](#) to \$65,000 — an 18.5 percent raise.



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"This was below our ask, which was for a minimum of \$67,500 with corresponding scaling for experience," Princeton University Postdocs and Scholars (PUPS) wrote in a statement to the 'Prince.' Faculty and Principal Investigators were also not given additional guidance or funding for scaling from experience.

Recently, academic institutions nationwide have seen a surge in collective action among faculty, researchers, and graduate students. Columbia University graduate workers' participated in a [10-week strike](#) last year and Boston University graduate students overwhelmingly [voted](#) to unionize in December. Rutgers and PGSU's efforts also come four months after 48,000 academic employees at the University of California's ten campuses [walked off](#) their jobs as the nation's largest education strike. Currently, a strike [led by](#) graduate students from the University of Michigan is ongoing.

As negotiations still continue, Givan expressed that Rutgers unions are "not finished yet."

"We're proud of the progress we've made, and we intend to make sure our staff colleagues who are still seeking contracts win their demands as well," Givan wrote.

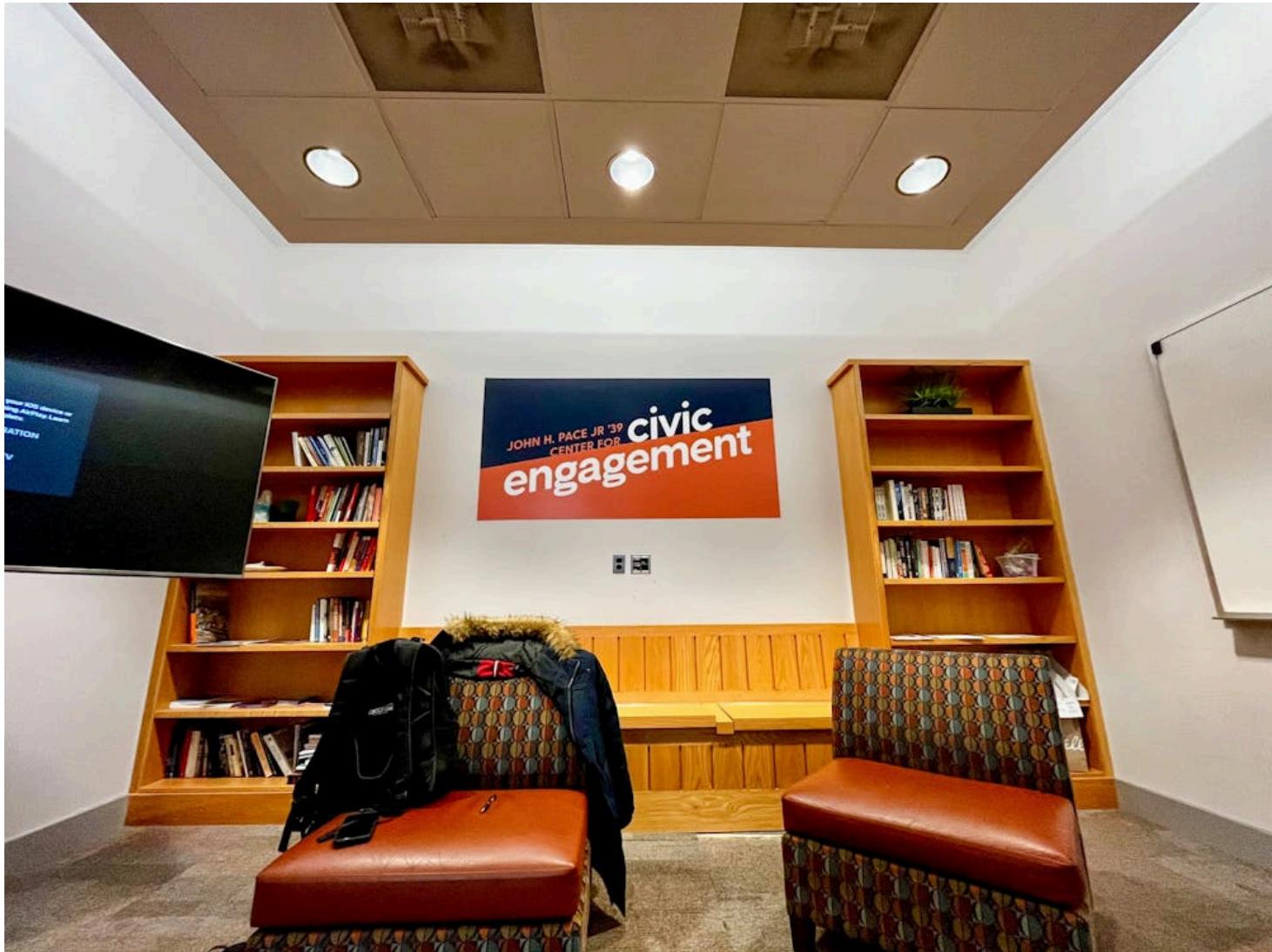
*Tess Weinreich is an associate News editor for the 'Prince.'*

*Lia Opperman is an associate News editor for the 'Prince.'*

*Please send any corrections to corrections[at]dailyprincetonian.com.*

**NEWS**

# As ProCES reaches 25th anniversary, LENS program reformats service summers



Zehao Wu / The Daily Princetonian

**Jeannie Kim**

April 25, 2023 | 11:27pm EDT

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"Princeton in the nation's service and the service of humanity," Princeton's informal motto claims. In what ways does the University support students' engagement with service? The Daily Princetonian looked into two programs, Program for Community-Engaged Scholarship (ProCES) and Learning and Education through Service (LENS), that are designed to expand students' commitment to service in class and during the summer.

ProCES, a program designed to integrate service and learning through immersive classes, is nearing its 25th anniversary. It was joined this year as a service-based program by LENS, which has restyled existing resources and summer programs under a new structure.

## A service element through ProCES classes

According to Tania Boster, the director of ProCES, [ProCES classes](#) are designed to “connect academic learning with Princeton’s commitment to service through collaborative, change-oriented projects of an intellectual nature that are of mutual benefit to students, faculty, and community partners.” ProCES course offerings for the coming fall semester include [CBE 411: Antibiotics — From Cradle to Grave](#) and [HIS 388: Unrest and Renewal in Urban America](#).

Boster explained that students could engage in direct community service or visit community organizations to observe their work.

For their final project in the ProCES course, ANT 240: Medical Anthropology, Sarina Sheth ’26 and her group are working with Princeton Human Services. Sheth explains that they are creating “a list of mental health clinics and dental care providers that accept Medicaid,” which will be made available and distributed to residents of the town of Princeton.

Sheth is a contributing Sports writer for the ‘Prince’

“We continue to bring our conversations back to the question of how best to be in the service of others, treat people with empathy, and work to preserve human rights and human dignity,” she added. “The midterm paper and final project similarly focus on human-centered approaches to ethnographic and service work.”

Adriana Alvarado ’25, who has taken three ProCES during her time at the University, described her experience in SPA 250: Identity in the Spanish-Speaking World, which included a class trip to Puerto Rico.

Alvarado said that during the trip, she had the opportunity to take a Bomba class, which provided her with a greater comprehension of Puerto Rico. “I gained a better understanding of how the island’s history of African slavery is remembered as a form of resistance and preserved in the spirit of the Puerto Rican community.”

Alvarado additionally emphasized that a key takeaway from the course was that it expanded how she understood and interpreted history.

“This course gave me the space to reflect and expand my understanding of learning about the past — it is not only rooted in the physical texts we can read or the artifacts we can touch; it transcends to the community bonds that are created through the memory of movement and sound,” she added.



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Boster said that ProCES is currently in a transition period, as it explores how to approach community-engaged scholarship. As the program passes its 25th anniversary in the 2022–2023 academic year, the team behind ProCES is taking the time to reflect on important questions regarding service: “What can grassroots community organizers, non-profit organizations, and NGOs teach us about navigating the world’s complex problems in ways that do not reinforce and replicate systems of inequality? How can ProCES facilitate experiential learning opportunities that align with the learning goals of a class in ways that are respectful of community partners’ time and talent?”

These themes of respect and awareness are already prominent in the ProCES classes, according to students.

From Alvarado's perspective, these courses offer a unique opportunity to "challenge [students] to be very intentional about the new spaces we enter and recognize that our learning experiences are not isolated and impact real people and communities outside the walls of our campus."

### **A new service push through LENS**

LENS, launched in October 2022, is another program that the University offers that focuses on service. Kimberly Betz, the executive director of the Center for Career Development, explained that LENS is an "overarching structure that can help a student locate the kind of opportunity that they want to have for the summer that's a service or a social impact internship." The [LENS website](#) lists various summer grants and internships that are related to service.

The programs included on their website existed prior to the creation of LENS. The difference, as Betz described, is that LENS provides assistance to students who are searching for summer service opportunities. Since the University offers so many opportunities through various programs and departments on campus, it may be difficult for students to find all these different internships.

Furthermore, the creation of LENS increased university funding and resources for pre-existing summer service programs. For example, Princeton Internships in Civic Service (PICS) were able to offer more internships this year than last year.

Betz told the 'Prince' that "every department is still running their programs the same way they did previously, but because of the LENS commitment, we have more opportunities to grow our programs."

An example of a program that supports students' ability to spend their summer dedicated to service is the Summer Social Impact Internship (SSII) Fund, which helps provide funding for students who are pursuing unpaid internships.

Makenna Marshall '26 will be an intern at BakerRipley's Immigration Service this summer with the support of SSII. Marshall said that SSII "will allow [her] to assist an immigration attorney in providing free legal immigration and citizenship services to low-income communities in the Houston area."

Jonathan Rosenberg '25, who participated in the SSII Fund last summer, worked at the National Union for Democracy in Iran. Rosenberg said SSII helped him engage in an opportunity he was genuinely interested in: "I was able to choose an internship that I liked, as opposed to one that was simply the highest paying."

Another program offered by the university that supports service over the summer is Recognizing Inequities and Standing for Equality (RISE). The 'Prince' spoke with Mohan Setty-Charity '24, who was a fellow at the Institute for Integrated Transitions in Barcelona through the RISE program. Besides the financial support that the program offered, RISE also helped Setty-Charity connect with the summer opportunity.

Setty-Charity said that with RISE, "the opportunity to find something tailored to my interests meant that I did not have to choose between a service oriented opportunity and something that would match with my academic and career goals."

Setty-Charity is a senior columnist for the 'Prince.'

While the first summer supported by LENS is still upcoming, students have appreciated the program thus far.

LENS continues to support and communicate with students throughout the summer as they are carrying out their internships. Nicole Young '23 explained that she was included in a Canvas group with other students who were participating in internships funded by LENS during the summer.

Young also told the 'Prince' about how LENS helped her identify her goals for the summer: "I was able to converse through the different ideas I had of working in service with an advisor ... Together, my advisor and I formed a meticulous plan which guaranteed my mission."

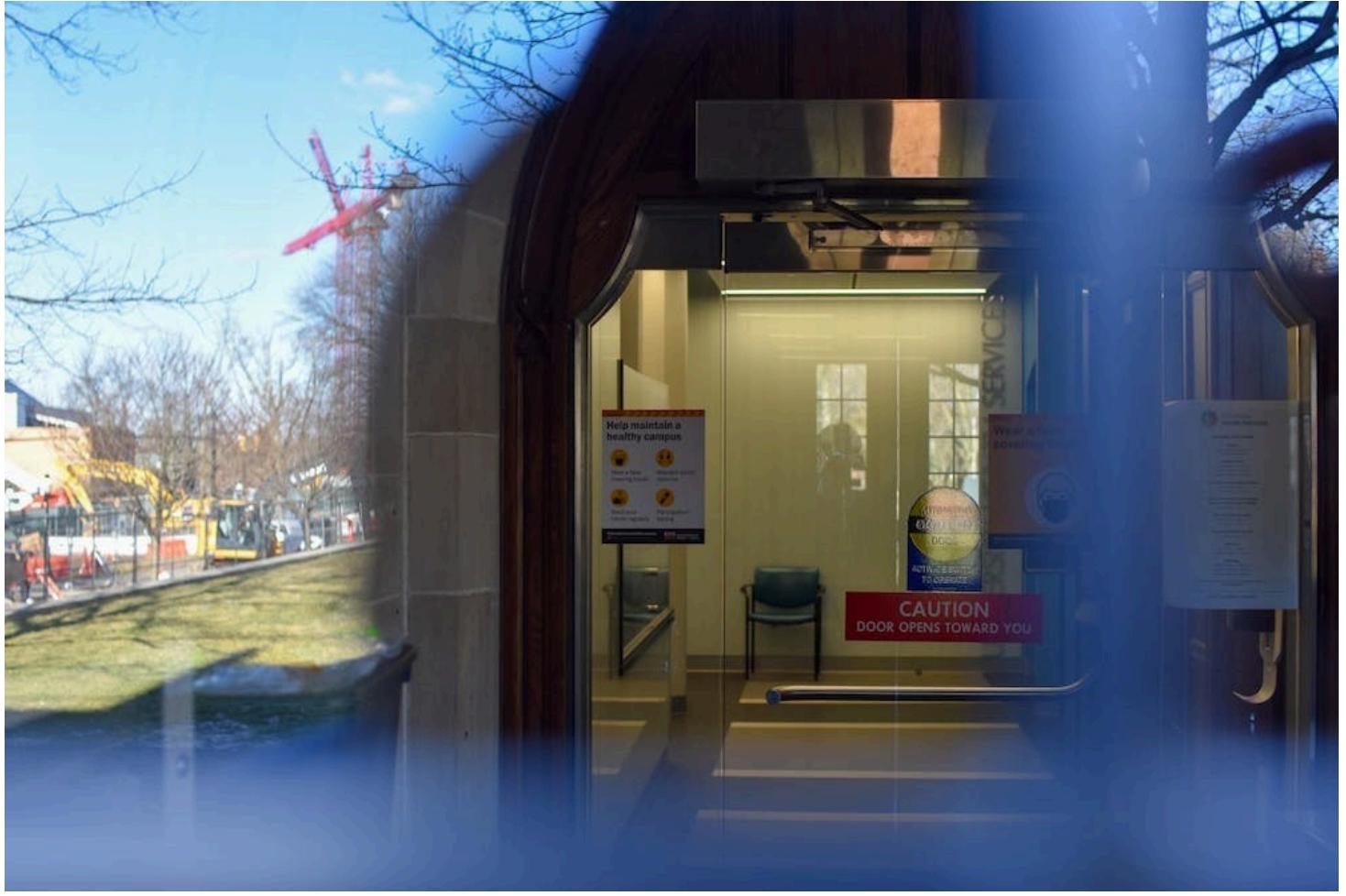
Betz stated that the program is a direct move on behalf of the University to reinforce its engagement with service. "From the University's perspective, it's a strong commitment to the University's values around service ... a commitment on the part of the University to say 'we as Princeton, will support every undergraduate student who wants to do a service or social impact internship. We will support that with university funding.'"

*Jeannie Kim is a News contributor for the 'Prince.'*

*Please direct any corrections requests to corrections[at]dailyprincetonian.com.*

**NEWS**

# A drastically changed process for students seeking mental health leaves



Angel Kuo / The Daily Princetonian

**Lia Opperman**

April 26, 2023 | 12:19am EDT

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*Content Warning: The following article includes mention of suicide. University Counseling services are available at 609-258-3141, and the Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24/7 at 988 or +1 (800) 273-TALK (8255). A Crisis Text Line is also available in the United States; text HOME to 741741. Students can contact residential college staff and the Office of Religious Life for other support and resources.*

In December 2014, a student at Princeton filed a [lawsuit](#) against the University and seven administrators, alleging that they discriminated against him when they reacted to a suicide attempt in his dorm room two years prior.

In the [lawsuit](#), the student, who identifies using the pseudonym “W.P.” alleged that had he not ‘voluntarily’ withdrawn from the University, he would be involuntarily withdrawn in approximately three weeks for failing to attend the classes from which he had been banned. The student ultimately left Princeton for two semesters.

“Princeton knew, or should have known, that this was against W.P.’s best interests and was likely to exacerbate his condition and cause him great emotional distress,” the complaint read.

The lawsuit prompted a Department of Justice (DOJ) [investigation](#). Other students also [expressed](#) issues obtaining a mental health leave, and the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) [spoke](#) with administrators to make the process more transparent.

An overview of the past decade of mental health-related leave of absences at Princeton shows that the process has rapidly changed over time. The mid-2010s saw high-profile negative experiences with the University’s mental health services, but students today report that obtaining a mental health leave is “a very smooth process.” The Daily Princetonian spoke with two students who took a mental health leave of absence on their experiences obtaining a leave, how they got reinstated, and their concerns with how Princeton handles the process.

Mental health leaves are again relevant with Yale having had [a major recent controversy](#). In December 2022, Yale University was sued for discriminating against students for mental health disabilities. The plaintiffs, including mental health advocacy group “Elis for Rachael” and two current students, alleged that the University discriminates against students with mental health disabilities through unfair practices and policies, especially surrounding withdrawal and reinstatement. Yale and the plaintiffs later negotiated a settlement.

Henry Erdman ’24 and Justin Chae ’24 both took leaves for a year. Chae withdrew before the start of the spring semester and moved out during winter break. Erdman withdrew [before](#) the ninth week of the semester, the last week that students can take a leave from the University without taking “Ws,” or withdrawals, on their transcript.

“I think for me, there are certain feelings, like guilt. I felt like I was sort of giving up by taking a gap year but I think at the time, that’s what I really needed to do,” Chae said.

### **Princeton’s history handling mental health leave of absences**

Though the process to obtain a mental health-related leave of absence was relatively easy in Chae and Erdman’s experience, in the past, students have had issues with the process.

The 2014 [lawsuit](#) said that, as a result of the forced withdrawal, W.P. “will always be afraid that seeking the help of mental health professionals in a time of distress may lead to disaster.”



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[According to](#) Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS), requiring a student to take a leave of absence is “exceedingly rare” and such a situation only occurred “fewer than five times in the past ten years.”

The year before, another [student](#) wrote an anonymous op-ed in the ‘Prince’ describing her experience with the University’s mental health process. She wrote about the series of events leading up to voluntary withdrawal as a “cookiecutter … [one] that seems to be very rigid and inflexible,” one that made her feel violated and ostracized.

In December 2014, [members](#) of the USG's Mental Health Initiative Board met with Senior Associate Dean of the College Claire Fowler to explore the possibility of publishing the official policies for mental health withdrawals and readmissions in the Undergraduate Announcement, something that they [now do](#).

Fowler suggested that the Mental Health Initiative Board work with the [Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students](#) (ODUS) to revise the current [FAQs](#) on mental health withdrawals and readmissions and have that recognized as the University's official protocol. The conference came after 95.5 percent of voters approved of a referendum question calling for greater transparency in mental health withdrawal and readmission policies.

Two years later, in December 2016, the Department of Justice (DOJ) [concluded](#) its review of the University's Americans with Disabilities Act policies. The DOJ did not find any instances of non-compliance. However, the University and the DOJ reached an agreement that detailed steps that the University must take to strengthen its policies, practices, and training to benefit all current and future students with disabilities.

At the time, the University said it "will clarify some information regarding policies and practices for reasonable accommodations and student leaves of absence."

### ***How students obtain a mental health related leave***

According to a [document](#) from CPS from December 2018, approximately 150 – 180 undergraduates take a leave of absence in the course of an academic year, with approximately 30 – 40 students for self-described mental health reasons.

"In almost all cases, it is the student who initiates the leave of absence," the document reads. There are around three to five cases a year where the University will encourage a student who had not initially considered time away to consider doing so to "address the issues affecting their safety and/or well-being."

The document also explained how most students who encounter mental health issues at the University remain enrolled.

Chae explained that he hadn't initially considered his leave a "mental health leave" and decided to take time off for an "overwhelming number of factors," including to figure out what his goals were to "resituate academically."

"I decided I need some time away to figure out, like, what's even overwhelming me?" he said.

According to CPS, a leave of absence is typically initiated for one of two reasons: the student believes that their treatment requires more attention than is possible while also being a full-time student, or the student has been unable to concentrate on their academic work and hopes to avoid a negative effect in their coursework.

Chae visited a University [website](#) for students considering taking a leave and then had a conversation with his residential college dean to put a specific plan in place, which is the first step in the leave process.

"I might have emailed [my dean] on a Friday, and we met on that Monday," he said. "We basically had a quick Zoom meeting talking about how we are feeling and what's going on and I didn't really get any sort of resistance."

"Throughout the whole process, she was pretty supportive," he added.

Sometimes the Director of Student Life (DSL) or dean may request or require an exit consultation with CPS before students leave campus to understand the student's experience on campus or provide treatment recommendations that the student can pursue while away from the University.

In order to allow disclosure of limited information from the exit consultation from CPS to the DSL or dean, the student is required to sign an authorization, permitting CPS to share with the DSL or the dean the student's risk assessment and recommendations for treatment.

After the meeting with the dean and if necessary, a consultation with CPS, students planning on taking a leave need to sign a few documents.

"It was a lot easier than expected," Chae said.

Considering Erdman decided to take a leave during the middle of the semester, once he pressed a button confirming his leave, he had to move out.

"Once you press the button, you have 72 hours to leave," Erdman said.

### ***Getting reinstated by the University***

Chae and Erdman both reported that during their time off, they didn't receive any "check-ins" or resources from the University, besides information about the reinstatement process a few weeks before they were slated to return to Princeton.

The semester **before** the student's return, the residential college dean communicates what is required for reinstatement, provides the timetable for submitting forms, information about financial aid, and rooming preferences, and directs the student to the reinstatement application.

After taking time off, Erdman filled out a form to be reinstated by the University, which he explained had "conflicting deadlines" and made course selection "stressful."

He claimed that due to the time this process took place for him, it interfered with his course selection.

"I had a friend who took an academic leave of absence. He said that he was able to do course selection at a normal time," he said.

According to a letter obtained by the 'Prince' in order to be reinstated by the University, Erdman had to schedule an appointment with CPS between four and six weeks before the beginning of his intended return.

"A goal of your treatment should be the development of an increased ability to handle both the academic and psychological stresses that regularly arise during a semester here," the letter read.

In some circumstances, students have to meet with a CPS counselor as part of the reinstatement process. According to CPS, the consultation confirms that the student is not at risk of self-harm or harm to others, and the meeting provides an opportunity for the **CPS** clinician to discuss the progress the student has made following their leave. Sometimes, the meetings are used to help with ongoing support when the student returns to campus.

Though Chae did not express issues with course selection, considering he first took time off in the spring semester and came back the following spring, he could not participate in room draw. He was placed in a random room when he returned.

According to University guidelines, the University expects that "all students will be reinstated."

### ***Participation in extracurriculars***

Erdman was previously the drum major and the president of the [Princeton University Band](#). He explained that during the fall semester, he traveled from his home in Maryland to play with the band at football games.

According to him, about three weeks later, a member of ODUS who knew that he was on a leave recognized him and told the band that he could not play anymore. Erdman also claimed that he was not allowed to follow the band “as a fan” on their march around the stadium before football games either.

Erdman said that in the contract he signed when he first took a leave, it mentioned that students could not be a part of ODUS-affiliated clubs during their time off, but he explained that it was “buried” and that “it wasn’t something that [he] was aware of” until after ODUS told him he could no longer participate.

“I did dig through and find that [in the contract], but it was hard,” he said.

Chae remained president of the [Korean Students Association](#) at Princeton during his time off and helped out with events from home.

“I remember that I was still like, taking on a lot of the responsibilities like figuring out catered food and stuff like that, even though I was like 1000s of miles away in Texas,” he said.

He mentioned that although he didn’t have an experience like Erdman, he knew a friend who was a senior who took a leave who wanted to participate in their senior show for a performance group, but wasn’t allowed to by ODUS.

### ***Room for improvement***

Erdman also said that he wishes the University provided more resources to students before deciding on a mental health leave of absence.

“There are ways to step in before [taking a leave] that I feel weren’t really accessible,” Erdman said.

He explained how during his leave, he was a part of an intensive outpatient program (IOP). Though Erdman described his IOP as “intense,” he said that “a lot of IOPs are designed for people to work and then go [to the program] in the evening.”

Princeton University does not offer an IOP nor resources to obtain one on the CPS website. On the other hand, Rutgers University [does offer](#) an IOP through a four-week, 12-session structured program for adults ages 18 and older “with a focus on utilizing DBT [(dialectical behavior therapy)] skills to manage and relieve symptoms of anxiety and depression.” Participants of the program attend three three-hour sessions a week. The program offers group sessions facilitated by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker as well as individual and family therapy and medication management appointments with a Licensed Medical Provider.

Chae explained that having to take a year off instead of having the option to take a semester off from Princeton made his choice “a much bigger decision.”

“If you can’t take a semester, then you kind of go all into this gap year or not at all,” he said.

Students with [advanced standing](#) eligibility who plan on taking the option of one semester of advanced standing can apply for a one-semester leave of absence. Students who have [completed](#) at least one year of study and have joined an academic department may also petition to take a one-semester leave if they “can demonstrate that returning out of the normal sequence would not unreasonably impact their regular progress to degree.”

Chae reflected on his time off and mentioned how choosing to take a gap year was the right choice for him.

He said that although he believes that may be a privileged thing to say, as he had resources available and a supportive home environment, he thinks that “you should be the priority” when it comes to deciding to take a leave or not.

“I gained a lot of great skills that I wouldn’t have had time to develop while here on campus,” Chae said. “My advice would be if you feel like you need it, you can take it and then the rest can be figured out later.”

*Lia Opperman is an associate News editor for the ‘Prince.’*

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**NEWS**

# Firestorm erupts at Princeton High School over principal's unexplained removal



Students walked out of afternoon classes on Friday, April 21.

Annie Rupertus / Daily Princetonian

**Charlie Roth** and **Annie Rupertus**

April 25, 2023 | 11:55pm EDT

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*Editor's Note: This piece has been updated with comment from Chmiel's lawyer, David Schroth.*

Upwards of 75 students walked out of afternoon classes and joined parents to gather in front of Princeton High School at 1 p.m. on Friday, April 21. They chanted slogans like "We want Chmiel!" and cheered for cars that honked as they drove by.

The group was protesting the recent removal of principal Frank Chmiel '98. His replacement marks the fifth principal in the last four years.

Chmiel's termination was announced in indirect terms in a message sent to the high school community on March 17. In the message, Superintendent of Princeton Public Schools Dr. Carol Kelley and the Princeton Public Schools Board wrote that PHS's assistant principals have "jointly assumed the responsibilities of the principal ... on a temporary basis." The full [email](#) can be read here.

Chmiel was not identified by name in the message. Additionally, no explanation for his firing was provided.

For the school community, the past month has been marked by turmoil as interests of parents, students, and administration collide. As legal constraints complicate the school board's ability to share information about the termination, some students feel their concerns are being ignored.

According to Shira Kutin, a senior at PHS, the email was sent the evening of "Asian Fest," one of the schools "biggest events" of the year. Chmiel was expected to participate.

She reported that she and other students were "shocked" by the email.

"It felt like it came out of nowhere," she told The Daily Princetonian.

### ***Why was Chmiel removed?***

"We don't really know," said parent Elizabeth Semrod, who was present at the start of the walkout. "He's really loved and adored by the students," she said. "I don't know one parent or one student that's not behind him."

Kutin recalled Chmiel's presence "in between classes in the hallway saying hi to everyone."



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"He would come into clubs, he would stop by during lunch," she said. "And it really didn't take too much time out of his day, but we all knew him and saw him all the time."

"He just kind of lightened the mood whenever we did see him. He was very friendly to everyone ... I don't know a single person that didn't like him," Kutin continued. "He was the sense of stability and friendliness that we all needed."

"One person even quoted Batman, and said that he's not the principal we deserve but the principal we need," Henry Cammerzell '25, who went to Princeton High School, told the 'Prince.'

In an interview with the 'Prince,' President of the Princeton Board of Education Dafna Kendal said that "unless Mr. Chmiel waives his right to privacy in writing," the board's hands are tied, legally, as far as disclosing any more details about the removal.

Kelley confirmed in an email to the 'Prince' that state law prohibits the board from sharing more.

"The board is extremely frustrated that we can't say more," Kendal said, adding that she thinks the protest "was a good display of democracy."

So far, Chmiel has not waived his right to privacy. Nor has he filed plans for an appeal or a [Donaldson hearing](#) — an informal appearance before the school board.

David Schroth, one of Chmiel's lawyers, said they are reviewing the reasons for non-renewal and will make a decision soon.

"There's a natural period of quiet [while we review the documents]," Schroth told the 'Prince.' "And as frustrating as that may be for the parents and the students because they're wondering what's going on, I can assure them that we are going through all of this with a fine tooth comb. As soon as we can let anyone know what our next steps are going to be, we will."

Schroth says the deadline to request a Donaldson hearing is Monday, and the team will make a decision by then. He also said he is "exploring the option of separate civil litigation which may be viable on this case."

Neither Schroth nor Ben Montenegro, the other attorney representing Chmiel, are the attorneys that the teacher's union assigned to Chmiel for this case.

### **Parents, students, and administrators clash**

Parents and students had previously protested on [March 20](#) at PHS and on [April 16](#) in Hinds Plaza, gathering under a banner that read, "Save Princeton High School! Reinstate Principal Chmiel!"



Protesting students and parents gather in the Hinds plaza on April 16.

Sam Kagan / The Daily Princetonian

"The board has continued to just ignore this reaction by the students," said Elif Cam, a ninth grader at the walkout. "It was like they didn't even care. And the board is supposed to represent our interests, the students and the community of Princeton High School."

Students also spoke up in support of Chmiel at the March 28 [Board of Education meeting](#). A [number](#) of student [petitions](#) have circulated, garnering thousands of signatures in support of Chmiel. Another, whose author does not identify herself as a PHS student, [calls for Kelley's resignation](#) as superintendent.

Friday's rally was organized by a group of sophomores via an Instagram account called [@chmiels\\_the\\_real\\_deal](#), according to PHS sophomore McConnell Sundgren. "Chmiel deserves justice and recognition for his love at PHS and unfair termination," reads a [post](#) advertising the walkout.

Students gathered at the school in support of Chmiel before marching to the district building.

Some students also voiced criticism of Kelley, chanting, "Get Kelley out!"



Students met at the district building to meet with Kelley.

Annie Rupertus / The Daily Princetonian

Soon after the protestors arrived at the district building, they sent a delegate to knock on the door and request a meeting. Seven students were sent in to speak with Kelley — the meeting lasted almost an hour and a half, according to Princeton Public Schools Public Information Officer Elizabeth Collier, who was present.

Sundgren, who was also at the meeting, noted that it mostly involved students expressing their support for Chmiel, as well as concerns around transparency and student involvement in the Board of Education.

On the subject of the meeting, Kelley wrote in an email to the 'Prince' that she "understand[s] and empathize[s] with the students' feelings," adding, "whenever a student's voice is heard, it's productive."

Kendal told the 'Prince' that her impression based on conversations with administrators present at the meeting was that it was "a good first step." Not all of the students agreed.

"We came to the Superintendent with real concerns and questions that required real transparency," sophomore Alexis Colvin wrote in a message to the 'Prince.' "What we were placated with was a platter of sandwiches, the district's therapy dog, compliments on our looks, and admonition to reach out to our school counselors."

"Our questions were dismissed and there was some aggressive intimidation," Colvin said. "We wanted to make clear that if the board honored our request to reinstate Principal Chmiel, it would be seen as a point of strength for recognizing a poor decision."

One student reported being followed back to school and questioned by a member of the district's staff after the meeting. "The individual made a point to apologize for Kelley's aggressive behavior towards me during the meeting," the student said, adding, "the interaction made me feel uncomfortable, intimidated, and concerned about the ramifications of the conversation."

### **A pattern of administrative turnover**

Colvin reported that students asked Kelley to confirm whether she "had fired 14 principals at her last place of employment."

"She told us that she couldn't recall," Colvin said.

Semrod raised similar concerns about Kelley in an interview with the 'Prince.'

"Our superintendent has a pretty heavy record," she said. "She's kind of known for coming in and firing people."

Kelley began at Princeton Public Schools in July 2021. Previously, she served as superintendent of Oak Park Elementary District 97 in Oak Park, Ill. from 2015–2021, and before that, she served as Superintendent of Branchburg Township School District in Branchburg, N.J. from 2012–2015.

Amanda Siegfried, the Senior Director of Communications for Oak Park Elementary District 97, told the 'Prince' that "no principals were fired during Dr. Kelley's tenure as superintendent."

Representatives from the Branchburg Township School District did not respond to a request for comment.

When asked about rumors about her record dismissing administrators, Kelley replied, "Any staffing recommendations have been made with input from multiple leadership sources."

Frequent administrative turnovers at PHS have caused difficulties for students in the past few years.

"There's no consistent message in what the school is going for, if you're swapping people in and out all the time," Cammerzell told the 'Prince.' "Ever since I graduated Middle School, there's been a sense of turmoil within Princeton public schools."

Some community members have remained supportive of Kelley. Princeton Parents for Black Children (PPBC), a group that advocates for Black students in Princeton public schools, issued an email statement on March 28 in support of Kelley and opposing "attacks against Black women [in] leadership."

The statement affirmed a trust in Kelley and the board "in its recent personnel decisions regarding Princeton High School," adding, "We also condemn and share our disappointment in efforts by a small, but vocal, group of parents to use these decisions as a pretext to mount a vicious and disrespectful misinformation campaign against Dr. Carol Kelley and other Black women leaders in the district."

The PPBC Executive Board situated the discourse in a national context, writing, "Attacks against educators and education are taking place around the country. From banning books, to eliminating Black History from curriculum, to discrimination against LGBTQ students, to physical attacks and threats against Board of Education members, this country is confronted with a crisis that is being led by people with a specific political agenda. It has become a national movement and, [noticeably], outsiders have joined the few locals to target Princeton."

An abridged version of the statement was published as a letter to the editor in [Town Topics](#) on March 29.

It remains unclear whether Chmiel will be reinstated and whether the board will be able to disclose more details around his removal.

"I'm waiting for a legal action," Cam told the 'Prince.' "I'm excited to see what Chmiel and his lawyers have in store for us."

*Charlie Roth is a head Data editor and staff news writer for the 'Prince,' focusing on local politics coverage.*

*Annie Rupertus is an associate News editor for the 'Prince.'*

*Please direct any corrections requests to corrections[at]dailyprincetonian.com.*

OPINION

# The collapse of compact theory should mean statehood for Puerto Rico



Whig Hall.

Angel Kuo / The Daily Princetonian

**Ignacio Arias**

April 26, 2023 | 12:32am EDT

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*The following is a guest contribution and reflects the author's views alone. For information on how to submit an article to the Opinion Section, click [here](#).*

Former president of the Puerto Rico Senate [Eduardo Bhatia '86](#), a visiting professor in the School of Public and International Affairs, spoke at a thoughtful colloquium on Puerto Rico's territory status at an event [hosted](#) by the [American Whig-Clio](#)philic Society on April 11. Bhatia retold the start of his career in politics and described the issues to which he has devoted his time in public office, namely: education, energy policy, and Puerto Rico's debt.

The main topic of Professor Bhatia's talk was statehood for Puerto Rico. He presented the issue as a twofold one: a matter of civil rights and of Puerto Rican identity. Regarding the former, he said it should be a no-brainer — naturally, Puerto Ricans, as U.S. citizens, should be able to have a say in national affairs by voting for the President of the United States and sending voting representatives to Congress. But regarding the latter, he stressed the sensitivity of the politics of Puerto Rican identity and its many forms, implying that they may impede further integration with the mainland.

However, the cultural question is often overstated. The question is not whether Puerto Ricans wish to be admitted into the Union. That [was already answered](#) in the affirmative in a 2020 referendum. The question is whether Congress will admit them, which has been long delayed by special interests and legal ambiguities. One of the barriers to entry is the so-called “compact theory,” which posits the existence of a bilateral agreement, or ‘compact,’ between the United States and Puerto Rico, effectively suggesting that Puerto Rico became sovereign upon gaining Commonwealth status. This can present a hurdle to statehood, as it promotes the status quo as being a viable alternative.

Yet compact theory is easily dismissed — and has been by the Supreme Court. Further, there's low support for independence, and statehood won in the last referendum. All of this points to statehood being a question of “if,” not “when.” As we move beyond compact theory, politicians in both Washington and in San Juan should answer the call of statesmanship, reject identity and party politics, and admit Puerto Rico into the Union.

Professor Bhatia gave a well-summarized legal history of Puerto Rico. Past insular cases deemed Puerto Rico “foreign … in a domestic sense” (*Downes v. Bidwell*), and they are still precedential law today ([despite recent challenges](#)). Puerto Rico is an unincorporated territory of the U.S. and has never been anything else. Though citizens of these United States [since 1917](#), Puerto Ricans have never chosen our President or sent a voting representative to Congress, let alone had a meaningful say in which welfare programs we benefit from or which wars we fight in. This is true despite the fact that, for more than a century, Puerto Ricans have fought for our country in every major war and [gallantly served it](#).

Once he reviewed the legal history, Professor Bhatia discussed ‘compact theory’ through a story about [his own role](#) in *Puerto Rico v. Franklin California Tax-Free Trust* (2016). The case was prompted because the island lacked legal recourse for bankruptcy after it was partially removed from the Federal Bankruptcy Code in 1984. In the absence of coverage by the law, then-Senate President Bhatia drafted and passed a similar bankruptcy law in the Puerto Rico legislature. The law's validity was premised at least partially on compact theory, supposing that if the island is sovereign it can set its own laws. The Supreme Court rejected the law and compact theory with it.

Indeed, the High Court has been repeatedly clear, then and since, that compact theory is no more than a myth. In *Puerto Rico v. Sánchez Valle* (2016), the court found that Puerto Rico is not a sovereign for double-jeopardy purposes. Justice Elena Kagan's opinion for the Court completely debunked compact theory, affirming that the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico only exists by the imprimatur of the US Congress, given in [Public Law 600 of 1950](#). “Put simply, Congress conferred the authority to create the Puerto Rico Constitution, which in turn confers the authority to bring criminal charges … The island's constitution, significant though it is, does not break the chain.”

This should come as no surprise. To accept compact theory is to break with all prior Congressional treatment of territories. Rather, as Columbia law professor Christina D. Ponsa-Kraus '90 [noted](#), “Congress merely did what Congress has always had the power to do under the Territory Clause: it conferred upon Puerto Rico a significant degree of autonomy — greater autonomy than any territory before it — but it did not relinquish U.S. sovereignty under the Territory Clause, nor could it have.”

Why, then, does compact theory exist? As Professor Bhatia noted, the useful fiction benefited America on the world stage during the Cold War to argue that it had decolonized Puerto Rico. Also, the notion of a ‘special relationship’ between the US and Puerto Rico profited Governor Luis Muñoz Marín and his Popular Democratic Party, who were intent to both mollify and capitalize on nationalist sentiment — which, in the 1930s and 40s, had reached a fever pitch that has died down ever since.

Though perhaps instrumentally useful in the 1950s, the proliferation of this theory has been ultimately harmful. The legal ambiguity of compact theory — and territorial status as a whole — serve to create a tax haven for corporate and private wealth. This is excellently documented by Alexander Odishelidze in his book *Pay to the Order of Puerto Rico*, which, though almost twenty years old, remains a highly relevant guide to the status question and to the use and abuse of tax breaks in Puerto Rico, both at the federal and local level. The rhetoric of a special relationship between Puerto Rico and the U.S. was always meant to disguise what Puerto Rico remains to this day: a territory.

The death of compact theory was heralded by the 2016 Supreme Court cases and what followed. After *Puerto Rico v. Franklin California Tax-Free Trust*, Congress passed the **PROMESA Act**, which mandated a Financial Oversight Management Board to handle Puerto Rico’s debt. Its role in the island’s politics has been controversial ever since. Needless to say, this would not have happened if Puerto Rico had a voting Congressional delegation: a clear sign that Commonwealth status is simply untenable.



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With Congress retaining the last word, Puerto Rico’s status must be finally settled by the legislative process. As many Princetonians flock to Washington for summer internships in Capitol Hill, they would do well to consider this national question for what it is: one of civil rights.

Compact theory’s rejection by the Supreme Court speaks to the inherent problems of territorial status. This experiment has been tried and found wanting, which leaves **only two options**: statehood or independence. Statehood is not the panacea to all of the island’s woes, but it will best equip Puerto Ricans to promote their interests and fully participate in national affairs. Statehood alone would redeem the full value of the precious grant of American citizenship and thus secure the blessings of liberty for three million Americans.

*Ignacio Arias is a sophomore from Guaynabo, PR. He can be reached at ia3069@princeton.edu*

OPINION

# It's time for Princeton to contextualize students' GPAs



Faculty Room in Nassau Hall  
Naomi Hess / The Daily Princetonian

**Henry Hsiao**

April 25, 2023 | 11:30pm EDT

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Grading is a subject of great mystery and concern at most schools, including Princeton, especially as finals season approaches and the end of the semester draws near. But conversations around grading reform are less prominent, and the Princeton community has yet to sufficiently grapple with the important questions of this debate. Are the systems we have in place conducive to student learning and growth — or are they harmful to those objectives? And do they constitute an accurate standard for assessing students' academic progress and achievements (if such a standard is even possible)?

The grade point average (GPA), which aggregates a student's grades across all of their coursework, is, by most accounts, an **imperfect and flawed tool** for investigating the aforementioned matters. Its ubiquity, unfortunately, isn't diminishing, so we must revise it in order to better meet our educational goals of fostering an appreciation for (and understanding of) a diversity of disciplines, developing an open and critically discerning mind, and, yes, **serving humanity**. To accomplish this, we should contextualize Princeton's grading benchmarks by providing median grades for each course alongside students' earned grades on their transcripts. This method, also adopted at other colleges, will give a fuller account of a student's academic circumstances, the nature of their coursework, and their relative successes, to clarify what may seem at times arbitrary and random.

Median grades put a student's performance in a class in the context of the overall course's performance. Their introduction would be a quick, effective way of allowing students themselves — plus employers and graduate school admissions offices — to see and compare the student's achievements in their courses to those of their peers. Quite often, low or unusual grades can puzzle transcript reviewers — were they flukes or signs of poor work? Median grades, in tandem with corroborating documentation (e.g., on a family emergency or severe illness), can answer these doubts, noting how abnormal a student's performance actually was. Reporting the contextual median is thus a safeguard against potential misinterpretation of a student's grades and serves to aid both the student and those requesting their transcript.

This metric benefits Princetonians not only beyond the University, but also while they're on campus. A ramification of contextualizing grades through medians is the encouragement of academic venturing; students who might've otherwise feared taking a course interesting to them — because of the chances of receiving a "bad" grade (lacking any supporting explanation) — might be more inclined to go ahead and take a "risk," if their individual grade were contextualized. This may, as a result, reduce stress and anxiety levels surrounding grading, and help build an environment of learning for learning's sake, rather than for the sole pursuit of a floating letter. Posting medians, then, would assist students in their journey of broad exploration, part of Princeton's **mission** of bestowing a comprehensive liberal arts education.

There, too, is a rationale for relying on the median, instead of another measure of central tendency, i.e., the average. While all measures are fairly easy to collect — and indeed, many classes at Princeton gather such data or make them known to their students — the median describes the middle value of a frequency distribution of grades and is less likely to be highly skewed by outliers, as an average would be. To guarantee more accurate sample sizes, reporting medians would be mandatory for courses with, say, 10 or more students enrolled, and optional for those with under 10 students. This procedure wouldn't apply, however, to departmental independent work, e.g., junior papers or the senior thesis, due to the personal character of those components. Classes taken Pass/D/Fail or "Audit" would be exempt as well. Below is a prototype:

Course Title	Grade	Median
Course #1	B+	A
Course #2	A-	A-
Course #3	A+	B+
Course #4	C	B-

This isn't an outlandish or outrageous proposal, for we already recognize that it works. Institutions of higher education across the country, like **Indiana University** and the **University of California, Berkeley**, now track average or median grades — in fact, the former goes further, **detailing** the "percentage of students who are

majors in the given course department," the grade distributions per section, and so forth. Cornell University, as yet another example, currently uses a system of contextualized grading through the reporting of class medians on student transcripts, as has Dartmouth College since 1994.

The merits of medians don't just accrue for students and transcript viewers, though — they also aid faculty members: recording them would enable Princeton instructors to tweak and adjust their courses, if necessary. For instance, a median grade far lower than in previous years' iterations might not be a total warning sign, but a persistent trend of significantly decreasing median grades might indicate a need to change something about the course (or students' quality of output). Medians would function, then, as another form of feedback on a course's structuring, pacing, and elements — a kind of self-evaluation. And if faculty members had this data for all courses, they could check for and ensure consistency of grading across academic fields, thus monitoring for and controlling rampant grade inflation or wild fluctuations.



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As Dartmouth has done, these median figures shouldn't be publicly circulated (e.g., on the Registrar's website) in order to deter students from attempting to game course selection and purposely pick "easier" classes. After all, the intent of implementing this design is to facilitate academic risk-taking, much like the present P/D/F policy, lessen the focus on the letter grade itself and place more emphasis on the fun and enjoyment of learning. The intellectual rewards of wrestling with, and eventually mastering, unfamiliar or difficult material should be more treasured than the final letter grade. Therefore, students should only have statistics about classes they've finished taking.

Of course, the transition to a contextual GPA may come with its own complications. The biggest foreseeable troubles are on the logistical front. For a case study, look no further than the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which killed its contextual GPA in 2017, despite years of efforts towards launching such a system. The UNC administration concluded that adding extra columns to the transcript and revamping the registrar's site would be infeasible, citing "technical challenges" and "prohibitive costs." Still, for Princeton, an educational institution with ample resources, these shouldn't be large issues — indeed, they pale in comparison to far more serious problems that have to be dealt with (e.g., the conversion of certificate programs to minors or campus construction).

Contextualizing the student GPA through median grades grants every stakeholder involved a win: students have improved access to information at their fingertips about their performance and are incentivized to engage in academic exploration and risk-taking; faculty can use the data to make modifications to, and prioritize consistency in, their courses; and employers and graduate school admissions committees have a fuller picture about students' work in each course and the personal circumstances that reflect upon that work.

This humble suggestion ought to be merely the start of an important discussion about grading reform at Princeton — one which we can hope won't cease anytime soon. Adopting contextual grading through class medians, as outlined above, will prove an excellent first step towards demystifying the student GPA and grading process at Princeton.

*Henry Hsiao is a first-year contributing columnist and assistant Opinion editor from Princeton, N.J. He can be reached at [henry.hsiao@princeton.edu](mailto:henry.hsiao@princeton.edu).*

OPINION

# Ronen Shoval's position as a lecturer at Princeton is deeply concerning



Bobst Hall: the home of the James Madison Program.

Louisa Gheorghita / The Daily Princetonian

**Eldar Shafir** and **Uri Hasson**

April 25, 2023 | 10:45pm EDT

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We write this to alert faculty, students, and the administration of the **appointment of Ronen Shoval as Research Scholar and Lecturer in Politics**, and to invite us to reflect on who we want to appoint to teach our students.

As described by the **media**, **politicians and civil rights groups**, and numerous **scholars**, Shoval is the founder of an **ultranationalist Israeli group** that has waged campaigns of **intimidation and harassment** against prominent **human rights organizations**, **academic departments**, **authors**, **artists**, and **scholars** across Israel for years. Shoval says he departed the group in 2013. Yet, before his departure, the organization was described by experts testifying in an Israeli court as having aspects in **common with fascism**. And even after his purported departure, when the organization was **accused of “Israeli McCarthyism”**, Shoval, referring to McCarthy, **responded** that, “The historical details reveal that he was mostly correct in most cases.”

Stunningly, Shoval is now teaching a [Freshman Seminar](#) at Princeton! Yes, this anti-democratic, anti-academic freedom “scholar,” has been charged with welcoming our first-years into a life of academic free-thinking.

To be clear, the issue here is not about freedom of speech. If someone on campus would like to hear McCarthyites or founders of organizations labeled fascist speak, by all means, invite them to speak. Granting University Lecturer status, however, is a whole other matter. Lecturers at Princeton not only have power over students, but access to a podium, resources, and infrastructure. When used by bad actors, these privileges can easily facilitate the development of anti-democratic playbooks, maliciously aimed at attacking independent thinkers and academic freedom. Princeton should always support a wide variety of views, but not a variety of scare tactics or bullying techniques.

Some background: In 2010, [Im Tirtzu, the ultra-nationalist group](#) of which Shoval was the founder and long-time chairman, campaigned against academics who taught courses about the Palestinian narrative of 1948. [Shoval led the campaign](#) to shut down the [political science department at Ben Gurion University](#). It is bewildering to us that someone who fought to close one respectable political science department should be generously hosted by another.

[Im Tirtzu has also allegedly](#) used private documents providing information on human rights organizations obtained from private investigators, and Shoval in 2013 [acknowledged](#) in a [legal testimony](#) that the group also had investigators spy on lawyers representing those groups. While Shoval was chairman, Im Tirtzu [sued](#) entities that called the organization [fascist](#) for defamation. Expert witness, historian, and recipient of the prestigious Israel Prize, Professor of Hebrew University of Jerusalem Zeev Sternhell, [argued](#) that the group displayed the traits of early-stage fascist movements; and religious scholar Tomer Persico testified that Ronen Shoval admitted he was influenced by thinkers whose teachings served as a basis for fascist ideology.

After Shoval’s departure, Im Tirtzu produced an appalling [video](#) in 2015, which [founder and former-chairman Shoval posted to his Facebook page](#), labeling the leaders of Israel’s most prominent human rights organizations “foreign agents,” and equating their work with support for terrorism. The targeted human-rights leaders included the director of the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel; the outreach director for Breaking the Silence; a lawyer for the Center for the Defense of the Individual; and the executive director of B’Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. The video — [widely accused of incitement](#) by people like [Isaac Herzog](#), now president of Israel, and by organizations like [ARZA](#), the Zionist wing of the Reform Movement (the largest Jewish religious stream in North America) — opens with the staged dramatization of a knife attack by a Palestinian man and goes on to allege that such violence is encouraged by the four Israeli rights activists. The video not only names the activists but also shows their photos. Not surprisingly, these human rights activists reportedly [received death threats](#) on social media after the clip was released.

With his appointment as Scholar and Lecturer, Ronen Shoval is now free to use his University affiliation to further advance his hateful agenda. (He now signs his email, “Associate Research Scholar & Lecturer in Politics, James Madison Program in American Ideals & Institutions, Department of Politics, Princeton University.”) Ronen Shoval was [invited by the James Madison Program](#) to be a Lecturer in Politics and to teach first-years at Princeton. If the Executive Committee of the Madison Program was unaware of Shoval’s “methods,” we urge them to revise their procedures, and if they were aware, we urge them to rethink how they evaluate the CVs and attitudes of those they invite as lecturers.

As faculty, we are embarrassed. We apologize to our first-years and to the rest of the University community. We call on the University and its departments to reflect on who exactly we want to bring to teach our students. Our objectives in writing this column are threefold: 1) inform our community of this lamentable situation, 2) call on

Princeton University's departments and programs to revisit their procedures for inviting visitors to teach on campus (needless to say, all the material reviewed here was easily accessible, just a few clicks away, to the hiring committees), and 3) **support our colleagues, the judiciary, and democratic institutions in Israel in their current fight for democracy**, with an aspiration towards a truly democratic state for Israelis and Palestinians.

*Eldar Shafir is a professor in behavioral science and public policy at Princeton University. He can be reached at shafir@princeton.edu. Uri Hasson is a professor of psychology and neuroscience at Princeton University. He can be reached at hasson@princeton.edu.*



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OPINION

# Appropriation is not representation



The Effron Music Building.

Angel Kuo / The Daily Princetonian

**Peter Christian**

April 25, 2023 | 10:52pm EDT

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*The following is a guest contribution and reflects the author's views alone. For information on how to submit an article to the Opinion Section, click [here](#).*

When an institution sponsors an event, there is an implicit suggestion that some of its people approve of the event's content. As such, the April 12 [event](#) titled "Dvořák's Prophecy and the Vexed Fate of Black Classical Music," [co-sponsored by the James Madison Program Initiative on Politics and Statesmanship](#) and the Department of Music, should be an embarrassment to Princeton students and faculty.

Rather than representing the complex richness of Black American music and histories, some of the speakers glorified white composers who intentionally appropriated Black American music. Misrepresentation is worse than no representation at all; it causes harm instead of doing good. Institutions that program events must

ensure that communities on campus are not only represented but represented well, with community members involved in the decision-making process.

Formatted as a panel on “Black classical music” and moderated by Initiative on Politics and Statesmanship Director Dr. Allen C. Guelzo, the speakers included: Joseph Horowitz, who recently authored a book of the same title as the event; Dr. John McWhorter, an associate professor in the Slavic Department at Columbia University who favorably reviewed Horowitz’s book; and Professor Sidney Outlaw, a celebrated baritone on the voice faculty of Manhattan School of Music and Brevard Music Center.

Despite the title of the event, the content was not primarily about music written by Black people. In the musical selections performed, only one Black American composer, Harry T. Burleigh, was represented. Otherwise, the panel discussion barely included any content about Black American composers or musicians. Apart from Burleigh, the panelists briefly mentioned only a few Black composers active in the first half of the 20th century — including William Levi Dawson, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, R. Nathaniel Dett, Florence Price, and William Grant Still — with few details of their biographies or musical works noted. No Black composers or songwriters active in the last 50 years were mentioned.

Instead of centering music written by Black people, most of the speaking time was focused on the composers Antonín Dvořák, George Gershwin, and Charles Ives, none of whom was Black. Guelzo claimed that Ives should be “in the pantheon of U.S. classical music,” and panelist Joseph Horowitz said that Gershwin’s opera “Porgy and Bess” is the fulfillment of Dvořák’s prophecy.”

The most egregiously shocking detour of the evening occurred when Dr. McWhorter said, “I have a fantasy that in 50 years, white people can sing ‘Porgy and Bess.’” To this, Horowitz added, “until we have a white Porgy, the full stature and the very identity of this opera will remain obscure,” claiming that “the greatest recordings” of the opera were by Lawrence Tibbett who, according to Horowitz, “happened to specialize in singing ‘Black,’ but he was white.”

The mere consideration of a white “Porgy and Bess” at a Princeton event is flagrantly appalling. The opera “Porgy and Bess” was premiered with an all-Black cast, and most productions since have followed this precedent.

Professor Outlaw mentioned the troubling history of Black singers being relegated only to Black roles, while also having their multifaceted talents ignored: “I’m cool with that as long as arts administrators of opera companies are going to be willing to hire Black people for regular standard repertoire.”

There are many reasons why this country does not need a white “Porgy and Bess,” not even fifty years from now. The main reason, however, is the long and painful history of white Americans taking on “Black roles” in music and theater, replete with hurtful, mocking stereotypes.

How could this event, supposedly about “Black classical music,” stray so far from the course? The answer is hidden in the event’s title, “Dvořák’s Prophecy,” coming from the book by Horowitz. According to Horowitz, composer Antonín Dvořák predicted that U.S. classical music would be rooted in Black American and Indigenous melodies, and his prediction never came true because American composers became overly fascinated with European modernism during the 20th century. Horowitz suggested a reorientation of U.S. music history around composers who used Black American and Indigenous music as source material.

There are many problems with Horowitz’s central premise, as well as his supporting evidence.



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First and foremost, his concept of “Black classical music” is overly reductive and does not adequately represent the complexity and multiplicity of Black expression, music, and scholarship in the United States. His work ignores many storied living composers, including Tania León, Roscoe Mitchell, Alvin Singleton, and countless more. It additionally ignores scholars such as Amiri Baraka who point to “so-called jazz” as “American classical music.” Black American contributions to “popular music” were briefly mentioned, but not seriously considered at this event — a mistake. The musical innovations of Black Americans have been foundational to music in America and across the globe. This fact should be wholly celebrated and not relegated to a “popular music” footnote.

Dvořák himself had a flawed understanding of Black American music, having conflated spirituals with blackface minstrel songs written by the likes of Stephen Foster, as he wrote in 1895, “The white composers who wrote the touching Negro songs … had a similarly sympathetic comprehension of the deep pathos of slave life.” Dvořák’s own arrangement of Foster’s “Old Folks at Home” for orchestra and chorus premiered at Madison Square in 1894, with Burleigh and the renowned soprano Sissieretta Jones as soloists expected to sing such insulting lines as “still longing for the old plantation.”

The foundational error in Horowitz’s concept of “Dvořák’s prophecy” is that it prioritizes composers whose works are rooted in appropriations of Blackness and Indigeneity. Salient critiques of appropriation are plentiful from the likes of bell hooks, Greg Tate, and Dylan Robinson, and have been outspokenly voiced since Frederick Douglass, who called blackface performers “the filthy scum of white society, who have stolen from us a complexion denied to them by nature, in which to make money, and pander to the corrupt taste of their white fellow-citizens.”

Prominent Black contemporaries of Dvořák and Gershwin likewise offered critiques. The composer Will Marion Cook, who had studied with Dvořák at the National Conservatory of Music, suggested in 1898 that, in Dvořák’s works based on Black American music, “something lacked … which even Dvořák’s great genius failed to comprehend, and only a Negro who had seen and felt and suffered could supply.” Similarly, the composer Hall Johnson wrote a lengthy and scathing critique of Gershwin’s “Porgy and Bess” for “Opportunity” in January 1936, in which he illustrated via metaphor how white appropriations of Black American music fail to capture the underlying depth of meaning: “Only we who sowed the seed can know the full and potent secret of the flower … all they can ever grasp is a handful of leaves.”

Apparently without knowledge — or in willful ignorance — of these critiques, the speakers at the event glorified Dvořák, Gershwin, and Ives, with “Black classical music” added as an apparent afterthought, perhaps an attention-grabbing headline to maximize attendance.

In “[The White Image in the Black Mind](#),” literary scholar Dr. Jane Davis explains how the ideology of white liberalism “boosts the egos of whites and reduces [Black people] to crutches used by whites to bolster their idealized self-images.” Similarly, Horowitz and Guelzo put forth an ideology that canonizes white composers under the false pretenses of “Black classical music.” This bait-and-switch advertising is not only misleading, harmful, and dangerous; it is poor scholarship.

The presentation of Horowitz as a dubious expert on these matters is a travesty and disgrace, grossly magnified due to the support of this institution. Given its stature, Princeton has a responsibility to perpetuate offerings that align with its values and mission. Otherwise, attendees may conflate the flawed pseudo-scholarship of a

speaker with the institution itself and, worse, come away believing the speaker due to their institutional backing. Judging from my own experience, the views of this panel unequivocally do not represent those of faculty and students in the Department of Music. Rather, students and faculty alike would find the views expressed to be deeply troubling if not abhorrent, making this co-sponsorship all the more concerning.

A credible scholar should have been invited to speak on this subject. In fact, one such scholar, musicologist [Dr. Matthew D. Morrison](#), was on campus a week later to lead a [seminar](#) hosted by the Department of African American Studies (AAS). Perhaps for similar future events, the Department of Music should seek to collaborate with AAS rather than the James Madison Program.

For how long will Princeton uplift voices of white hypocrisy to the detriment of its proclaimed [goals](#) of diversity and inclusion? Time will tell.

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SPORTS

# 'Frustrated and exhausted': The impact of concussions on Princeton student-athletes



Football has often been coined as the "face of concussion risk".

Photo Courtesy of @PrincetonFTBL/[Twitter](#).**Ava Seigel**

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Playing a sport at any level comes with [increased risk of head injuries](#) like concussions or traumatic brain injuries. "One out of every ten all-contact sport athletes will have a concussion each year according to the CDC," [Notterman Lab](#) M.D./Ph.D. student Nicole Katchur wrote to the Daily Princetonian. "Not every concussion gets reported, so this number is likely a minimum estimate."

While football is often framed as "the face of concussion risk" in athletics, Katchur emphasized that "concussions can happen in any sport, including swimming, diving, wrestling, basketball, and skiing." The 'Prince' spoke with athletes from different sports at Princeton, who spoke about their experiences with concussions.

At Princeton, the ever-present risk of concussions in athletics is evident. According to first-year women's rugby player Kenzy Elshazly, she and three other teammates all had concussions at the same time. First-year women's soccer defender Caroline Kane shared a similar experience, as she told the 'Prince' that four women's soccer players, including herself, have had concussions this season. "[Concussions are an] injury in every sport on campus that you hear about a lot," Kane said.

Elshazly is a contributing Sports writer for the 'Prince.'

The impacts of head trauma, however, are far from restricted to the fields of play. "Concussions are debilitating," noted Katchur. "They can have short-term effects that become chronic and last a whole lifetime." We are not simply dealing with time away from athletics or minor inconveniences; the effects of head injuries often linger and can be substantially impairing.

Elshazly described the symptoms she experienced during the first week after her first concussion, including a "lack of concentration, drowsiness 24/7, insomnia, migraines all day long, sensitivity to light and sound, dizziness, nausea, and vomiting." Similarly, first-year Tigers' football defensive back Nasir Hill reported taking "about a week or so to feel back to normal [post-concussion]."

These symptoms, which are unique to each individual, have direct mental health implications for the student-athlete population on campus. "The challenge of enduring a concussion, in and of itself, can alter mental health," Katchur continued. "Athletes can feel isolated and frustrated because of lasting symptoms, including memory loss, headaches, and sensitivity to light."

"[Being] frustrated and exhausted are definitely the biggest things," Elshazly explains. Elshazly also reported feeling anxious about not knowing the timeline of concussion recovery and the resolution of her symptoms.

Elshazly told the 'Prince' that she questioned "If I will get things back [to normal], or if I am permanently like this? It's been like a week and a half of living [concussed] and now it just feels like I'm going to live like this forever."

"My most recent concussion was here at Princeton," Kane told the 'Prince.' "That one was pretty bad. I had to miss a scrimmage and two practices." Along with asking for extensions, Kane took two lectures off from classes and missed course precept meetings due to her concussion.

When injured, student-athletes are extremely motivated to get back to playing, which can make it difficult to let the recovery process take its full course. "I definitely did feel pressure in healing," said Kane. "Being an athlete here [at Princeton] where sports are very much a part of your experience, there is a lot of pressure to get there and push through."

Similarly, Hill wrote to the 'Prince' that "many athletes try to hide [concussions] and still play through it until they can't." Emphasizing the struggle between wanting to play and the importance of physical and mental health, Katchur warns that "returning to play too soon can increase the risk of a second concussion and may even result in death."



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As student-athletes are also full-time students, academics add an additional layer of stress to the concussion experience, with the pressure to attend lectures, complete problem sets, and meet deadlines despite symptoms.

"I had a draft for [first-year] writing seminar due [while concussed]," Kane told the 'Prince.' "I had to figure out how to ask for an extension with my professor. Luckily, my professor was super understanding, but I think it's definitely hard to be injured and stay on top of everything for academics."

"The Princeton in me makes me feel like I have to grind, grind, grind [on work], but I cannot just grind, grind, grind because even if I try, I just get really sick," Elshazly echoed.

"It will take me around eight hours to do one problem on a [problem set], and then I am just knocked out for 20 hours straight because I am so mentally exhausted," Elshazly continued.

Notably, however, many student-athletes shared that at Princeton, the resources on campus for support when experiencing concussion symptoms were vast. This support system includes team athletic trainers, the Office of Disability Services, and residential college deans.

Ultimately, when facing mental health repercussions like extreme exhaustion, frustration, and anxiety, Elshazly expressed concern over how athletes approach the risks of concussions. According to Elshazly, athletes often think, "What are the odds that I'll be the one to get concussed?"

For Elshazly and other student-athletes, however, they will continue to face the odds and take the risk to continue playing the sports they love.

*Ava Seigel is a contributor to the Sports section at the 'Prince.'*

*Please direct any corrections requests to corrections[at]dailyprincetonian.com.*

CARTOON

# The Daily Struggle

**Aysu Turkay**

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