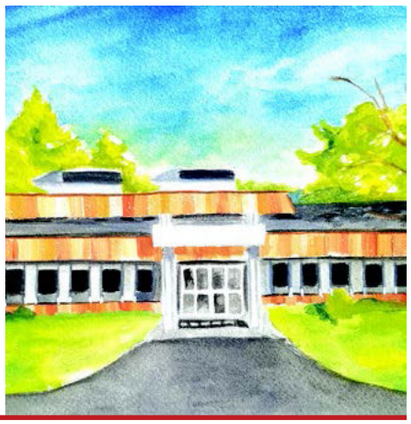
THE COUNTY COLLEGE OF MORRIS' AWARD-WINNING STUDENT NEWSPAPER

THE YOUNGTOWN EDITION

VOL. 113, NO. 5
DAY, APR. 22, 2025
RANDOLPH, N.J.



Working Affects Students at County College of Morris

BY JAKE PETROVCIK
Staff Writer

Many college students work jobs in addition to attending classes. This is especially prevalent at a community college such as County College of Morris. Students in the CCM library talked about if they work alongside school and if it affects their schoolwork.

Samantha Chauca, who is a nursing major at CCM, said she works approximately 20-25 hours per week at Walmart as an online grocery associate. Chauca is also a part-time student, but said that often it feels more like she is a full-time student.

"Because I need to pay for like my school supplies and stuff, that I feel like I need to work, and when it takes away time that I could be studying," Chauca said about the impact work had on her classes. "Especially on Thursdays, I get scheduled 'til closing and then on Fridays I have, I have AP lab and AP lecture back to back like six hours."

Chauca has to choose between having extra time to study and having enough money to pay for school supplies. She has closing shifts on Thursdays, followed by a long day of classes on Fridays, making it tough to keep up.

"If they did in the beginning of the semester, asked students, 'Oh, where do you work, how many hours do you work, what's your day like?'" Chauca said on how CCM could do better for student workers. "Obviously, school should be number one, but it's sometimes it's not possible, they have to work to make money to go to school."

According to Fortune, 43% of full-time college students work while 81% of all part-time students work alongside school, according to an article written in January of 2023. "In Tennessee, we found that working is especially common among community college students, first-generation students, and students returning to college as adults."

Leah Frank is an early childhood education major student, who goes to school full-time. She works approximately 20 hours per week at a kids' gymnastics center as an instructor.

"My job requires me to do lesson plans every week, and that takes me usually like an hour to 2 hours of my time on top of schoolwork," Frank said. "I did have to change my work schedule, beginning of the spring semester, because my job we have a week-to-week schedule, so it has to be the same every week."

Evelin Lewis is an early childhood development major who goes to school online part-time. She is also a to-go specialist at Olive Garden, typically working 25 hours per week.

"No, it's pretty easy to balance," Lewis said. "I do online school, so, works for me." on how her work impacted her schooling, "I'm pretty good where I am cause I'm online."

Curving Corners: Should College Exams be Graded on a Curve?

BY RUTH ADAMS
Editor in Chief

As college students, it is imperative that we take responsibility for our education to ensure that we understand the material. I believe that most students faced this shock, that, unlike our previous K-12 experiences, we are not guided by the hand when it comes to facing college exams and workloads. The balance between showing up to lectures and studying on our own is a challenge, yet it is a necessary adjustment for college-level academics.

Still, even with the proper habits made, there will always be that one class that can break down all the studying you did. The exams are long, strenuous, and ultimately lead to a grade you were not expecting, or think you didn't deserve. Your classmates in your study group feel the same way when you compare your grades in the next class. It seems as if the entire class was dumbfounded by what the exam was asking, and all of the hard work was for nothing. That's where exam curving comes into place.

What is "curving"? Grading an exam on a curve typically means that, even if the grade is not a 100%, the student with the highest grade will receive full marks, or even higher, and everyone else's exams will fall within that ratio. If an exam has 100 questions, with each question worth one point, and one

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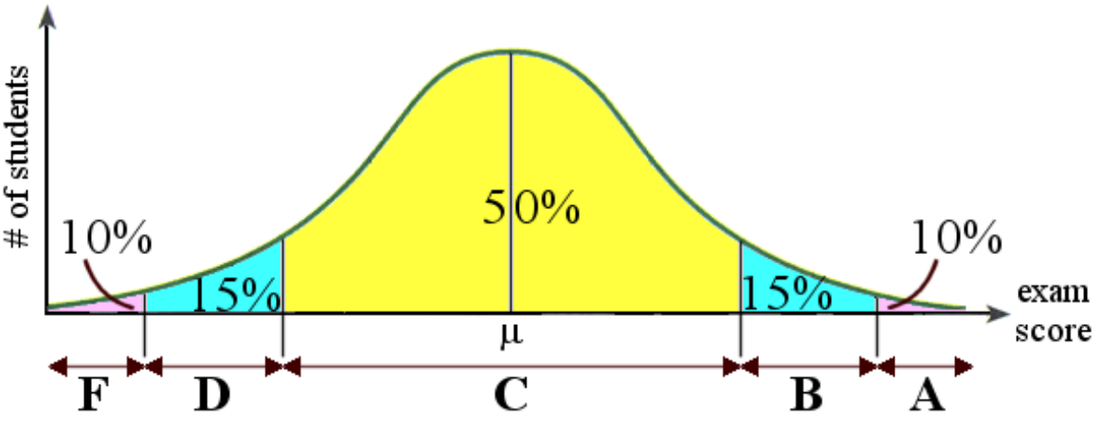
student gets the highest grade of a 70/100, the teacher may "curve" the 70% to a 100%, and give each student following 30 more points. In the end, the student with the highest mark still has the highest, and each student is in proportion with that student. The only difference is that students' C- turns into an A+, and students with a 40% are no longer "failing" the exam, and now have a 70%, etc.

"Saved by the Curve"

While there are many other types of curving, this is the most common type. Some exams are graded on a normal bell curve distribution, where grades are calculated based on how far they deviate from the average, which can be adjusted to the discretion of the professor. Simply put, students are put into "tiers", and where they fall on exams is where their letter grade will reflect. A majority of students will be in the "C" tier, as reflected on a normal bell curve. Even if you received an 89% (some schools may grade this as a B-), you can fall under the middle 60%, and ultimately end up with a C. Vice versa, you may have a 90% (which can be graded as an A-), but fall within the top 10%, or "A tier", and end up with an A. This can typically only be done if the initial raw scores resemble a bell curve, have a large population mean, and the difference between the highest score and the lowest score is not minimal. Depending on the type of curving, students may feel that grading on a curve is a game-changer for their final grade, although negative curving does also, unfortunately, exist.



An example of a normal distribution grading curve via the University of Hawaii grading system.

Exam curving is typically done when an entire class does not do well on a test. Professors may feel it's appropriate to curve an exam to raise the average grade of the exam and allow more students to pass. It can also allow for a more equal distribution.

Should more exams be graded on a curve? The benefits of exam curving seem to outweigh the potential cons, at least to the students benefiting from it. Depending on the type of curve, the benefits include higher test scores and averages, more students passing, and can help students feel more motivated in their subjects. However, from an outside perspective, curving can be seen as a way for underperforming students to get away with higher marks. Why should students be able to pass classes because the rest of their class is also struggling? It can also be more work for professors, who have to individually remark every student's exam from its initial raw score.

While it can be portrayed as a way for students to "curve corners" around their schoolwork, curving is beneficial in the right circumstances. This semester, I heard the phrase "Test scores are a reflection of the test maker" from one of my professors. The quote stuck out to me, as I realized more than ever how important exams truly are. Today, it seems education is prided on passing percentages and test scores. It is used universally as a measure of a student's and professors' "success" at an institution, whether it comes to applying, transferring, or evaluating. This system, while it can be argued as flawed, has been in place for many years and will most likely be the standard for the time being. If this is the way it has to be, then I can argue that curving is absolutely necessary. If the class average of an exam was a fail, a typical curve is fair for the students and levels the playing field. In the end, the student with the highest grade still has the highest, and vice versa with the lowest scoring student. It helps the students not to feel discouraged from their classes, and ensures that the professor can pass more students. However, I will agree with curving not being a mandatory measure, but rather used by a professor's discretion. If a professor sees that the entire class managed to slack off on purpose, knowing that there would be a curve, then it makes sense to have them face the consequences of their raw score.

Professors may get insight into which parts of the material the class understood and struggled with through exams by seeing which questions were widely incorrectly answered, and basing a curve on this analysis makes sense if a certain section of the exam was generally missed. I believe that curves are misunderstood as a way for students to get free points for less work, and should be implemented into more grading criteria. Curving factors in the difficulty of an exam and shows the correct grade spectrum of the class, just at a different focal point. As students, we want to succeed in our academics, but to do so, the playing field should reflect the work we put in. We still push ourselves to the greatest of our abilities, if not more, with the help of a curve.

> "Test scores are a reflection of the test maker"

The Youngtown Edition

The Student Newspaper of the County College of Morris

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All students are welcome to contribute articles to The Youngtown Edition either in person or via e-mail. However, students cannot receive a byline if they belong to the organization on which they are reporting. The deadline for articles is the Monday prior to a production.

My Neighbor Totoro {となりのトトロ}

BY SARA LIM
Managing Editor

アニメ. Animation: to give life to something, to imbue life into your art and art into your life. Perhaps no one in the world of animation encapsulates this philosophy of creative transformation as wholeheartedly as Hayao Miyazaki {宮崎 駿}. The Japanese animator, filmmaker, artist, and co-founder of beloved Tokyo-based animation collective Studio Ghibli, is characterized through his distinctive exploration of the sublime, humanity's relationship {and responsibility} towards nature, and the role we play in creation and destruction, all submerged in the unique aesthetics and cultural inheritance of twentieth century Japan. A man in a decade-long feud with his own cynicism, Miyazaki paints an endlessly intricate portrayal of the fundamental complexities of existence and of the world that surrounds us, painstakingly depicting the minutiae of natural details that make up our universe. His 1988 masterpiece My Neighbor Totoro unfolds as a lyrical ode to Shinto spirituality, where the boundaries between the mundane and the mystical dissolve beneath the canopy of ancient camphor trees. At its heart lies Totoro, a benevolent forest kami {神} whose presence radiates through the gnarled roots and whispering leaves of a sacred tree—a living shrine encircled by shimenawa ropes and guarded by a weathered torii gate. This arboreal deity, both whimsical and wise, becomes a guardian to sisters Satsuki and Mei, whose wide-eyed wonder mirrors Shinto's emphasis on kokoro {心}—the pure heart through which humans commune with nature's spirits. Miyazaki paints rural Japan as a liminal space where rituals of gratitude, like the family's bow to the camphor tree after Mei's disappearance, echo Shinto practices of honoring kami through offerings and reverence. The film's magic lies in its quiet moments, ma {間} or negative space: acorns sprouting into towering saplings during a moonlit dance or the catbus—a yōkai-like {妖怪} marvel—bounding across powerlines as a bridge between human fragility and nature's timeless cycles. Through these elements, Miyazaki crafts not merely a story but a tactile experience of Japan's animistic heritage, where every rustling branch hums with sacred breath.

Hayao Miyazaki's My Neighbor Totoro follows sisters Satsuki and Mei as they move to a rural 1950s Japanese countryside with their father, their mother hospitalized with a lingering illness. Amidst the creaking wooden beams of their new home and the whispers of soot sprites {煤渡り, or susuwatari} fleeing human presence, the girls discover a realm where the ordinary dissolves into wonder. Mei stumbles upon Totoro—a benevolent, owl-eyed forest spirit—sleeping in the hollow of an ancient camphor tree, its trunk girded by sacred shimenawa {指名縄} ropes and guarded by a weathered torii gate. Illuminated by whimsical moonlight and the soft glow of the heart of spring, the film becomes a tender meditation on childhood resilience, familial love, and the sacred dialogue between humans and nature. Miyazaki's world is inhabited by creatures that simultaneously belong to ancient tradition and are freshly reimagined under the careful brushstrokes of Studio Ghibli's animators. A central thematic motif of his oeuvre is kami {神}: deities, spirits, or mythological beings sometimes serving as representations of natural forces, an artistically depicted manifestation of musubi {結び}, the interconnecting energy of the universe. These creatures hold a otherworldly presence and a deep spiritual a connection to the nature realm—to be in harmony with the awe-inspiring aspects of nature is to be conscious of kannagara no michi {随神の道 or 惟神の道, "the way of the kami"}, bearing remarkable similarity to the central doctrine of mid-19th-century European Romantic philosophy.

Layered into this enchantment is the Romantic sublime, reimagined through a Japanese sensibility. In Western Romanticism, the sublime often evokes terror and awe at nature's vastness—storms, mountains, the abyss. In Totoro, the sublime is gentler but no less profound. It emerges in the enormity of Totoro himself, in the vast canopy of the camphor tree, in the flight through night skies on a spinning top. These are moments of transcendence, where the boundary between self and world dissolves. Nature is not a force to be feared or conquered; it is a mystery to be embraced. This is a world shaped by the rhythms of nature, where time dilates, where spirits live in tree hollows, and soot balls flit in abandoned corners. To watch Totoro is not merely to witness a narrative—it is to be immersed in a sensibility. The film is a meditation, a poem of light and shadow that draws deeply on traditional Japanese aesthetics and spiritual philosophies. Within its gentle surface lie the contours of animism, the spaces of ma, the balm of iyashikei, and the trembling wonder of the Romantic sublime, all bound together in a vision of environmental nostalgia and spiritual reverence.

From its opening frames, My Neighbor Totoro hums with the philosophy of kami, the Shinto belief that spirit resides in all things—rocks, rivers, trees, even memories. The film's countryside is animated not by technology or spectacle but by spirit. The great camphor tree, where Totoro sleeps, feels sacred not because anyone declares it so but because it emanates presence. It is immense and ancient, its branches heavy with time. When Satsuki and Mei kneel before it in awe, we are reminded that sacredness is not a quality imposed but a truth revealed. The Totoro creatures themselves do not explain their existence; they simply are. In this way, Miyazaki quietly affirms a worldview in which the spiritual and material are inseparable. The world is not merely scenery—it is alive, watching, responding. This animistic lens suffuses even the smallest elements of the film. The soot sprites that dart through the girls' new home are not malevolent but residual—flickers of spirit unsettled by human arrival. They dissolve when laughter fills the rooms again, as though joy itself is an act of purification. These subtle presences ask the viewer to see not with judgment but with reverence—to allow for mystery, to accept that not everything needs explanation. Miyazaki draws us into a child's mode of attention: open, wide-eyed, and unquestioning. In doing so, he reawakens our own capacity to dwell in the world with wonder.

Integral to this atmosphere is the concept of ma—the Japanese aesthetic of emptiness, pause, and interval. Miyazaki has spoken of ma as "the space between the claps," and nowhere is this more evident than in Totoro. Long silences stretch between scenes. We watch the breeze ripple through rice fields. A raindrop falls, and then another. Mei lies sprawled in the grass, the world

humming gently around her. These moments do not advance the plot. They deepen it. Ma is the breath of the film—it allows time for presence, for noticing, for being. In a cinema landscape often driven by speed and noise, these pauses feel radical. They invite the viewer to dwell, to sit beside the characters rather than race ahead of them. There is a particular sequence that encapsulates this ethos: the iconic scene at the bus stop in the rain. Satsuki stands beside Totoro, waiting for her father. Rain drums steadily on their umbrellas. Nothing happens, and everything happens. Totoro receives a humorously miniature leaf to shield himself, then a borrowed umbrella. Raindrops begin to fall on the umbrella's surface, and the creature's delight builds until he jumps—thump!—sending water cascading from the trees. He grins. The Catbus arrives with eyes aglow. Mei sleeps on Satsuki's back. There is no dialogue of consequence, no turning point in the narrative. Yet this quiet encounter is one of the most emotionally resonant in the film. It is ma—time filled with presence, silence rich with feeling.

Such moments speak to iyashikei {癒し系}, or "healing" aesthetics—a genre of Japanese media that provides comfort and restoration. Totoro is perhaps the quintessential iyashikei film. It soothes not by avoiding sadness but by allowing sorrow and joy to coexist. The film does not hide the girls' worry for their hospitalized mother; it lets it breathe. Yet, even this worry is not sharpened into melodrama. It is met instead with the kindness of neighbors, the patience of a gentle father, the sheltering embrace of forest spirits. In Totoro, healing is not the erasure of fear but its gentle holding. The film suggests that comfort comes not from fixing the world but from being lovingly present within it. This healing quality is entwined with a sense of environmental nostalgia—a longing not merely for a specific past but for a way of seeing and being in the world that has been dulled by industrial modernity. The countryside of Totoro is not idealized but tenderly remembered: dirt roads, straw hats, creaking wooden homes, the smell of rain on earth. Yet this nostalgia is not reactionary; it is reverent. It invites the viewer to remember that we, too, once played in the dirt, listened to the wind, felt the breath of trees. In this way, the film becomes a quiet act of environmental activism—not by condemning technology, but by re-enchanting the natural world.

The children's relationship to this mystery is central. Mei and Satsuki do not "learn" about nature in didactic ways. They live it. They dig in the garden, follow acorns, crawl through brush. Their knowledge is embodied, instinctual. They do not ask, "What is Totoro?" They ask, "Can we see him again?" It is a question of longing, not classification. In this way, Miyazaki reclaims a way of knowing that is relational rather than rational—rooted in proximity, affection, awe. Furthermore, the inherent magic of Miyazaki's world runs from the spring of childhood wonder, the imagination that we attempt to hold in our hands for as long as possible. This introduces a thread that runs throughout Miyazaki's films—the concept of the sublime {from the Latin sublīmis}. The sublime, as a philosophical concept, is defined as "the quality of greatness, whether physical, moral, intellectual, metaphysical, aesthetic, spiritual, or artistic, oftentimes related to the majesty of nature." This last detail is oftentimes depicted in cinematography—some propose that it is not nature, itself, that is sublime, but rather the way that we humans perceive it. Thus, the 'magic' lies within ourselves. In his 1790 manuscript, The Critique of Judgment, Immanuel Kant linked the sublime to the power of the human imagination, thereby proposing that the creative sublime lies in the deepest part of the human psyche, something inherent to humans as fundamentally story-telling creatures. My Neighbor Totoro stands out in Miyazaki's filmography as most definitely capturing the creative power of children, emphasizing his conception of the ideal Romantic hero and the connection that this figure shares with the magical sublime. The openness and sense of wonder that children have inspire his artistry. The vitality of these characters shows the world that they exist in — life literally screams from his movies, each frame is carefully crafted with a visual wonder, a reflection of the rich inner world of its protagonists.

This is, in a way, reflective of Miyazaki's artistic philosophy—Miyazaki admits to oftentimes beginning his work without a script or a cemented idea, instead working off of a single drawing, an image that hooks the audience to the story to come, intertwining his imagination with that of his audience in an unexpected and beautifully harmonious way. In his words, "This might sound ridiculous, but I've had staff tell me they have no idea what's going on in my films." For instance, with My Neighbor Totoro, the film began, so to speak, with the image of a bizarre little creature, Totoro, standing alongside a little girl in the rain at a bus stop. Working in this way allows the filmmaker the full freedom of visually-driven media, introducing a very natural style of development.

Ultimately, My Neighbor Totoro is not a story about what happens, but about how it feels to be alive in a world full of spirit. It is about presence—the rustle of wind in bamboo, the comfort of a warm bath, the hush before rain. It is about trust—the trust children place in the unknown, the trust we place in the world to hold us even when we tremble. And it is about love—not romantic or heroic, but the everyday love that nourishes and steadies. The love of a sister carrying her sleeping sibling. The love of a father biking through the dusk. The love of a great, silent spirit waiting in the trees. To return to Totoro is to remember how to see—not as adults seeking answers, but as children attuned to wonder. In its quiet way, the film asks us to live differently: more slowly, more tenderly, more attentively. It asks us to believe, again, that the world is alive. In the words of Hayao Miyazaki, "My films show the world's beauty. Beauty otherwise unnoticed. That's what I want to see."

Streaming Is Ruining Movie Theaters—And Here's How We Can Save Them

BY GRACE SCANLON
Staff Writer

Movies have always been a shared experience, bringing people together to watch stories on the big screen. The exciting environment of a movie theater—being with an engaged crowd, the surround sound, and stunning imagery—is something that a person can't recreate in their home. Now, since almost anybody can stream movies from their home, fewer people are getting up and going to the theater. As entertainment becomes more accessible, the future of movie theaters seems uncertain.

The countless streaming services are the primary reason for the decline in moviegoing. Movies are typically released on streaming platforms after they've been in theaters for approximately a month. "It's sad to say that I'd rather stay at home to watch a movie than go out to the theater," said Jen McEntee, a student studying broadcasting art and technology at County College of Morris.

The rising prices at movie theaters also play a role in the decrease in theatergoers. "And the tickets, they can be a little too much," said McEntee. "Same with snacks and popcorn and stuff. It can add up." According to Sherwood News, movie theaters made over $1.7 billion from concession sales in 2019, with only $279 million in costs.

As prices rise and streaming services keep adding to their platforms, many people are wondering if the theatrical experience is worth the price tag.

A chain reaction occurs when people don't take the trip to the theater. Since fewer people are leaving their houses to see movies, it impacts the box office revenue, which then alters budgets for future movies. Production studios aren't tak-

ing financial risks, which results in mainly sure-to-be successful films, such as those already part of a franchise. "All that's out now is remakes and Marvel stuff," said Jaime Weger, a CCM student studying nursing. "I'd like to see more original movies in theaters."

Movie theaters, especially smaller ones, are having trouble making enough money to stay in business. For example, Cinépolis, located in Parsippany, New Jersey, closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Indie movies are under greater threat, as they tend to have a harder time securing theatrical releases.

COVID-19 completely changed how people watch movies, speeding up the development of streaming services. Since everyone was stuck inside for months, people started streaming movies and other media, and now that theaters are open, many have not come back to the big screen.

"In quarantine, I would just stream things on my laptop," said Weger. "Everyone did. I guess we all got used to it and liked not having to get up and go out to see a movie."

Society was forced to form these habits during the pandemic, but now, these habits are hurting the film industry.

Moviegoing is more than watching a film—it's about nostalgia. Movie theatres are tied to childhood memories, first dates, and family days. The smell of the buttery popcorn, the lights dimming right before showtime, and the energy of a crowded theater all come together to make magic.

"I have so many memories at movie theaters," said Ethan Mann, a CCM student studying early childhood education. "My dad loves going to the movies, so he'd always take me with him. We'd go get ice cream afterward. It was always a good time." Accessing the nostalgia of it all might be the answer to getting people back in front of the big screen.

To get audiences back, movie theaters need to tap into people's fond memories and start making some changes. Creating a more enjoyable experience by offering early screenings, comfortable seating, and exclusive content that you can't stream. The tradition of moviegoing can stay alive if theaters adapt to the ever-changing world.

OPINION: Measles as Metaphor

BY KENNETH A. SHOULER
Professor of Philosophy and contributor to the Youngtown Edition

Less than two weeks ago, on April 3, a second child in Texas died of measles, the New York Times reported. At times, our ability to understand a single phenomenon will crystallize the remaining parts of some unseemly whole. Such is the case with the present administration. Listen to Dr. Kavita Patel, a physician and health policy researcher and teaching professor of medicine at Stanford University, speaking several weeks before, when measles had taken one child and an adult, both unvaccinated. "When two deaths occur—the first fatalities in a decade—and our health secretary [Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.] responds with a jumble of pseudoscience and platitudes, we've reached a moral crossroads in public health," the doctor said. She then cited the evidence for vaccines.

Since 1974, measles vaccination has saved an estimated 94 million lives. No misprint. Of those 94 million lives saved, the vast majority were young children. Between 2000 and 2022 alone, measles vaccination prevented an estimated 57 million deaths globally, compared to those with no vaccination.

Dr. Patel then yanked the veil off this flawed man—nominated for the Secretary of Health and Human Services by a man far more flawed—by exposing the inconsistencies of his argument and the vacuous speculating (I won't say thinking) that informs his conjectures. In a March op-ed, placed on Fox television, where it would likely meet no resistance, he prefaced his remarks by praising vaccines for their efficacy by "protecting children" and bolstering their immunity. Then came the U-turn.

He stated that vaccines were a "personal choice," a phrase that rears its head frequently in anti-vaccine literature. It got worse. He then sang the praises of vitamin A supplementation, which is at times recommended by clinics in "underresourced areas of the world, creating a false equivalence between proven prevention and situational treatment," Dr. Patel said.

Even as the measles epidemic grew and Kennedy posted on X that measles is "a top priority," his words rang hollow, since he never referenced the most telling statistic: that 97 percent of the 505 cases reported in the current measles outbreak occurred in unvaccinated individuals. He upped his absurd ante during a Fox interview—after the $787 million defamation suit won by Dominion Voting machines against Fox, it should never be referred to as Fox "News" again—as he recommended unproven remedies like budesonide (a steroid prescribed for asthma) and cod liver oil and vitamins A and D, dangerously implying these could substitute for immunization.

Before I continue to describe Dr. Patel's ongoing frustration, what has happened with the measles contagion is both fact and metaphor. If a president is science averse, he will choose heads of agencies who are also science averse. Those appointees will then display fealty to Trump. As does Pete Hesgeth, a neophyte who is ill-qualified to be Secretary of Defense. He recently published detailed U.S. war plans to attack Yemen in a Signal group chat that included Atlantic Magazine's editor-in-chief, Jeffrey Goldberg. Ever insecure about defending his own positions, Trump hires such people based on their loyalty to him, not on their qualifications. The attack on other institutions continues apace. We shun doctors and the learned, swapping them out for a conga line of insufferable boobs.

In a separate interview, Dr. Patel complained, "This is equivalent to malpractice. He [Robert Kennedy Jr] is not a doctor but he's in charge of Health and Human Services." She went on to cite statistics that demonstrate the efficacity of the vaccine. Despite the inarguable success of the measles vaccine, vaccine hesitancy and falling immunization coverage during the pandemic have led to progress backsliding.

On April 6th, Kennedy attended the funeral of the unvaccinated unnamed 8-year-old girl. He wrote on social media that he was in the state to learn how federal employees can better partner with Texas health officials to control the spread of the highly contagious respiratory virus, noting that "the most effective way to prevent the spread of measles is the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine."

But he couldn't help himself. Just hours later, Kennedy praised the practices of "extraordinary healers Dr. Ben Edwards and Richard Bartlett, who have treated and healed some 300 measles-stricken Mennonite children using aerosolized budesonide and clarithromycin." Edwards and Bartlett have reportedly both promoted medicine other than vaccines to treat disease. In fact, Dr. Ben Edwards has criticized measles vaccination and described mass infection as "God's version of measles immunization," according to The Washington Post. Edwards runs a wellness clinic in Lubbock, Texas that supplies patients with vitamin C and cod liver oil, according to The New York Times.

Kennedy's post on X attracted criticism from social media users - as both men have been linked to controversial stances. "Bulls__t Bobby is still quoting quacks," wrote Dr. Jan Kirsch, a medical oncologist and hematologist in California.

This failure to comprehend the problem and prescribe the right cure is eerily reminiscent of America's Covid-19 ignorance under Trump five years ago. In April 2020, Trump stated that "Easter Sunday will bring us a miracle." It didn't. This is the same person who describes climate change as "a hoax." If you have the temerity to tell Trump about his failures, you suffer the consequences of him attacking you. He goes after his enemies who point out his myriad failures.

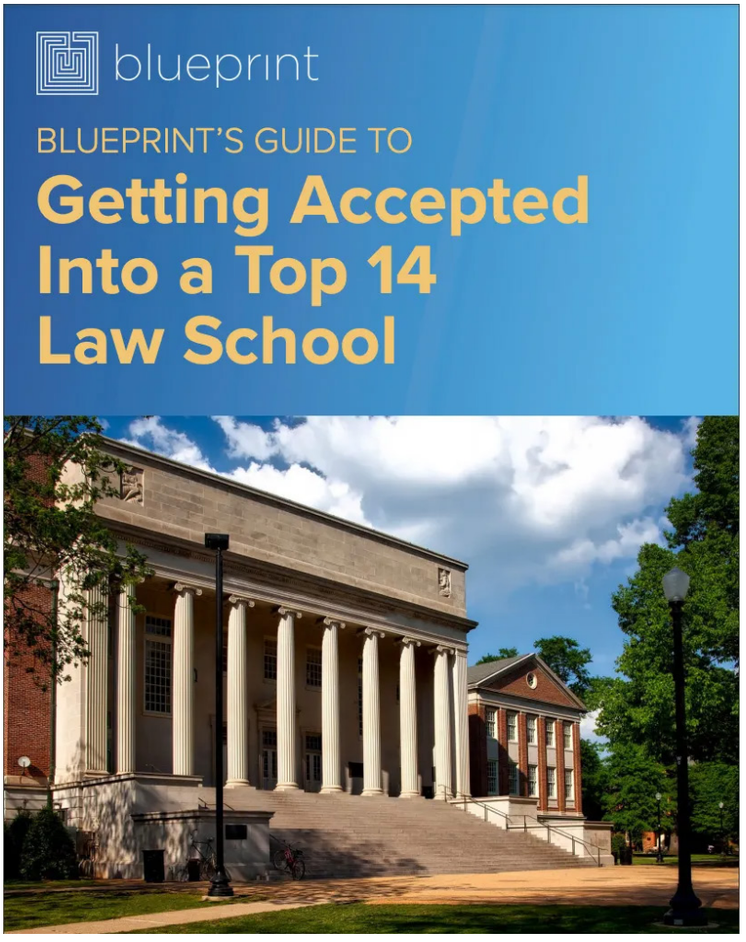
That is what happened to the Voice of America (VOA). This U.S. government-funded international broadcaster has been supported by every president, Republican and Democrat, over its 83-year history. It launched in 1942 during World War II to counter Nazi propaganda. But it is off the air due to a Trump administration executive order and lockout of hundreds of its employees placed on suspend-

ed leave. What was their offense? Telling the truth. Trump didn't like their reporting on Covid-19, which is equivalent to saying his abject failure with respect to Covid. On Trump's watch, the United States' 334,805,000 people—just four percent of the world's population—endured 1,219,48716 deaths, roughly 17 percent of the 7,010,681 deaths worldwide. It's math. It's history. This colossal, unmitigated, irrefutable failure occurred on his watch. In a recent online poll where readers could grade America's response to Covid, 64 percent of more than 3,700 people polled gave America a D or F for its COVID response.

The Trump administration has thus extinguished a trusted beacon of fact-based journalism for hundreds of millions worldwide.

The White House claims, "Taxpayers are no longer on the hook for radical propaganda." Never mind that they weren't radical and didn't promote propaganda. With the myriad nationwide protests against the Trump administration, people have displayed scores of clever posters. My favorite one read: "Make America smart again."

EDITORIAL: The T14 Welcomes New Institutions to its Law School Rankings



BY RUTH ADAMS
Editor in Chief

Have you been considering attending law school after undergrad? Here is what you need to know about the 2025 law school rankings and the future of the top law institutions.

Law schools have seen a rise in applications this 2025-2026 cycle, most likely caused by the new *Suits* spinoff, *Suits LA*. Coincidentally, it mirrors the boom in law school applications seen during the US election years. Because of this phenomenon, the ranking system of US law schools is consistently monitored by its applicants. The "best" law schools in the US are ranked in a list of the top 14 (including ties), or more commonly known as the "T14". According to 7sage, this year, the T14 welcomes three new law schools into its list. Taking the place of Cornell University, Washington University, Vanderbilt University, Georgetown University, and the University of Texas-Austin now enter the T14 tied for 14th place. Stanford University and Yale University are now tied for first place, with the University of Chicago coming in second, and the University of Virginia bumped from seventh place to third. Many non-Ivy League schools have jumped up in statistics this cycle, with Vanderbilt University seeing the T14 for the first time in its ranking history.

What the 2025 ranking shows: You don't need to get into an Ivy League school to attend a great law school. While it is not necessarily "easy" to get into a highly ranked non-Ivy League university, it shows that a highly regarded law school degree does not have to come from an Ivy League institution. The median GPA accepted into a T14 is currently 3.91, with a Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) score of 171 on a 180 scale, according to 7Sage. This is also the first cycle that has been reviewed after the removal of the Logic Games/Analytical Reasoning section of the LSAT, which according to BlueprintPrep.com, showed no difference in average LSAT scores, which remain at 151 on a 180 scale.

If you're wishing to become the next Harvey Specter or Elle Woods, it's appropriate to start studying for your LSAT now while in undergrad. Prep course sites such as 7Sage, Blueprint and PowerScore are highly rated in increasing LSAT scores, providing real LSAT questions from previous years. Keeping your GPA up is also a critical factor in aiming for a top law school, as you have a better chance of being accepted with a lower median LSAT score with a higher GPA. Depending on where you wish to work in the future, it's important to start planning for your law school education today.

The ping of the bat pierces the air in April

BY KENNETH A. SHOULER
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You can't always control the circumstances—only how you react to those circumstances; you can always control your attitude and effort.

- Jenny Finch, pitcher for the Arizona Wildcats and Gold Medal winning pitcher in the 2004 Olympics

in Athens. In 2008, Time Magazine described her as the most famous softball player in history.

Softball is back. No, not those Sunday morning lob ball contests where the pitch is served up underhanded on a silver platter. That easy stuff is for men. This is fast pitch softball. You know, the game where the delivery is about striding and arm speed and releases from down under. The ball is still rising when it reaches the batter, so squaring it up and driving it takes real quickness on the part of the batter.

The season that births softball: an early spring view of the home of the Lady Titans

The Lady Titans did win their first game on March 29 with three runs in the bottom of the seventh against Salem Community College. But the challenges are evident for the Lady Titans. They have tallied just one win in their first six games.

When the teams I rooted for didn't have their best seasons, I turned my attention to the individual performances. The Titans haven't been going deep, but their batting averages are impressive. Besides holding down the hot corner and catcher, freshman Kelly Preston was raking at a ridiculous .538 clip. Shortstop and pitcher Morgan Demm is spraying the ball to the tune of .455. Meanwhile, sophomore second sacker and shortstop Cameron Fehsal is batting .385. The team average is a respectable .288.

Going forward, the Lady Titans will need to bear life on the road. The home cooking portion of the schedule is behind them. The Lady Titans face 11 straight road games between April 5 and April 22 before returning home for a pair on April 24 against Raritan Valley Community College to complete their season.