Dear Penguins,

As we bundle up and begin our Spring semester, I hope you’ll take a moment–amidst the hustle and bustle of bouncing between browser windows–to connect with friends and classmates. I am reminded now more than ever that community is the core of music-making. I often think back to last year: laughing with my Studio-mates, walking into Mark Zaleski’s Jazz Ear Training class to a room full of smiles, sitting wide-eyed with excitement before a concert in Jordan Hall. These are memories that made my freshman year special and impacted my musicianship in so many ways. Many miles away from Boston or right down the street... we all keep a piece of NEC with us: whether it be in our online ensembles, friendships, or our artistry. We will make music together again! And with that sentiment, I hope to begin this semester with a sense of optimism and continued strength.

Warmly,

Brittany Bryant, Student Government President

Happy New Year and Welcome Back!

As we embark on a new semester, we wish you a successful year with a few self-care tips from our Health and Counseling Center! We explore new horizons with our new SGA President and gain some perspective from new and returning students on the City of Boston. We hope your first week has been exciting and fulfilling! And as always, we hope you are staying safe and connected to your loved ones.

From your editors: Caroline & Madeleine

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**Conversations WITH**

**SGA President Brittany Bryant**

What are your interests outside of music?

I love to read, study languages, and hang out with my bearded dragon.

What do you love most about NEC?

I love the opportunity for cross-departmental collaboration; there is something to learn from each style of music, and I appreciate the chance to take classes and ensembles in the Jazz and CI departments. I think every musician should explore other genres of music to add new perspectives to their musicianship.

What would you like to tell remote students who are unable to be with us this year?

I was a remote student last semester and had a six hour time difference, so I understand that it’s difficult to study music remotely. During this time, I would encourage students to take advantage of the unique opportunities that come with being an NEC student outside of Boston. This could be an opportunity to bring a fresh perspective to the place you’ve been making music all your life, or to simply apply what you have gained from NEC to a completely new environment.

What are you most excited about with the new student government?

I am excited to work with my classmates as we tackle issues and gather feedback from the student body. As musicians, we are dedicated to refining our craft. We adapt to change. We face challenges head-on. For these reasons, I am confident that NEC students can make real change. Beyond our community, we may also draw inspiration from local student governments: NEC’s SGA was just officially voted in as the newest member of the Boston Intercollegiate Government, an organization that connects student governments from the Greater Boston Area. Through this group, we will have the opportunity to work on a variety of action items with students from all over Boston.
Hello NEC students and welcome to the Spring 2021 semester! The counseling team at the Health and Counseling Center hope you are all taking care of yourselves as best you can during these challenging times. We wanted to introduce ourselves and share with you one of our favorite self-care practices to help us recharge, relax, and/or have a little fun during the COVID pandemic. We hope you all have a “toolkit” of strategies and practices you can use to support your overall mental health, and maybe one of our tools might work for you. Of course, working with one of us in counseling this semester could be a GREAT self-care practice!

If you’d like to make a telecounseling appointment, please call the Health and Counseling Center at 617-585-1284 during business hours from 9am-4pm, Monday through Friday. We may not be able to provide counseling with students living outside of Massachusetts because of certain regulations, but we surely can offer help.

For Everyday Wellness:
1. Focus on one thing at a time
2. Eat well-balanced meals
3. Go for a walk outside
4. Connect with loved ones
5. Sleep well and power nap
6. Try meditation or stretching
7. Create a new playlist
8. Take time to reflect or journal
9. Positive self-affirmations
10. Watch something that makes you laugh

As the spring semester begins, it’s a great time to renew, refresh, or start a self-care routine. Having a self-care routine is particularly important as the semester quickly gets busier—it’s sometimes only too easy to forget self-care practices that can help keep you grounded. It can be difficult to establish or keep up a self-care routine when trying to balance classes, rehearsals, concerts, gigs, practice time, auditions, and...the list goes on. It’s even more difficult during the pandemic when many of us are isolated from the people, places, and experiences that are so integral to our habitual self-care routines. However, while there may be moments of adjustment or setbacks, there is also space and time to craft new sets of self-care routines that can support you during the semester. Far from daunting, a self-care routine can range from five minutes of daily reflection to a short walk around your home (fresh air! even through a mask) to listening to your favorite songs. See the adjacent list for some more suggestions, but feel free to make your routine your own! Don’t feel discouraged if you forget about your routine for a little bit—it’s bound to happen during a busy semester. Instead, take a deep breath and remind yourself of what makes you feel fulfilled as you move forward. To motivate yourself to maintain your self-care routine, you can set reminders on your phone, work with a friend to keep each other accountable, or you’re always welcome to talk to a member of the NEC Health & Counseling Center team.

Best wishes for a healthy and rewarding spring semester!

Greetings from our COUNSELORS

Squire Paige  Director of Counseling, Psychotherapist

Bringing in a bit of joy and levity during a pandemic has definitely been therapeutic, and one of my favorite vehicles for this is TikTok. Opening that app is like taking a trip somewhere super random and you never quite know what your fyp is going to bring you! I really appreciate the thought and effort that people put into their videos, but the best part is heading right to the comment section where more often than not I will read something incredibly clever that makes me laugh or smile.

Elizabeth Conward  Psychotherapist

Writing has always been a therapeutic outlet for me, and I love to write short stories and poetry. During the pandemic, I have been able to set aside time to write poetry and use my poems as a way to reflect and express my thoughts and feelings. I also enjoy watching anything that can make me laugh, so I definitely enjoy watching funny videos and memes on social media.

Katie Kelly  Psychotherapist

Since the pandemic began, I started experimenting with cooking plant-based meals. This became a form of self-care because it distracted me from all the stress and really aligned with my values around nutrition and diet. I have really enjoyed learning how to be a better cook and doing something healthy for myself and the planet.

Dani Patrick  Counseling Intern

Being able to connect with others has always been a big part of my self-care and has become even more important for me to prioritize with the pandemic and its limitations. One thing I have appreciated is that COVID has helped me be more creative in the ways that I connect with others, whether it’s having short phone calls, video calls with long-distance friends I might not otherwise see, or social distance walks.

Angela Winslow  Counseling Intern

During this time of increased isolation, I have found it helpful to be more intentional in creating spaces that feel safe and soothing to me. This often consists of switching from overhead lighting to lamps and making sure there are some live plants around. Lighting sage, incense or a scented candle can really help to alter my mood as well, especially after spending a long time in the same space as many of us are doing these days. Not only are these comforting practices for me during a pandemic, making these small alterations can make it easier to drop into a mindfulness practice.

Tips from Jessica Ding

Harp Performance, MM ’24
NEC Health & Counseling Wellness Programming Assistant

As the pandemic recedes, we are slowly getting back to in-person life. This spring semester begins, it’s a great time to renew, refresh, or start a self-care routine. Having a self-care routine is particularly important as the semester quickly gets busier—it’s sometimes only too easy to forget self-care practices that can help keep you grounded. It can be difficult to establish or keep up a self-care routine when trying to balance classes, rehearsals, concerts, gigs, practice time, auditions, and...the list goes on. It’s even more difficult during the pandemic when many of us are isolated from the people, places, and experiences that are so integral to our habitual self-care routines. However, while there may be moments of adjustment or setbacks, there is also space and time to craft new sets of self-care routines that can support you during the semester. Far from daunting, a self-care routine can range from five minutes of daily reflection to a short walk around your home (fresh air! even through a mask) to listening to your favorite songs. See the adjacent list for some more suggestions, but feel free to make your routine your own! Don’t feel discouraged if you forget about your routine for a little bit—it’s bound to happen during a busy semester. Instead, take a deep breath and remind yourself of what makes you feel fulfilled as you move forward. To motivate yourself to maintain your self-care routine, you can set reminders on your phone, work with a friend to keep each other accountable, or you’re always welcome to talk to a member of the NEC Health & Counseling Center team.

Best wishes for a healthy and rewarding spring semester!
Nozomi Murayama MM’22, Violin Performance

Moving back to Boston was very exciting for me, since I spent my childhood here. I felt safe knowing that everyone who steps foot on campus are tested regularly, and I was able to focus on my education. I especially enjoyed chamber and orchestra. I have always loved collaborating with other musicians, but I have a new appreciation for it after not playing with others for months.

Mark Larrivee BM ’24, Percussion Performance

Hybrid learning at NEC has been challenging, but not so bad. Commuting to school has given me the opportunity to utilize the lovely T-system we have in Boston where you wonder how the orange line is still functional and why the commuter rail comes every two hours…still, I consider myself lucky to live close enough to commute to Boston at all. Despite the inconveniences of commuting to NEC, being able to create live music in the practice rooms and with friends makes it all worth it.

Caleb Montague BM’ 23, Jazz Studies

The pandemic has made music school really difficult for people who have been studying remotely, so I’m really excited to be back in Boston as a hybrid student this semester. It’s been really good to see everybody, and Boston’s done a good job of keeping everyone safe. I’m thankful that I am in the position to come back to NEC and study with my teachers in person.

Eunha Kim BM’23, Violin Performance

It’s my first time back in Boston since the pandemic, and the happiest moment since my return is when I walked out into the city to see my school. Even though I’m not interacting with people, the fact that I can hear people practicing in Gainsborough again, walk by people along Huntington Ave brings me happiness. I am just excited to be able to interact and play with people again.

Arun Asthagiri BM’24, Violin Performance

As a freshman attending NEC remotely, it felt a bit surreal to be thrust into the college environment over a computer. The passion of live music was confined to a computer screen and Zoom breakout rooms were the highlight of my social interaction. But with the terrific guidance of my studio teacher, Nick Kitchen, the first semester for me became more of an inward journey to explore my instrument. I focused on a lot of new solo repertoire at first and eventually moved back into standard concertos. Overall, the flexibility and warmth of NEC’s faculty and students made the semester a productive learning experience despite the pandemic. Looking forward, I am excited to be on campus for the next semester and finally meet my private teacher and many friends in person.

Hannah Dunton BM’23, Jazz Studies

Returning to Boston for the first time since March of 2020 has been thrilling, tumultuous, and even a bit nerve wracking at times. I’m thrilled to be back in the spaces I associate so strongly with creativity and collaboration, although they look quite different than they used to (and will likely continue to for a while longer). As I took last semester fully remotely, it made me quite emotional returning to Jordan Hall, hearing students playing in practice rooms, and seeing so many familiar faces walking around NEC’s campus. While it may be a long time before we’re back to sitting in packed concert halls or having impromptu jam sessions into the late hours of the night, I’m so looking forward to seeing my classmates and being able to spend time on campus this year.
Submit an album recommendation that encapsulates the phrase “Escape the Ordinary”
We’ll feature your recommendation in the next issue!
Send submissions to our Instagram @penguin.nec