State budget delays renovations

Pa. has not passed its state budget, holding up two major campus updates

By Sarah Reichle and Megan Poland
Editors-in-Chief

More renovations are coming to La Roche, but not until PA passes its budget.

In the past year, La Roche College has renovated CC Square, SC 103 and the Cantellops Art Gallery.

“I feel like the renovation president. We had the square, we had Science Center 103, now we have the art gallery,” La Roche College President Candace Intracosa said.

According to Sr. Candace there are many projects in the works.

One of the major projects for the college is to build a sidewalk on the main driveway.

Sr. Candace said there would be “7,500 square feet of sidewalk. It would come from Duncan Ave in front of the college and go up the driveway and past the library.”

The sidewalk would make walking up the driveway safer for students and would distract onlookers from the storm water detention pond, she said.

“One of the reasons we’d like to do the sidewalk is to make it easier for students to walk over to McCandless Crossing, too,” Sr. Candace said.

“But the whole idea behind the sidewalk project is safety. We don’t want our students having to walk on the driveway.”

She added, “The sidewalk project will also address all the landscaping around the storm water detention pond and take your eye away from looking down into the gulley to looking up. There will be a wall and trees and shrubbery.”

According to Sr. Candace, the construction of the sidewalk also involves the college planting evergreen shrubs and placing decorative poles with lighting, banners and a low brick wall.

She said, “We’ve got the plan for what kinds of planting we want to do, we just need the money.”

The college president said they will also build an educational observation deck overlooking the storm water detention pond. She said this would allow students to

See Renovations, Page 5

International students share challenges in America

BY LAUREN VILLELLA
Associate Editor

A host of academic, social and cultural challenges pepper the international student experience.

La Roche College’s international student population is considerable.

According to Natasha Garrett, Ph.D., the director of International Student Services, there are over 35 countries represented in La Roche’s international student body.

Garrett said there are currently 22 graduate international students, 235 undergraduate and 90 in the ESL program.

For many of La Roche’s international students, the first step toward transitioning to an American college is learning and mastering the English language. The ability to communicate affects a wealth of commonplace academic and social activities.

International students’ uncertainty over their English language skills can be a barrier to classroom discussion, joining campus activities and interacting with other students.

Dolma Tsering Gurung, a freshman from Nepal majoring in biology, said she first began to learn English when she was 5.

“English is definitely a barrier for me in class discussions as English

See International, Page 8
Professors bust common winter myths

By Sydney Harsh
Associate Editor

Some winter wisdom is about as factual as frosty the snowman.

Problem is, these fictions don’t always leave you nice and warm on the inside. Be prepared this winter by educating yourself about these winter myths, so they don’t get the best of you this winter season.

Dr. Terri Liberto, nursing professor, said there are many common winter myths that we believe are true.

“Some of those common myths include: cold air can make you sick, allergies subside in the winter, lack of sunlight causes depression, and you should not exercise in the winter,” she said.

“A few other myths that are commonly known are not having to wear sunscreen in the winter, as well as cold temperatures cause hair loss,” Dr. Lauren Ameris, health sciences professor, said.

Dr. Liberto said these myths have no credible basis and can be easily busted.

“People believe what they hear and what they read from non-credible sources — it may be the talk of the office, school, or among friends — but it has no credible basis,” she said.

“These winter myths also give people something to talk about,” Dr. Ameris said, “and many of these myths have been passed down from generation to generation.”

Dr. Liberto said you can bust these myths if you follow these simple steps:

1. First to find out credible health information, an individual should ask their health provider, the professor said. “The health care provider is the most credible source of information.”

2. Dr. Ameris said, reading articles and watching the news is also a beneficial source.

3. That brings us to myth number one: does being out in the cold actually make you sick?

   This myth can be busted pretty easily, Dr. Liberto said.

   “Bacteria and viruses make you sick, not the cold temperatures,” she said. “The best way to prevent yourself from getting sick in the winter is to wash your hands frequently.”

4. Dr. Ameris said she agrees with Dr. Liberto.

   “The cold air alone will not make you sick,” she said. “In fact, studies have shown that cold viruses actually grow best at 91 degrees Fahrenheit.”

So, if you find yourself sneezing a lot in the winter, it doesn’t necessarily mean that you’re catching a cold — it could just be your allergies acting up.

“That’s right, your allergies stay with you all year round,” Dr. Ameris said.

This brings us to myth number two: do your allergies subside in the winter?

“Many people still suffer from allergies in the winter. If you think about it,” Dr. Ameris said, “people spend more time indoors which makes them more susceptible to indoor allergies such as mold, pet dander, and dust mites.”

Depending on the trigger for the allergy, some triggers are worse in the winter. Molds thrive during the colder months, and pets are generally inside more during this time,” Dr. Liberto said. “If these are triggers for an allergic response, they will be much worse in the winter.”

While some seasons bring physical illnesses, others can bring mental illnesses.

With that in mind, we can now bust myth number three: does lack of sunlight cause depression?

Many studies have shown that sunlight causes depression.

Battling winter blues

By Josh Baktay

As you gaze out the foggy, speckled window of AB221, boasting a fat lip of powdery snow, nostalgia for sunlight and clear skies starts to creep into the room, like a student subtly arriving late to class. Next, your brisk walk across campus, to your dorm in Peters Hall leaves you missing, “It should be illegal for it to be this cold!” or perhaps, “I swear hell is a cold place.” And by the end of the day, you have begun to wish that summer was year round and that feeling of nostalgia has morphed into an underlying sadness.

These feelings are not unfamiliar to the citizens of western Pa. and other northern countries and can affect us more than we realize. Seasonal Affective Disorder is a psychological condition that can affect anyone by bringing them increased levels of depression, lethargy, and social withdrawal due to the winter season. Therefore, it is important to be conscious of one’s mental health and take the best steps towards prevention and living a healthy life.

In order to understand this condition, we must first unpack its psychological implications. According to Dr. Lee Markowitz, Assistant Professor of Psychology, SAD is "classified as a mood disorder. You can think of it as a form of depression." Some symptoms of this mood disorder can include fatigue, depression, social withdrawal, loss of interest and apathy. A more common variety is known as Subsyndromal SAD which means "you have some symptoms of the disorder but a milder degree. You can basically be more depressed than the average person, lower mood than average, but not severe enough that it's actually a clinical problem," he said.

Dr. Markowitz said that SAD is primarily caused by a lack of light exposure. The lack of light then affects the levels of serotonin and dopamine in the brain (these are often known as the “happy drugs” and are responsible for our positive moods). He said, "Those are the two most important neurotransmitter systems in depression. Those systems are affected by light exposure, they’re affected by social support, behaviors like regular exercise, and drugs [legal prescription]." He clarified that light exposure is responsible for a direct
Students hibernate to get through cold season

By Sarah Reichle
Editor-in-Chief

After Christmas, who wants snow? The winter months are hard to get through with the frigid temperatures, icy roads, and lack of sunlight. So, what do you do to keep yourself sane in the winter? A few La Roche College students said they like to spend time indoors and as far away from the snow as possible.

Amanda Dugan, a senior sociology major, said that she likes to spend time with her friends and to sleep. Putu Kartika, a senior health science major, said he likes to watch a lot of YouTube videos, workout and train at the gym to keep himself sane during the winter months.

Federica Riedel Gonzalez, a sophomore child and family studies major, said she likes to sleep and watch movies during the winter.

Madison Elberthy, a freshmen biology major, said she eats a lot during the winter. She added that she likes to stay inside but tries to go out at least three times a week. "I want to go back to Texas," Purohit said.

One La Roche student said that the winter weather affects his mood. To keep himself sane, Eric Cosmides, an IT and Political Science major, said, "I use UV lights to maintain a sense of daylight after civil twilight."

"I have Seasonal Affective Disorder. Late fall and early winter are the worst times for me because of the darkness. I’m a firm believer in your moods being affected by the seasons," he added.

At least one La Roche student tries to embrace the cold with optimism. Hillary Dorian, a marketing major, said, "I try to do things you can't do in the summer." She said for example snowboarding, snow tubing and skiing.

"The beautiful winter sceneries are breathtaking, but La Roche seems to be over the cold. Punxsutawney Phil did not see his shadow, so we can all look forward to an early spring--well hopefully.

"I usually go out to eat," Vanisha Purohit, a senior leadership major said. "And then anything indoors that's fun, like laser tag."

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Myths, continued from page 2

occurrences of depression take place more frequently in the winter months, Dr. Ameris said. So – does lack of sunlight play a major role in winter depression?

"Lack of sunlight does not cause winter depression," Dr. Liberto said. However, Dr. Ameris said, people do suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder – also known as SAD. "SAD is a type of depression that occurs during the same season each year," she said. "You may have SAD if you felt depressed during the last two winters, but felt much better in the spring and summer."

Dr. Liberto said, it is still very important to get sunshine in the winter to keep your mind and body healthy.

"Sunshine increases the production of Vitamin D by the skin," the professor said. "Vitamin D is important in calcium regulation, healthy skin, immune system health and in bone health."

Another myth – myth number four – that deals with the winter weather is whether or not you should get out there and exercise in the cold, both professors said.

"Many studies have shown that because you are working out in these cold conditions, one may work out faster – causing you to burn more calories and increase your endorphin levels," Dr. Ameris said.

However, Dr. Liberto said, it is important to get cleared by your primary care physician before you begin exercising in the cold, wintry weather.

But – should you wear sunscreen when you go out into the winter weather?

Dr. Ameris said that this myth – myth number five – is also an easy myth to bust.

"Lack of sunlight does not cause sunburn. So – does lack of sunlight play a major role in winter depression?

Dr. Liberto agreed. She said, “Of course you should wear sunscreen in the winter. Even though it’s winter, we all still need to protect our skin from those harmful, cancer causing rays of sunshine.”

"If you do go out for that cold, refreshing, winter run – should you worry about your hair? Dr. Ameris said, there is no need to worry about myth number six: cold temperatures cause hair loss. "Studies have been done that prove that hair loss in more common in the summer than in the winter," she said.

Dr. Liberto said heredity, certain medical conditions, and scalp conditions cause hair loss – not cold temperatures.

Now that we’ve busted some common winter myths, the professors said that keeping up to date with your health will help you avoid believing that these myths are true.

"It is important to stress that health information is best from the individual’s health care provider," Dr. Liberto said. However, she also said, students should refer to the Centers for Disease Control or contact their primary care physician to obtain more information regarding these winter myths.

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Read more at courier.laroche.edu
Goals

Historic, beautiful travel destinations exist in U.S.A.

Get out of your comfort zone and explore a new city

By Mike Weaver
Outdoors Correspondent

Different locations within the United States offer individuals the opportunity to explore their unique characteristics. Pristine beaches in Virginia offer a taste of the salt life, while Boston, Ma. presents a tourist with countless historical landmarks. Finally, Sun Valley, Id. presents opportunities for active individuals, such as hiking and skiing.

Virginia Beach, in my opinion, is one of the nation’s best beaches. A well-kept boardwalk is constructed parallel to the Atlantic Ocean. Interesting stores and delicious restaurants are present along the three-mile boardwalk. Grab a few souvenirs at one of the many shops in remembrance of your vacation. Grab a bite to eat at Ocean Eddie’s restaurant, which is located on a fishing pier. If dining on the outside patio, you will be greeted with the sounds of ocean. Many of the items on the menu are caught with the sounds of ocean. Many of the items on the menu are caught outside patio, you will be greeted with the sounds of ocean. Many of the items on the menu are caught with the sounds of ocean. Many of the items on the menu are caught.

Virginia Beach’s restaurants and atmosphere are extremely welcoming to individuals of all ages.

Within Boston, Ma., countless historical landmarks are present. Boston presents an extremely unique atmosphere to visitors. Begin your vacation by visiting historical Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox. Constructed in 1912, Fenway Park is the oldest park in Major League Baseball. Although many improvements have been made, Fenway Park continues to possess its classic look. Take a tour through the park and visit the gift shop for unique memorabilia. After your visit, be sure to stop at other landmarks within Boston, such as the New England Holocaust Memorial and the Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum. Finally, take an educational walk on the Freedom Trail, which presents a fun and entertaining history lesson.

Sun Valley, Id., presents stunning scenery for the viewer. Dress in layers and grab your ski to visit the first purpose-built ski resort in the United States. While riding the chairlift, you will be presented with a stunning backdrop of the Sawtooth Mountains. Within Sun Valley, countless outdoor activities are available, such as hiking, mountain biking, and fly fishing. Visit Sun Valley year-round to experience delicious, unique food and amazing cultural events.

The United States is an amazing country filled with unique scenery. Plan a trip to one of the above locations for a memorable, fun-filled vacation. Explore beaches, cities, and mountains of America to take in its marvelous beauty.

Are you interested in joining our staff?
The Courier is always looking for new writers and photographers.

Contact either Sarah Reichle or Megan Poland for more information on writing for the Courier.

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February celebrates Black History

BY SARAH TURNBULL

February is Black History Month. We've all heard stories of famous African-Americans and their contributions to the country... Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott, Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, and Barack Obama becoming the first black president. But black Americans have accomplished much more over the centuries.

So what do La Roche students know about Black History Month? Branden Kummer, a sophomore majoring in religious studies, said, "It's like Martin Luther King Day. Celebrating a nonviolent activist who didn't see hatred in everyone and welcomed people from all races."

"Honestly, I think it's weird that there's a month dedicated to black history but not any other race or ethnicity. That being said, it doesn't really affect me so I don't have a problem with it," Andre Parker, a sophomore majoring in communications, said.

According to the "International Business Times," Black History Month was originally named Negro History Week. Author and historian Todd Hoffman, assistant to the president, created the idea of such a holiday in 1926.

The holiday gained mainstream popularity in 1976 after being named Black History Month. To fully appreciate the diverse accomplishments of African-Americans in the United States, here are seven things you probably didn't know about Black History Month.

PBS News said, "Before there was Rosa Parks, there was Claudette Colvin." Fifteen-year-old student Claudette Colvin made history on March 2, 1955, when she refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Ala., bus to a white man. Along with Rosa Parks, she's credited with helping to desegregate the Montgomery bus system.

"Gone with the Wind" is one of the most-well known films in American cinema. The 1939 film tells the story of southern belle Scarlett O'Hara and her struggle to survive after the South's defeat in the Civil War. In 1940, Hattie McDaniel became the first African-American performer to win an Academy Award for her portrayal of Mammy, a house slave.

A black man designed America's capital. Scientist and mathematician Benjamin Banneker is credited with helping to design the blueprints for Washington, D.C. Biographer.com stated, "We don't want to say everything was accurate as we think. Black American sheriff trying to maintain law and order in a small frontier town, may not have been as historically inaccurate as we think. Black Americans played a major role on the American frontier. PBS.com estimates that as many as one in four cowboys were black."

African-Americans contributed to our country's greatness. In an interview on "60 Minutes," Morgan Freeman said, "You're going to relegate my history to a month? I don't want a Black History month. Black history is American history."

The fight for racial equality is not over. A poll conducted by the Washington Post revealed that two-thirds of black Americans view Barack Obama as America's most important black leader.

"Blazing Saddles," the 1974 comedy movie about an African-American sheriff trying to maintain law and order in a small frontier town, may not have been as historically inaccurate as we think. Black Americans played a major role on the American frontier. PBS.com estimates that as many as one in four cowboys were black.

So just how much have African-Americans contributed to our country's greatness?

In an interview on "60 Minutes," Morgan Freeman said, "You're going to relegate my history to a month? I don't want a Black History month. Black history is American history."

The holiday gained mainstream popularity in 1976 after being named Black History Month. It was becoming very clear that the square was very crowded. I think getting rid of the booths has opened it all up," Sr. Candace said. "People seem to like the bistro tables and the comfy furniture with the outlets so they can charge up their phones or words while they're talking."

Sr. Candace said the college has plans to completely renovate the second floor of the Science Center, as well as the library. As part of the project, the Science Center renovation relies on a capital grant from the state.

"The La Roche president said, "We don't have a lot of room, but we're working on it."

Design, continued from page 1

about the design departments and college's history, including the number of enrolled international students.

She said that self-evaluation was a part of the report.

"We had to put a report together that had an evaluation of all our departments, our programs and student retention," Wood said.

"We don't want to say everything is hunky-dory. We want to call out things we're working on before we want to revise in some way because the profession has changed," Wood added. "They kind of know before they come what they want to key in on. If you say it in the report, it better be true."

Todd Hoffman, assistant to the department chair of graphic design, said the accreditors read La Roche's previous accreditation report to have insight on areas that needed improved 10 years ago.

La Roche is one of two institutions in the Pittsburgh area with NASAD accreditation and has held the title since 1992.

The design departments had enough funds in their budget to renovate the Cantellops Art Gallery, according to Wood. Updates included new paint, flooring and homasote (the tack space).

Hoffman said the renovation of the art gallery was related to the accreditors visiting but was also a project the design departments have been wanting to do. Wood said it was a race to finish the gallery before NASAD's visit.

Wood said there are more plans for the art gallery. She said they are going to build a wall from the Cantellops Art Gallery entrance to the modular that holds the design classes, adding security to the gallery.

"Security is the big thing. The second part will happen toward the end of the year. I don't know what the time frame is—part of it has to do with the budget," Wood said.

She added, "It's wonderful to have gallery shows, and maybe external gallery shows, but we have no security there because students have to walk through it."

"We could accommodate the gallery better if it was secure and you could lock it at the far end near CC Square," Wood said.

She explained that the wall would create a pathway for students going to and from classes in the design modulars. The wall would extend from the modular entrance to the art gallery's main entrance and would reach the ceiling. The department is considering making the wall partially glass so that passersby can see into the gallery.

She explained that the wall would start at the entrance of the Cantellops Art Gallery—at the bottom of the staircase—and would end at the entrance to the design modulars. Wood said that the wall would extend to the ceiling. The door leading to the art gallery would be able to lock, ensuring security.

Wood said that Lisa Kamphaus, the assistant professor and design division chairman, was charged with the task of designing part for the renovation.

Kamphaus said the renovation of the Cantellops Art Gallery began on Dec. 15.
Entertainment

Mission and Ministry presents ‘The Giver’
‘To Light Through Film’ series kicks off with powerful message about memories, emotions

By Lauren Villella
Associate Editor

Entertainment Editor

L

a Roche College’s Mission and Ministry team presented the first installment in its three-part film discussion series entitled “To Light Through Film.” The film series aims to ignite discussions on faith and philosophy in cinema, Professor Ben Burkholder said. Burkholder said that the purpose is to create an academic dialogue between the community and students who have an academic interest in film studies.

“The best movies help us become more human,” Burkholder said. The Mission and Ministry team selected “The Giver” as the first installment in its film discussion series. The team made the selection, Burkholder said, because of the film’s depiction of pain and its relationship to everyday life.

“The Giver” is the only film adaptation of the 1993 young adult novel of the same name by Lois Lowry. The novel is a Newbery Medal winner and continues to be required reading in schools across the United States and other countries.

“The Giver” depicts a world of sameness, one devoid of any color, emotions or memories. The film’s first scenes are shot in black-and-white, launching viewers into a mourning community where the inhabitants are strangers to independent decision-making. The community’s leaders, the Elders, monitor every aspect of the characters’ lives like hawks. Maryl Streep stoically portrays the Chief Elder, a woman akin to an omnipresent fog. She appears unexpectedly to remind the inhabitants of their wake-up times and to advise “precision of language” when their words become too emotional.

“The Giver” depicts a world of sameness, devoid of any color, emotions or memories.

The Elders also assign the community’s teenagers to the jobs they will perform for the rest of their lives. “The Giver’s” central character, Jonas, is a 16-year-old boy with a destiny drastically different from the one’s resigned to his peers.

On the day the Elders assign the professions, the Chief Elder tells Jonas she has selected him to be the next Receiver of Memory. The Receiver of Memory is an advisor to the Elders and the sole holder of the community’s wealth of memories. Jonas soon meets the current Receiver of Memory, known as The Giver. Jeff Bridges’ performance as The Giver is one of the film’s shining qualities. Bridges’ warm voice and gentle humor imbue The Giver with a grandfatherly presence and envelop him in an aura of wisdom.

The film’s best scenes are between Jonas and The Giver. The Giver slowly begins to transfer the community’s memories to Jonas through the simple act of clasping their hands. He shows Jonas memories of love, happiness, joy and war, and the accompanying emotions both startle and fascinate Jonas.

“Memories are not just about the past,” The Giver said to Jonas. “They determine our future.” Jonass, the transferring of memories is an emotional tsunami that leaves him desperate to share his experiences with friends and family. As the Receiver of Memory, though, the Elders swore him to secrecy, a fact that catapults him into a devastating isolation.

With his newfound knowledge of memories and emotions, Jonas feels acutely what his whole community is missing. He sets out to surmise the community’s border, known as Elsewhere, in order to release the memories back into the community. “The Giver” presents a fascinating example of what a world would be like without the emotions that create vibrancy and uniqueness. Its script, however, is moderately problematic.

Some of the lines truly capture the depth of the particular scene, but others are inclined to make the viewer cringe.

“The Giver” provides little glimpses into how memories can both drag us back and propel us forward. Its depiction of a people drained of emotions for the sake of sameness is sure to ignite in viewers an appreciation for the brutal and beautiful.

“The Giver” was the first of three installments in Mission and Ministry’s film discussion series. The third film in the series will be shown on Feb. 28.

“Memories are not just about the past. They determine our future.”

-The Giver

The underdevelopment of Jonas’ parents and his two friends, Fiona and Asher, give the film a fleeting, touch-and-go quality. Nevertheless, what “The Giver” as a whole says about memories and how they color our lives is timeless.

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Five planets lined up for a cosmic dance in the night sky that dazzled sky watchers all over the world in January.

This cosmic dance makes February 2016 a great year to see some of the planets together, Dr. Rebecca Bozym, chemistry professor, said. Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn are aligned for the first time in over 10 years, she said.

The professor said these five planets will be visible until February 20, 2016; however, there is no need for telescopes or binoculars! “All the planets will all be bright like Venus normally is in the morning sky,” Dr. Bozym said. “They hit the spot in their orbit where they will reflect the sun light and all be visible in the sky for us to see in one view.”

She said, it is really neat waking up a little bit earlier to see the planets aligned next to one another. “The moon also makes it neat because it has been hopping from planet to planet over these past couple of weeks,” the professor said.

Dr. Bozym said students, faculty, and staff can see these five planets at predawn. “When we say predawn, it is usually about 30-60 minutes before local sunrise,” she said. “If you look too early Mercury will be behind the horizon, too late and it will be blocked by all of the sunlight.”

The professor said to be able to see all five planets you need to understand that their orbits are relative to the Earth and the Sun – then to position yourself correctly. Since the orbits are all different sizes, Dr. Bozym said, it makes seeing these five planets a once in a lifetime event.

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She suggested that everyone should take advantage of this event because it won’t happen again for another four years. “The next time all five planets will be aligned again will be in July 2020,” the professor said, “you can probably see them in August from the 13th to the 19th; however, Mercury and Venus will be low and rather hard to spot in the sky.”

Dr. Bozym said she thinks the last time this cosmic dance happened was in May of 2000.” In May of 2000 – there were six planets that were aligned instead of five,” she said.

This can be confusing for some people to understand, the professor said, because some sources say that such a phenomenon only takes place every 100 years or so, while other say it will happen every few decades. With that in mind, Dr. Bozym said, she highly encourages students, faculty, and staff to get up a little bit earlier within the next week to see this phenomenon take place.
is a second language for me and I am not fluent in speaking English,” Gurung said. “It decreases my self-confidence.”

Jinal Prajapati, a freshman from Kenya majoring in biology, said English was her first language. “I have some difficulty grasping the concepts in a new language,” Jinal Prajapati said. “I have to work harder than the others to improve my English.”

The quality of his English did not improve, Alabdulkader said, until he came to the United States. Alabdulkader said he spent a year studying English at North Seattle College before coming to La Roche. “In my country, the people who teach English are not Americans. They are mostly from Egypt, or Asians or Arabs. It is hard for us to learn English because they have different accents. So, they are international students who teach English.”

The way we address professors is very different from my country. However, I’m used to very hot weather, so when I moved to the States, until now, I can’t like the weather,” Alabdulkader said. “But I’ve got to deal with it.”

Jinal Prajapati said she never heard of plagiarism before coming to La Roche. “I used to live in a cold area so temperatures like 10 C wasn’t a problem but negative Celsius – yes!”

“La Roche professors and students are very different from the one he experienced with his teachers in high school.”

Mutiso said, he had only been to cold areas once. “I used to live in a cold area so I was used to the cold. For me as a vegetarian, there are not many varieties but what is available is quite good,” Jinal Prajapati said.

Mutiso also said he noticed a change in the food he eats. “In my country, we only have a salad or closed items like chips from La Roche’s cafeteria. The quality of the food is available is quite good, “ Jinal Prajapati said.

Alabdulkader said adjusting to the food in the United States has also been very difficult for him. “Food here, I can’t accept it,” Alabdulkader said. “I really can’t accept it. I don’t like it at all. It tastes like plastic.”

Alabdulkader said he feels the food lacks flavor and spices. “Even living on campus I was late to get around. I didn’t know how I was going to get around. I even had a hard time finding my way in the city. ‘I then found out it only comes once every hour.’”

Alabdulkader said both they are vegetarians. They added the selection of food choices available to them at La Roche’s cafeteria is limited. “For me as a vegetarian, there are not many varieties but what is available is quite good,” Jinal Prajapati said.

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Mutiso said one of the reasons he moved off campus after his freshman year was because of his difficulty adjusting to the cold. “I’m used to living in a cold area so temperatures like 10 C wasn’t a problem but negative Celsius – yes!”

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**SAD, continued from page 2**

When analyzing the demographic component of SAD we can see that, “those countries which are located up north do have higher rates of depression especially during the winter months,” Dr. Tajuddin said. Consequently, these societies have different systems to help counteract the effects of these climates.

According to Dr. Tajuddin, “These societies have very good safety nets to sort of keep these rates down, places like Finland, Scandinavia, and Canada. They have good social support systems. Health care is free [government funded]. With health care come all these therapeutic services like counseling. So the populations there are able to fend off what otherwise would be an age old natural phenomena.”

Moreover, he explained that the key to surviving in locations where winter is the predominant season is community involvement. He said, “They live in neighborhoods where the community supports each other in terms of child care and communal living spaces. They encourage a lot of interaction between people. A lot of communities activities that are put together make people be more in touch with each other.”

A fascinating perspective arises when analyzing different cultures in history who lived in harsh, cold climates. For example, Dr. Tajuddin teaches that the Inuit — the indigenous tribe of Alaska, otherwise known as the Eskimos — have lived in an area where winter lasts for six months out of the year. He said that their festivities help thwart the depressive tendencies that can develop during such an extended period of darkness. “They wouldn’t say 100 percent depression, but I get sad. It doesn’t make me want to be antisocial, but I hate that there’s nothing to do outside.”

If you feel that you are affected by Seasonal Affective Disorder, it is important to seek professional help where treatment methods are known to be effective. If not, there are many preventive measures that you can take to not only counteract the development of this condition specifically, but also improve your mental health in general.

The most suggested method is to increase your exposure to light, which treats the root of disorder. You can accomplish this by increasing the amount of light in your room, spending time in well-lit areas, and by spending more time outside on sunny days. A more formal treatment involves sitting in front of a light box for varying intervals of time. Another method, which addresses an indirect cause, is to exercise more because it is known to increase your energy levels. This increase in energy will help lift your spirits and raise your attitudes. Dr. Markowitz suggested aerobic activity because it releases a larger amount of endorphins at a faster rate (referring to the concept of a ‘runner’s high’).

Finally, one of the most effective protective techniques, as we learned from Dr. Tajuddin, is to increase your level of human interaction and engage in group social events. Altogether, by adopting these lifestyle practices you can help prevent this condition. Even if you’re an individual who enjoys the winter, these lifestyle practices will improve your mental health and increase your quality of life.

While our physical health remains important, we cannot forget about our mental and emotional health. Lucky for us, some simple changes can have some very positive effects on our day to day life. So let’s take after our lovable friend, Olaf, and not let the grey skies and white snow get us down while we dream of summer.