News



by James Dearie

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Welcome to NCR's college roundup, where every Friday we bring you the latest news in Catholic college and university life. Do you have news you would like to share? Email James Dearie at jdearie@ncronline.org.

FAIRFIELD, CONN. — Sacred Heart University has been sued by the family of a student who died after an eating contest, The Washington Post reported Oct. 30.

Caitlin Nelson, 20, sustained major brain damage and died of asphyxia days after her airway became blocked during a pancake-eating contest that was part of an annual celebration of Greek life at the university.

Nelson's family says that eating contests, particularly ones involving certain kinds of food, are inherently dangerous to non-professionals, and is seeking over $15,000 in damages.

"Caitlin's family is bringing this case to expose the dangers associated with amateur eating contests and to help prevent other families from having to endure this type of preventable tragedy," the family's attorney, Katie Mesner-Hage, told the Post.

VENTURA, CALIF. — Thomas Aquinas College will soon open a branch campus in Northfield, Massachusetts, the Ventura Country Star reported Oct. 23.

The National Christian Foundation gave the land that will serve as the new campus to the college in May 2017, and the college received approval by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education for the plan in October. Thomas Aquinas is now seeking to transfer its accreditation to the new campus, and expects approval for that plan soon as well.

The new campus, to be named Thomas Aquinas College, New England, will open in 2019.

STEUBENVILLE, OHIO — Franciscan University of Steubenville has removed a plaque commemorating Fr. Sam Tiesi by its Portiuncula Chapel, after several women had accused the late priest of sexual misconduct.

Tiesi was the driving force behind the construction of the chapel, and was much loved on campus. However, multiple women claim they were abused by the priest; some say their reports to university officials were dismissed or met with retaliation. One woman, who spoke to NCR, says she received a financial settlement from the Franciscan friars in 2006.

Current university president Franciscan Fr. Sean Sheridan said in September that he had received a new credible report about unwanted advances by Tiesi and that the plaque and a portrait of the priest would be removed.

COLCHESTE, VT. — St. Michael's College has approved new majors in the health field to meet growing demand, the university said in a press release Oct. 25.

The two majors, health science and public health, will be available starting next year, the college said.

"While medical, dental or veterinary school will be the goal of many in the new majors," the press release says, "entry-level positions are available with such a background at hospitals, community health centers, clinics, private practices, relief organizations, home health care agencies, rehabilitation centers, hospices, sports and fitness facilities, refugee and immigrant organizations and non-profits or nursing

and residential care facilities."

The board of trustees, in approving the new majors, pledged a $1 million challenge gift to help fund them; administration is now at work raising the matching $1 million.

[James Dearie is an NCR Bertelsen intern. Contact him at jdearie@ncronline.org.]

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