The Matthew (2015 Nov)

John Cabot University's Student Newspaper

The Matthew

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Ryan Loughran works on his dunk before the all-male game against the Italian D-League. This was the first game of the season JCU played which outlawed females teammates from playing on the court.
Photo Credit: Kristen Stephenson

Tuition Discounts: Those Who Ask Shall Receive

By Alessia Primavera

Tuition fees increased for both degree-seeking and study abroad students at John Cabot University (JCU) this semester, but if needed the university is willing to provide students with a discount. The catch: you have to go and ask for it.

"The discount was not advertised, yet not secret," said Jeff Link, the head of JCU's Financial Aid Office. "But the policy was made with the intention of helping our students. We are willing to offer a discount to all students in relation to their financial need."

The majority of students found out about the opportunity to ask for a discount only thanks to some rumors that were spreading around the Guarini and Tiber campuses.

"I think this situation is not managed professionally. The [finance] office should send a formal email in order to inform students about the discount," Giulia Caparrelli, degree-seeking student of Communications said.

Big Victory for MUN Team at ROMUN15

By Giusseppe Spatafora

John Cabot University's (JCU) Model United Nations Society (MUN Society) took part in the ROMUN 2015 Conference organized by the Italian Society for International Organizations and United Nations Association in Italy (SIOI-UNA Italy), a leading institution in the preparation of future Italian Foreign Service officials.

The topic of the conference was based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recently approved by the 70th Plenary Session of the United Nations General Assembly. A total of 21 JCU students acted as delegates of 18 countries in four round tables: they had the task to represent their assigned country's official position on the topic and to negotiate with other delegates ways to practically implement the SDGs.

It was not an easy task for the JCU delegates, given the high level of competition from other delegations (SIOI, Sciences Po Paris, LUISS) as well as the importance of the venues where the conference was held (the headquarters of FAO, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the University of Washington and the Center for American Studies). However, the JCU students delivered great performances in their respective round tables. Their effort was recognized at the closing ceremony by winning seven out of the 12 awards.

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In This Issue

Letter from the Editor

It would be impossible to publish this issue of *The Matthew* without addressing the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, not so far away from Rome. In such a time of conflict, we must recognize the value and privilege of interacting with a diverse group of peers every day. I urge everyone to go out of their way to be welcoming and open-minded. Solidarity is needed not just to honor the victims of this unspeakable violence, but also to maintain unity and awareness on campus.

The October/November issue of *The Matthew* celebrates students' recent accomplishments, including John Cabot University's distinguished MUN team victory at ROMUN. We have also addressed recent changes on campus, including a new opportunity for students seeking scholarships.

As always, the newspaper strives to address student concerns. Our writer, Alessia Primavera wrote an informative piece on tuition discounts following the university's tuition increase and Ludovica Pizzichelli interviewed students who are struggling with chronic illness.

Please send criticism, suggestions and questions to newspaper@johncabot.edu.
Sincerely,
Lauren Cater

Dean Announces Scholarship Change

Dean Mary Merva announced in an October 26 email sent to degree-seeking students that the Dean's List Scholarship will now be awarded to students who are currently receiving JCU-funded, merit-based scholarships. In the past, only students who were not receiving JCU-funded, merit-based scholarships were eligible for the Dean's List Scholarship.

Students who receive the Dean's List Scholarship will now receive an award of $200 or €200.

The changes will begin for JCU degree-seeking students who make the Dean's List for their Fall 2015 coursework.

To read more about JCU scholarships for degree-seeking students, see www.johncabot.edu/admissions/financial-aid-and-scholarships/scholarships/degree-seeking-students.aspx

STUDENT LIFE

Chronic Pain in College: What It's Like to Study When You Have a Chronic Illness

By Ludovica Pizzichelli

College is hard on all of us -- heavy exams, lots of homework, and trying to juggle social life, healthy habits, and extracurriculars without seeing our GPAs plummet. But for some students there is an added hurdle: chronic pain. According to the American Academy of Pain Medicine, some 100 million Americans suffer from a chronic pain disorder, which is almost four times the amount of Americans who suffer from diabetes. Worldwide, according to Global Industry Analysis Inc., it is estimated that upwards of 1.5 billion people suffer from chronic pain. That's about 1/7 of the entire world population.

Chronic pain disorders span all sorts of body pain: headaches and migraines, back pain, joint pain and arthritis, menstrual pain, and more. Many people go undiagnosed. Chronic pain is, of course, painful, but it also affects daily life. In fact, more than 75% of chronic pain patients suffering from depression and more than 85% having difficulty sleeping as a result. Having chronic pain is not a little problem, and for university students it makes studying harder than most. But how does it affect our fellow students at John Cabot? I talked to 6 different John Cabot students to hear their stories.

Even before attending college, chronic pain poses its challenges. "I was always in the lower classes because of teacher student placement and evaluation, nevertheless isolated due to being 'weird' or 'dumb'," says ex-John Cabot student Aurelia Pezzaniti. Working to try to dispel those assumptions made by teachers and other students can push students to their limits. "I tried to hide the pain and go about daily tasks and seem normal, but I was always seen as the weird one," Pezzaniti continued. "It pushed me to further my limits academically, but I feel also contributed to more pain because I was going too far."

Some of the greatest limitations even start when a student with chronic pain wakes up until they go to sleep, making studying at some times impossible. "I never know when I will wake up and it will be a day where I cannot function at all, due to the pain that takes over. It happens on rare occasions," says Pezzaniti. The most simple tasks sometimes require help and asking for help so often can feel degrading.

Communications student Virginia Agnoni, who suffers from constant migraine, nausea and dizziness, said, "so I must stay in bed, in a dark room since I can't bear the light and I can't even think about studying or reading a book." Not only does the pain make it difficult to complete simple tasks, but being able to maintain crucial concentration can be taxing. "It is difficult to have the energy to survive the whole day in university without feeling tired and keeping a high level of concentration," says Communications and English Literature student Clari Cecchi.

The situation is especially complicated for certain Roman students. For some of them, it can take a long time to get to the university because they often do not live near the Trastevere area, and when you have chronic pain it is especially demanding. Agnoni said it was easier when her high school was only a half hour away. She says, "Now it is different because it takes me more than an hour and a half to reach JCU, and the doctor is not on campus every day. So if I feel sick the only thing that I can do is wait for the pain to ease and pray to feel better until the moment I get home."

For some, even the policies at JCU can pose some problems. Attendance is very important for many professors and most students at American universities and is integral to learning, but when you have chronic pain, having good attendance can be next to impossible. "If I need to stay at home for a couple of days each month I will be absent about 8 times, and these absences interfere with that portion of the final grade called attendance. To me this isn't fair at all, since I don't remain at home just because I want to, but because I can't even leave my bed and walk on my feet," says Agnoni. Students with chronic pain work extra hard to be able to make it to class. "I believe it does make a difference to professors whether one is absent because traveling somewhere for fun or because that person was sick.

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Tuition Discounts: Those Who Ask Shall Receive

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"Should I give more credit to students' rumors than to the Financial Aid Office?"

Dean Mary Merva said the students were all informed about the tuition increase and the reasons behind it in a September 2014 email from JCU President Franco Pavoncello.

"The University places a high priority on meeting the financial needs of all students and we will employ our generous financial aid and discount program to insure that the burden of this tuition and fees increase on our current students is kept at sustainable levels for them and their families," the email said. "The Financial Aid Office is available to discuss any concerns and to answer any questions you may have."

JCU tuition fees increased €600 per semester for Italian and non-American students tuition for a total of now €17,000 per year. On the other hand, American and Canadian student fees increased by $1,000, for a total of $23,900 per year.

Some students would also like a little more transparency when it comes to knowing how the extra funds are going to be used, especially since it's been hard to absorb the increase.

"This is a period of crisis and families plan their expenses in advance. Additional costs can cause problems and difficulties," said Alessandro Potalivo, a junior degree-seeking International Affairs student.

Marina Slicane, degree-seeking student from Lithuania, feels the same way. "My country is one of the fastest growing in EU, and our taxes are steadily increasing from time to time. My father owns a small company and, as a result of the higher bill he has to pay for my college tuition, he has to pay more taxes according to our laws. This increase has definitely affected my family."

Dean Merva explained that the money is used for the improvement of facilities, for the increase of faculty and staff, and for scholarships. "The financial management of a private institution like JCU is not quite as simple as students may think. We need to be financially able to consolidate our institution and reputation, and JCU has a thriving reputation in Rome in a period of crisis like this," Dean Merva said.

She added students are welcome to question the Student Government about the tuition increase.

Big Victory for MUN Team at ROMUN15

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The seven students who received awards were:
BEST DELEGATE: Claudia D'Agostini (Brazil, Roundtable 4), Giuseppe Spatafora (Norway, RT5), Davide Orsitto (Israel, RT6)
OUTSTANDING DELEGATE: Cristian Tracci (Japan, RT4)
HONORABLE MENTION: Laura DI Girolamo (USA, RT1), Caroline Thomas (Korea, RT4), Viktor Sobra (Canada, RT5)

The success of the MUN Society is even more remarkable because many students were at their first MUN conference. Much of the merit for this success goes to the MUN Society's board, President Cristian Tracci, Vice-President Davide Orsitto and Faculty Advisor Pamela Harris for their effort and guidance in the pre-conference preparation period.

"I loved interacting with people from all over the world and representing Nigeria at the conference," said JCU delegate Tahira Ambreen, on her first time at MUN. Vice-President and Best Delegate Davide Orsitto comments, "Not only did I find myself a student delegate representing Israel, but I felt as if I served global youth in its struggle towards a better world. That was beautiful."

The final document of the conference, the ROMUN 2015 Youth Road Map, has been submitted to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and will be presented to the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates in Barcelona on November 12-15.

STUDENT LIFE

Editorial: It's Time to Talk About Street Harassment

By Misha Nicholas

No. This beautiful word doesn't receive a lot of attention in Rome; instead, the sweet sound of silence is heard whenever the issue of street harassment is brought to the table. The silent route isn't going to make the situation better, instead, it will only make the issue worse. John Cabot University is aware of this issue, however many students are afraid to report the incident to anyone, let alone faculty. The time has come to speak about the many situations in which JCU students find themselves in. Unfortunately, the issue is relatable for many students. It should not be brushed off as nothing.

According to Hollaback, "[m]ore than 88% of Italian women report taking a different route to their home or destination because of harassment."

This staggering number indicates an increasing conflict with addressing the issue for what it is, unjustified harassment. Some victims of street harassment speak up about their conflicts with their appearance.

Diana Berezanskaya, a 20-year-old International Business major at JCU, has expierience with the shameful harassment that goes on in Rome. "Yes, it's a huge problem. I might even wear pants and a jacket but creepers are still catcalling," said Berezanskaya.

Skye Chanon, a 22-year-old Humanistic Studies major at JCU shares his observation about the harassment in Rome, and also, how some of it can be avoided.

"I think it is a prevalent problem in Rome as it happens far too often. It is a direct reflection of the lack of consciousness and misogynistic character of many males. At the same time, this problem could be avoided in many cases by conscious decisions on the part of women to be less provocative in behavior and attire," said Chanon.

While some ponder that the issue could be a mix of clothing and emotions, others see a huge conflict with the Italian courting process.

International Relations major Phendli Prou said "every semester I have a female friend tell me about a time where she was grabbed on her way home or was followed for a while. I think the main thing that allows for this is the traditional Italian courtship process. Italian men need to prove the degree of their "macho" this is forcing them to treat women as Pokémon. 'Gotta' Catch Em' All."

Some people view the issue as minimal. Keyriah Williams, a 21-year-old study abroad student at the American University of Rome, has a couple of cents to add about the topic of street harassment.

"Where I'm from I don't really have cat calls either it's usually a boy walking pass asking if I could stop and talk. I don't think cat calling is a huge issue in Rome," said Williams. While others see nothing wrong, others view the subject as a global phenomenon.

Stop the Street Harassment's indicated that in a conducted study, "[t]hey found that 85% of female respondents had experienced street harassment in public spaces in Poland, as had 44% of men."

Also, in France "…25% of women aged 18-29 reported being scared when they walked on the streets. They also discovered that 1 in 5 women have suffered from verbal harassment on the street in the past year, and 1 in 10 said they had been kissed or caressed against their consent."

For many who think that the issue is local, it is far more than local. All around the world, people are inappropriately being harassed, however, victims of street harassment aren't speaking up about it.

If you have been harassed on the street, verbally or psychically, please speak to the JCU Health and Well-Being Office. The time is now; speak up.

Photo Credit: Edgar Ilves

Students Receive Prestigious Premio America Award at Italian Parliament

JCU students Samantha Abear, Stefania Rohas and Thomas Oswald Young IV) were awared an institutional medal from the Italian Parliament by Italia USA Foundation on October 8.

The Premio America award is given to people who encourage initatives and relationships between the United States and Italy. Abear, Rohas and Oswald were all honored for their service connecting with the community.

Chronic Pain in College: What It's Like to Study When You Have a Chronic Illness

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We go out of our way to manage our health in a way that allows us to do our best in school," says Communications student Silvia Bezzi.

JCU students with chronic pain have some suggestions for the university. In particular, students want a doctor to be on campus during all university hours. "I think that there should be a doctor on campus from the first hours of the morning until the closure of the university, in order to help the students every time it is needed," says Agnoni.

Having an understanding community is also essential, because chronic pain encompasses social life as well. "In JCU it was that I felt limited to a welcoming community. Almost as if I felt welcomed the first week, and then thereafter everyone had developed groups. The Internet, therapy, and health care was there, but it is all a matter of community and acceptance," said Aurelia. The best way to support your fellow students with chronic pain is to learn their limitations and sometimes offer help they need to make it through the day. Emotional support is crucial.

Their advice to other students with chronic pain? "My only advice is to talk to your professors at the beginning of each semester and explain your situation to them," says Agnoni, "since it seems to me that JCU professors are more empathic and tolerant than the system itself." Often the biggest help can be yourself. "My advice is that it does get better," says Pezzaniti. "Some days are better than others, but the older you and more experiences you get, you learn a lot about yourself and others which helps the strength within overpower the pain." The most important thing is even when your studies get overwhelming, it is important to remember you have made it this far. In the words of Bezzi, "If you're struggling, my advice is that no matter how hopeless and hard it seems, do not ever give up. Find something worth fighting for, someone who fights with you - or for you on the bad days – and fight every small or big inconvenience that gets in the way. One at a time."

STUDENT LIFE

"Look Here, Bro...": Debate Over Bikini Poster on Facebook

A photo shared on JCU Undergrad, the university's unofficial Facebook group, depicting a poster seen in the Gianicolo Residence gym, sparked a debate that spanned dozens of threads and hundreds of comments on the objectification of women in the media.

The poster, which reads, "Look Here Bro! Go Clean Up Your Weights!" next to a bikini-clad woman in a provocative pose, was photographed by Elizabeth Truffa, a visiting pre-law and political science student from University of Mary Washington. Truffa shared the photo with a group of students in the Women's Leadership Initiative (WLI). The club's president, Lauren Cater (and the editor-in-chief of the *The Matthew*), then shared the photo on JCU Undergrad.

Comments flooded the post. While some students argued that the poster was inappropriate, others said that the photo was petty. One student wrote, "Go waste your time on some serious stuff and try to get offended for problems that are really worth changing." Another student wrote, "You don't have to be an angry feminist to understand that such posters should not be hung up anywhere, let alone a university full of bright 'educated' people…"

While opinions and views varied widely, one thing was clear: students, even those who expressed apathy, did care about the photo.

In response to the post on JCU Undergrad, the Women's Leadership Initiative hosted a forum on November 3.

Life After Winning "The Voice" in Ukraine

By Oleksiy Shevtsov

Igor Grokhotskyi is hurriedly packing up his German VGS acoustic guitar. "I can give you like 10 minutes because I'm really, really late to this rehearsal." Staying in shape is crucial if you're serious about making music, and especially if it's been a year since you've won 'The Voice' of Ukraine. "500 bucks," says the 23 year old as he zips up the guitar bag, "a lightly trembling voice that represents all the shades of music, enveloping my soul from the inside," he lets out a hearty chuckle at his romanticizing description of the VGS.

Grokhotskyi's high-pitched, short laugh is somewhat similar to that of Tom Hulce portraying Mozart in 'Amadeus' -- the laugh that almost got him an Oscar. But it will take more than being a handsome and likeable guy for Igor to achieve his victory. He grew up "not far from Kiev," his main interest being football. "I never played music. Might have pressed some keys on the piano when I was like 10 but that's it." That's around the period when he moved to the city. "I knew every single album of ABBA when I was five," he says, "sang in school sometimes, you know, nothing professional. Just football."

Sports seemed like the right destiny for Grokhotskyi, having lived in a sports boarding school upon his arrival to Kiev. "It was kind of my own survival school before I got into Dynamo." FC Dynamo Kiev is a Ukrainian football club founded in 1927 as part of the Soviet Dynamo Sports Society. Its president and owner is Ukrainian businessman, Ihor Surkis. Becoming a member of the Dynamo youth league is not an easy task. It was a time in Ukraine before the Maidan Revolution, and there was no better qualification for being a member of this kind of community, than having lots of money. Grokhotskyi was an exception. "We won the Ukrainian championship the year I made it in. I thought my life was pretty much working out with football." It was, but not for much longer.

Around the time when Grokhotskyi and the Dynamo crew returned from a long summer having celebrated their victory, things started to shape differently. "We had our tryouts for the next season, during which I received a serious back injury," he says staring blankly at the floor, "after I recovered, the injury kept reminding me of itself." He couldn't play like that -- not in the Dynamo league. "So I thought maybe it's time to change something."

Grokhotskyi was 21 when he found himself on a stage singing to impress the 4 'bitiest' critics of the Ukrainian music industry. "It all started when my dad got me some musical equipment, you know, just to sing at weddings

It's true. Ukrainian culture is very big on organizing the most 'epic' party for any kind of event. There's got to be balloons, tables full of food, mostly-transparent alcohol, and of course the DJ guy who is going to annoy everyone with soviet-school style competitions and Russian pop music. If you're ever in Ukraine and you want to sing karaoke, be ready to wait for at least an hour and a half to get your turn.

"I had all this equipment, and I guess I just wanted to make people happy with with my musical accompaniment" says Grokhotskyi, with a puzzled face, realizing that he was at one point the wedding-singer guy. "I sang for a while, and kept doing it, and I eventually realized that people were starting to like what I do. Somehow I came across the casting for The Voice and decided to test my luck at something serious," because after all, "I didn't really want to sing at birthdays and weddings for my whole life."

Casting at The Voice was tough. "I didn't even expect that I could get past the battles, I really just hoped to land into the hands of some sort of trainer so that I can at least believe in myself that I can sing." When Grokhotskyi heard his competition next door, did he have the feeling that he stood no chance? "Honestly," in the back room of The Voice, Grokhotskyi did not have confidence in himself at all, "The Voice is full of really powerful vocalists and usually everyone has been playing somewhere, or taking vocals lessons for a long time," he says. Weddings and birthday parties cannot be considered serious gigs, and Grokhotskyi has never taken vocal lessons. Not a single day.

It wasn't only the lack of musical background, but it was also the overall choice of style that made Grokhotskyi the underdog on The Voice. "Right now with the situation that is unravelling in Ukraine, everyone is trying to politicize their music, or sing traditional patriotic Ukrainian songs." The style at The Voice was very particular. Songs like Aerosmith's 'I Don't Wanna Miss A Thing' or James Brown's 'It's a Man's Man's Man's World' were classics at the show, and were pretty much the only format of Western music accepted. "Some people gave off the Stas Mikhailov kind of vibe, some seemed like they just knew much more than me. I came in and all I knew was this Muse song 'Feeling Good.'"

Feeling Good is a song composed by English songwriters Anthony Newley and Leslie Bricusse, and since its iconic performance by Nina Simone it has become a pop standard. Igor felt particularly inspired by the Muse version, opening the door to alternative music for himself. "When I met Svyatoslav [Svyatoslav Vakarchuk is the lead singer of Ukrainian band 'Okean Elzy'], "it really changed my perception of music and I started listening to alternative composers, such as Jeff Buckley, Muse, Coldplay, etc." Calling Coldplay an alternative artist is a stretch but it is alternative music for Ukrainians, who can hardly escape half-naked women dancing next to Stas Mikhailov blasting on every music channel.

"I came up to the producer at The Voice and asked him if I could sing this Muse song called 'Unintended' and he said no because nobody will understand it and it would not be good for the ratings." That's truly what it's all about, the ratings. "I don't know how I got so lucky. There was a rehearsal and in the last moment I just sang it, and everybody loved it. They let me sing it in the show after that." Having picked an alternative song, and alternative style to what everybody was doing, it seemed that at this point he couldn't be more of an 'oddball' in that atmosphere. Grokhotskyi describes 'Unintended' as being the song that "let my wings grow" and when he finally performed it, the audience, the judges, and the entire staff of The Voice saw him from a different side. Svyatoslav Vakarchuk from Ukrainian band Okean Elzy, a judge on the show, was particularly interested in Grokhotskyi's vocal skills. "At first the minus started playing and I was a bit disappointed with the guitar levels. I wanted them to be a bit harder," said Vakarchuk as he is sitting on the judging panel at the show. Grokhotskyi was on the stage, smiling nervously and waiting for his verdict. "But eventually I realized it was a good thing that the guitars were soft because then everyone could hear how well you actually sang," finished Vakarchuk.

Svyatoslav had invited his newly appointed 'apprentice' Grokhotskyi to sing with Okean Elzy band at two massive-scale concerts. "It was in Kharkiv. In front of like 27,000 people? 30? I don't remember," Igor shrugs. After the Khrakiv show, Okean Elzy band invited him to sing on the Olympic Stadium in Kiev, a concert celebrating 20 years of the bands existence which had sold 63,170 tickets. "Soon after I did a cover for Viva magazine, and that's pretty much it."

Grokhotskyi had not received much more support for his project since then. "Right now I'm trying to compose songs that are a bit… different. I really feel all these songs spinning around in my head and I'm afraid they go in dissonance with the type of music that is being played in Ukraine." His choice of style did not coincide with commercial interests of the Ukrainian music industry, but this would not be the first time that Grokhotskyi decided to challenge these conventions, having won The Voice with a song that was first rejected. "Of course it's pretty hard to evolve like this, but what can I say?"

Grokhotskyi's current band has not yet released any material, and maybe for a good reason.

Read the rest of this story at johncabotnews.com

PHOTOGRAPHY

Left: The picture was taken on February 2014 around 4.30 pm. It depicts two refugee kids playing with garbage sacks. The photographer said this picture reminds him of his primary work meant to photograph childhood. Right: Amato Serafino and Peter Flaccus, JCU Studio Art Faculty members, observing and commenting Daniele Vita's photographs with the artist himself on November 12. at the Fiorentini Art Studio The pictures exposed are all black and white film photographs mainly taken in Istanbul. Photo Credit: Marialuigia Ruffo

JCU students walk up the main road of Capri's Marina Grande. It's the first leg of the hike to the high-altitude town of Anacapri. Photo Credit: Emily McConville

Advisor: Rosamaria Mancini
Editor-in-Chief and Layout Editor: Lauren Cecilia Cater
Managing Editor: Alessandro Ceschi
Reporters: Alessia Primavera, Giuseppe Spatafora, Ludovica Pizzichelli, Misha Daniels, Oleksiy Shevtsov

The Matthew is John Cabot University's nonprofit, student-run newspaper. The student body's array of over 40 different countries, cultures and backgrounds is reflected in our writing.

The Matthew is published while classes are in session during fall and spring semesters. For questions or submissions, please email newspaper@johncabot.edu.