

THE SOPHIAN



PHOTO OBTAINED FROM CEEDS

Staying in the Game, Losing Teammates: Smith Athletes Respond to NCAA Rule Change

MIRIAM PENNOCK '28 *Disclaimer: The names of the student-athletes interviewed for this article have been withheld at their request.*
NEWS & LAYOUT EDITOR

Smith College recently announced that it will abide by the National Collegiate Athletic Association’s (NCAA) updated policy regarding transgender student-athlete participation. It now limits competition in women’s varsity sports to athletes assigned female at birth only. The change, enacted by the NCAA on February 6, 2025 has prompted a wide range of reactions among Smith student-athletes, many of whom expressed concern about the policy’s impact on inclusivity and

team values.
The NCAA’s change in policy came in response to an executive order issued by the White House on February 5, 2025. The Executive Order, titled “Keeping Men Out of Women’s Sports,” states that institutions receiving federal funding must reserve women’s sports categories exclusively for individuals assigned female at birth. The order cites Title IX and recent federal court decisions, arguing that allowing transgender women to compete in women’s sports deprives cisgender women of “fair athletic opportunities.” The Executive Order also directs federal agencies to rescind funding from colleges and *continued on page 4*

Amid Northampton Housing Crisis, Smith Considers its Role

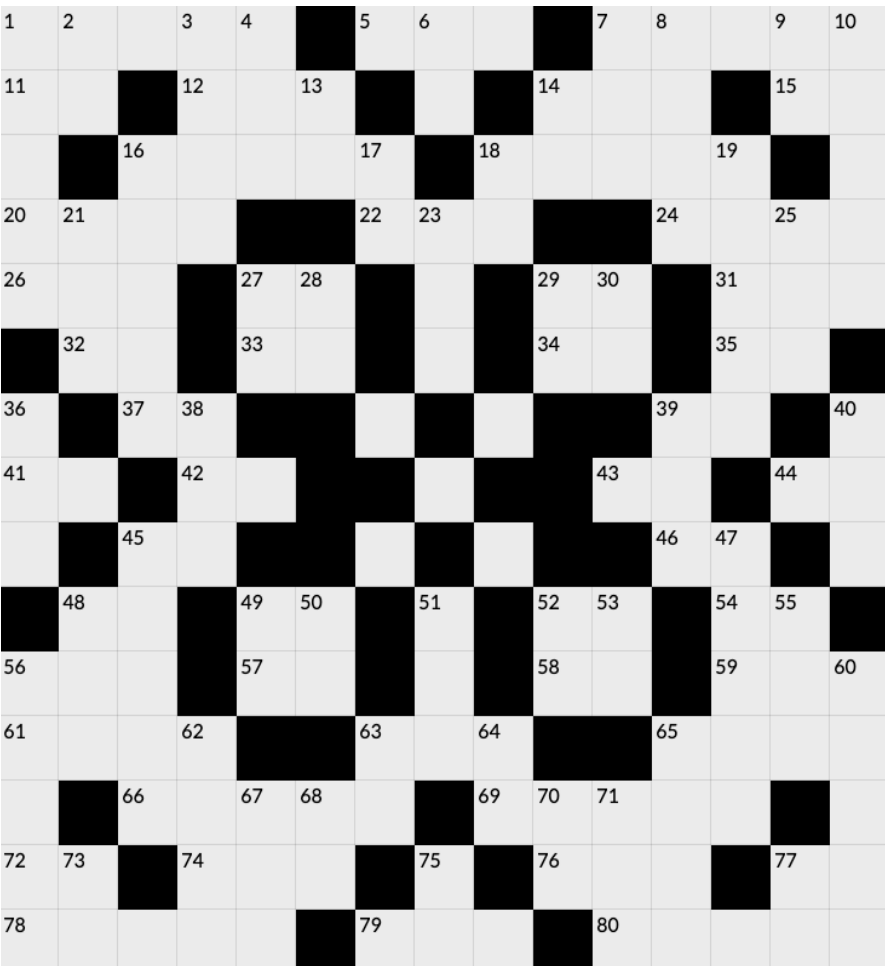
AVA BLANDO '27 Northampton, alongside many cities in the United States, is facing a housing crisis. While stakeholders agree that the college should address the crisis at hand, there are active discussions and debate about Smith’s role in the community and how to design solutions that benefit Smith College, the city of
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NEWS EDITOR

Mayday! Mayday! New Crossword!

POORVI SARKAR '27
CROSSWORD & GAMES EDITOR

Across

- 1. Pokey’s friend
- 5. Give it a go
- 7. What a cat might get stuck in
- 11. One of these stabilizes your vitals
- 12. Chow down
- 14. American broadcasting company
- 15. Scrip
- 16. “Do you think it will snow?”
- 18. Orange-ish tint
- 20. Sensitive part of dogs
- 22. As well
- 24. Indian, Adriatic, and Red, for a few
- 26. A big one of these might signal a good investment
- 27. Ontological existence
- 29. Mother, in many languages
- 31. Technical school in upstate new york
- 32. “Is,” in spanish
- 33. Signifying a certain time
- 34. Pronoun
- 35. Global students abbr
- 37. Great quality, as in visual
- 39. Thomas Edison’s Electric company
- 41. Staple digital toy of the 2000s
- 42. Common preposition
- 43. “Kung Fu Panda’s” lovable panda
- 44. You
- 45. Famous irrational number
- 46. High school gym class abbr.
- 48. TV Show’s first piece, abbr.
- 49. Nighttime abbr.
- 52. Instagram action, abbr.
- 54. What HCAs at Smith are, essentially
- 56. Noah’s
- 57. You, in spanish
- 58. Option word
- 59. ___ Miss; University of Mississippi, casually
- 61. Solid



Reproductive Justice Exhibit Makes a Stop at Smith

OLIVIA PETTY '26
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On Thursday, April 10, a 27-foot truck rolled up outside of John M. Greene Hall with an emphatic statement plastered across its flank: “YOUR BODY IS A BATTLEGROUND.”

Repurposed to fit across the side of the vehicle, the iconic phrase originally debuted at the 1989 Women’s March on Washington by feminist artist Barbara Krueger, known for her iconic bold typography in stark red, white and black. A curated exhibit sits inside the truck bed like it was plucked out of a museum, walled with prints, textile art and zine collections that depict interlocking themes of feminism, queerness, reproductive justice and human rights.

“We definitely got a lot of dudes on the road giving us the finger,” said Ann Lewis, the tour director for the gallery-on-wheels. “The truck did get shot with a paintball gun once when we were driving [...] but aside from that, it’s been pretty quiet.”

The vehicle is part of an ongoing exhibition called “Body Freedom for Every(body)” by the Project for Empty Space, a Newark-based art coalition. It has been on tour all over the United States; in 2024 it logged almost 10,000 miles cross-country, partnering with various universities, museums and nonprofit art organizations to bring the art directly to the audience — and in this case, directly to unsuspecting Smithies.

Some met the exhibit with initial abrasion. In response to a post on the Smith Confessional (Confesh) asking what the truck was for, one anonymous user wrote: “idk but it pissed me off. no my body is not a f***ing battleground brah it’s my body and it’s mine,” to which another commenter replied, “is that not the point?”

The other side of the truck that faced away from the main path is also a Krueger piece; a custom vinyl wrap made specifically for the exhibit that displays the words “HEALTHCARE; GENDER; HOUSING; CIVIL; HUMAN; RIGHTS”.

The indoor portion of the exhibit changes depending on the stop, with 35 different versions of the gallery tailored by the exhibit curators.

“If there are specific artists from the area featured in our show or specific issues going on in that place, we’ll make sure to pick and choose the prints based on that,” said Lewis.

All of the pieces displayed are print reproductions (for liability purposes) that include works by Ana Mandieta, Mickalene Thomas, Marilyn Minter, Laurie Simmons, Shahzia Sikan-der, Dredd Scott, Ryan McGinley, Andrea Bowers and many more. However, one aspect of the exhibit that never gets rotated out is an ongoing interactive project on abortion.

Just inside the gallery entrance, a small table was set up next to the entrance stairs with an array of colorful slips of paper, each signifying a different statement. A dark blue slip meant “I support abortions”; purple meant “I am anti-abortion”; light blue meant “I have had an abortion”; and so on. Visitors were encouraged to pick out all the colored slips that were true to their own feelings and experiences, put them all in a sealed envelope, and drop the envelope into a fake ballot box to be eventually used in a large, crowd-sourced art piece.

“We’re not just going to locations to preach to the choir,” said Lewis. “We’re wanting to go places that will engage with the dialogue around queer liberation, trans joy, reproductive rights, all of that.”

The truck was a gift to the Project for Empty Space and had previously been used to haul artwork, making it ideal for a mobile gallery. However, Lewis and Gabrielle Simmons, the truck driver, are the only ones actually on the road. Lewis is an artist by trade and longtime

activist for reproductive rights, and Simmons — once the vice president of the company She Trucking — runs her own trucking business.

The tour initially began in September of 2024 and was only intended to last three months. Since the election of Donald Trump, it has kicked back up again. Smith, according to Lewis, had been on the list of pit stops for a long time.

According to the exhibit’s mission statement, the project directors were interested in prioritizing locations that might not have robust reproductive justice networks due to social and political constraints, while also serving as a traveling tool for education.

“Now more than ever, we believe this work is essential, and we will keep using our mobile exhibition space as a vehicle for nationwide community-building,” say Rebecca Pauline Jampol and Jasmine Wahi, the creators of the exhibit, on the Project for Empty Space’s website. “Body Freedom is an issue that impacts Every. Single. Person.”

Public reactions — paintball guns aside — have been generally positive in Lewis’s point of view. Still, necessary precautions have been taken.

“I think it would be a very different story if we weren’t partnering with organizations,” said Lewis. “In order to keep the art and, literally, us safe, we aren’t just going to roll up into a Walmart parking lot or anything like that. [...] But thankfully, most of it has been positive.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF OLIVIA PETTY '26

Staying in the Game, Losing Teammates:

Smith Athletes Respond to NCAA Rule Change

MIRIAM PENNOCK '28
NEWS & LAYOUT EDITOR

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universities that do not comply. In a statement from the Office of College Relations, Media Relations Director Carolyn McDaniel said, “Although Smith does not agree with excluding trans athletes from varsity competition, we believe it is in the best interest of all our athletes to remain in the NCAA so that we can continue to advocate for their rights as a member organization.” McDaniel added that the college will continue working with the NCAA, legislators and peer institutions “to push back against unfair practices.”

Student-athletes across several teams shared their reactions, voicing concerns about the policy’s implications.

“It’s a huge emotional toll,” one nonbinary student-athlete said. “Already being in this state of stress from everything going on with the administration...and then having to navigate your moral compass — knowing what’s right — while also participating in the NCAA, it’s just tricky.”

Others echoed this tension between participation and principle. A sophomore athlete reflected on the harm the policy could cause: “We see trans women as teammates. Whether they’re on our team or another one, it just really hurts to think that this place, which is our safe place — sports — is becoming less safe.”

The sophomore student-athlete continued, “I want women’s sports to be welcoming to all women with open arms. That definitely includes trans women and nonbinary people.”

Though the number of athletes directly affected may be small, many emphasized the broader implications.

“The policy doesn’t even say how it’ll be enforced — it could mean hormone testing or severe violations of people’s privacy,” a senior student-athlete said. “That’s not just about trans women. That affects all of us.”

She added that “just because this only directly affects a small number of students doesn’t mean their experiences and identities aren’t valid.”

Smith athletes mentioned feeling support-

ed by peers and coaches, while feeling that Smith as an institution could be doing more to support its students.

“There’s intention — but not enough, and not all directed in the right way,” said the nonbinary athlete. “A big concern is that this change feels like compliance. Like we’re consenting to the exclusion of trans women.”

Athletes emphasized that sports are not just about competition, but about belonging, growth and access — values they believe should extend to everyone, including trans women.

“Trans daughters need sport as much as your daughter needs sport,” the sophomore athlete said. “A trans woman doesn’t belong on a man’s team because she’s a woman.”

For many athletes, the NCAA policy not

*“Trans daughters need sport
as much as your daughter
needs sport.”*

only challenges their values but also puts their teammates directly at risk. Another senior athlete spoke about a teammate who is no longer able to compete under the new rules.

“It impacts our team because we do have a person who’s affected by it,” she said. “One of our players who’s extremely skilled and who allows us to all get better as a team is no longer allowed to compete with us. Which is really unfortunate.”

She continued, “[My teammate] came to a place like Smith because of how accepting we are... and now she has to either figure out another place to go or just simply not compete.”

Many interviewees acknowledged the efforts of Smith’s athletic department to offer support, but noted that intention alone is not enough.

“I think the athletics department is doing their best to support and accommodate people,” the senior said. “Especially with all of the rules and regulations thrown at them recently.”

Still, others voiced that more inclusive decision-making is needed.

“I think the intention to support trans and

nonbinary athletes was there — but the execution felt misinformed and didn’t include people from athletics,” one senior athlete said.

Others emphasized the broader implications of the policy and the danger of isolating already marginalized students.

“We have a really vulnerable population here — queer students, trans students, undocumented students — and drastic actions could put all of them at risk,” the senior added.

Despite the policy’s limitations, athletes remain committed to advocating for equity in sports. Many expressed a deep belief that athletics should be accessible and welcoming to all, regardless of gender identity.

“There’s a lot of wanting to do something, trying to find something to do,” the nonbinary athlete said. “But it never feels like enough until trans women are fully welcomed into sport.”

As student-athletes continue to grapple with the implications of the NCAA policy, many are calling not only for action, but for clarity, connection, and collective responsibility. “We need to be really diligent when consuming media and recognize that there are a lot of forces and political agendas that thrive by separating us,” one athlete said. “We need the diligence to recognize those forces and name them and overcome them by talking to each other and connecting.”

For many, that means finding strength in community while resisting oversimplified narratives. “I don’t want people to get wrapped up in that and lose sight of what tools we have now — how we can show kindness and strength now, and how we can organize responsibly in the future.”

At the same time, students acknowledge the complicated reality Smith faces. “There’s a lot of misunderstanding around what’s at stake,” one senior said. “Opposing the bill and pulling out of the NCAA means sports would cease to exist at Smith.”

For now, athletes are navigating the tension between staying in the game and staying true to their values — and hoping that, together, they can reshape the rules.

Local Filmmaker Kate Way Screens Documentary “Banned Together” at Smith

DELLA BAER '28 FEATURES EDITOR In 2022, University of Massachusetts professor and filmmaker Kate Way had just finished teaching her course on the politics of K-12 education, which included a unit on book banning, when she traveled to South Carolina to find the subject of her next documentary—resulting in “Banned Together,” which she screened at Smith on April 17.

During her trip, Way went to Beaufort, South Carolina, where students in Beaufort County were dealing with heavy book bans. “I just kind of went with an exploratory sense to see what was happening and discovered a community where almost 100 books had just been pulled from the schools. And being someone who loves making documentary films and cares about these issues, I immediately was like, ‘Yes, this is an incredible story, and we have to tell it,’” Way said.

Way began filming three Beaufort high school students who opposed the bans at their local school board meetings. Soon after, a Charleston-based production company offered funding and collaboration, enabling her to expand the project from a short film into a feature-length documentary.

“We were able to really follow this local story in Beaufort, South Carolina, and follow these teenagers who were who were standing up against the book bans, and then kind of extrapolate out to how this is playing out nationally, and the political forces behind it,” Way said.

“Banned Together” follows three Beaufort high schoolers initially working with the Diversity Awareness Youth Literary Organization (DAYLO), which is based in Beaufort and was founded to encourage empathy in teenagers through reading diverse literature. As book bans in Beaufort attacked diverse texts, students and mentors involved in DAYLO began to speak out against them at school board meetings and recruited new students concerned about the legislation. Way documented the students as their activism, originating at Beaufort school board meetings, carried them to literary festivals, protests, and to speak with politicians and authors like Jodi Picoult,

whose novel “Nineteen Minutes” was banned in Beaufort county schools.

Though Way was able to follow the students from the very beginning of the issues in Beaufort, she had trouble incorporating supporters of the book bans. “We had a lot of difficulty getting book banning proponents to speak with us. We tried really hard in the film to at least get their side of the story [...] we did get a few people to speak with us, but largely the major players weren’t willing to do on-camera interviews with us,” she said.

Way still captured public board speeches backing the bans and condemning certain books, finding them painful to witness in person. “The political climate is, of course, very difficult to witness, and particularly in a state like South Carolina, which has some of the most stringent legislation around [books] which has gotten even worse since we completed the film,” Way said. “It’s sort of a double edged sword: how inspiring it is to see people standing up against it, but also how difficult it is to see the lengths to which people are trying to censor information in the state.”

As soon as the film was finished, Way began to screen it publicly across the country before it was officially released in order to encourage people to think and talk about the issue, which remains pertinent. Following her screenings Way encouraged audience discussions and circulated a feedback form.

At the screenings she was able to attend, Way noticed how the film impacted one group in

particular: educators. “We’ve had teachers and librarians in tears after, after watching [...] I believe [they] feel really seen and really kind of validated and honored in a way that doesn’t often happen in national press,” she said.

Way was able to resonate with the educators in her audiences as she was a high school English teacher for the first half of her career and taught at Northampton High School for many years, a perspective she felt informed her as she created the documentary. “Part of what was driving me as I was making this film was knowing exactly what it means to be a classroom teacher,” she said.

Beyond her residence in the Northampton community, another factor brought Way to screen “Banned Together” at Smith: activist Julia Garnett ’28. Garnett, who fought book bans in her high school community in Nashville, Tennessee, makes a small cameo in the credits sequence of “Banned Together” where she instructs student activists to not let adults silence them. After Way realized that Garnett was attending Smith the pair worked together to bring the film to Smith.

Following the Smith screening, Way, Garnett and children’s author Grace Lin participated in a Q&A moderated by Smith professor Naila Moreira. “We have very different perspectives: author, student, filmmaker/professor, and so we’re all kind of coming together to share our experiences [...] But I think we were also learning from each other as well,” Garnett said regarding the conversation.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CLAUDIA ZHANG '28

Amid Northampton Housing Crisis, Smith Considers its Role

AVA BLANDO '27
NEWS EDITOR

Northampton and all of its residents alike.

continued from page 1 Massachusetts, where the cost of living is especially high, saw a 74% increase in family homelessness in 2024. Almost 18,000 residents in the Commonwealth are now living on the street. Housing costs are rising rapidly while wages remain stagnant, and there are simply too few housing units to meet demand across the country.

Particularly in small cities like Northampton, which saw an influx of new residents as people began remote work and left Boston during the pandemic, the housing crisis has been exacerbated by population growth in addition to socioeconomic shifts.

"There needs to be some more substantial investment in affordable housing," said Denys Candy, Director of the Smith College Jandon Center for Community Engagement. "Then we begin to look at land. What land is available? Who owns that land, and how can subsidized housing be developed?"

David DeSwert, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration at Smith, says that he and his team are "fully committed" and "actively engaged in finding some solutions" to the Northampton housing crisis.

When asked if any undeveloped land owned by Smith could be used to address the housing crisis downtown, DeSwert said that Smith's land around Fort Hill is a potential opportunity for the development of new affordable housing units.

"We have to think about it in terms of the impact on Smith," said DeSwert, emphasizing that low housing supply and high costs are creating "barriers to attract and retain employees."

Housing costs are impacting current Smith professors, Candy says. "We have junior faculty coming to Smith who can't afford to live in Northampton."

DeSwert added, "We have a portfolio of about 100 rental units that we rent out to faculty and staff. Before the pandemic, our vacancy rates

were really high. Then the pandemic came, and they're almost fully occupied and there's waitlists to get into them."

DeSwert also said that Smith values its "symbiotic relationship" with Northampton. "We need to think about the idea that our wellbeing and Northampton's wellbeing are deeply intertwined. Our successes are Northampton's successes and vice versa."

However, student groups and community organizations focused on homelessness and housing say that Smith College has historically worsened the Northampton housing crisis through its land ownership and expansion. These stakeholders are concerned that new land development could benefit Smith while excluding the broader Northampton community.

Currently on display in Neilson Library, an exhibit titled "How Smith Ate Green Street" (completed by Alexa Schnur '25 for her Archives Concentration Capstone) illuminates Smith's decision to demolish affordable housing on Green Street to expand its campus in the early 2000's. It also highlights the Northampton community's negative reaction to this development and how it undermined Smith's ongoing relationship with the town.

"Smith has been a landlord, and not a well-liked one," said Schnur. "Smith has so much control and power, and when they want to use it, they just can."

"Smith has been a landlord, and not a well-liked one," said Schnur. 'Smith has so much control and power, and when they want to use it, they just can.'"

"I think they should build more affordable housing," Schnur continued. However, she added that she "doubts that Smith will follow through."

DeSwert stated, "Smith is committed that if we take any housing units offline, we help to support the development of replacement housing

units downtown." The college provided funds for nonprofits to build new affordable housing after the Green Street development, but it's not clear that the homes on Green Street were fully replaced.

"I don't think there was a like-for-like replacement" for the Green Street homes, said Alexis Breiteneicher, Executive Director of Valley Community Development (VCD). The organization, which builds affordable housing, was one recipient of Smith funds after the Green Street project.

Breiteneicher said Smith "seems isolated from the community" and could be doing more to partner with community organizations.

She said, "I do feel like there's potential, given the brain trust that's at Smith and its proximity to Northampton. There's potential to have a greater impact on addressing housing and the housing crisis."

She says that her organization has the capacity to build new housing in Northampton if Smith provides land suitable for development.

As discussions on housing continue, the Smith Mutual Aid Collective (SMAC) is working alongside unhoused people in Northampton to provide material assistance immediately and directly. SMAC partners with community-based organizations, especially Touch the Sky, to provide food and crowdfunded financial support to unhoused Northampton residents.

"We don't see our work as charity," said one SMAC member in a group interview. "Charity is very transactional and one-sided. We're trying to provide long-lasting relationships with the people we work with."

SMAC is very concerned about "aesthetic policing" in Northampton and the criminalization of homelessness, which they say is especially prevalent near Smith campus. SMAC says it has seen a rising number of encampment sweeps and arrests of homeless individuals over the past few months.

Members of SMAC are also conscious of Smith's history as a land developer and landlord. "I think the only way you rectify that is by relinquishing power over the land you have," a SMAC member added. "Give that land up. Give it to the city government, give it to somebody."

A Bountiful Spring Season for Smith Athletics

ZOE SCHWARTZ '28J
HEAD COPY EDITOR

Spring has sprung on campus — but for many student athletes, its arrival means more than high UV rays. Tennis, rowing, softball, lacrosse and track and field have been preparing for the most important games, matches and races of their respective seasons.

Smith aims to continue momentum built by volleyball and basketball as each spring team chases a title in the New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference (NEWMAC).

Track and Field kicked off the championships at Mount Holyoke on April 25, sending athletes to compete in every event in the NEWMAC for the first time in years.

"I think it's been really exciting, even just morale-wise, for people who have been around for a while to see how much the team has built," pole vaulter Kerry Seekamp '26 said.

Smith's distance group has been making consistent national appearances, but for a long time the team didn't have enough speed and power athletes to compete in the sprinting, jumping and throwing events. Now, with a full roster in both categories, Smith can focus on getting

more competitive.

"We're not leaving points on the table because we don't have enough people anymore," Seekamp said. "Now, it's just about lifting the level of our program higher."

Seekamp said in a word, this season has been "unprecedented."

On April 26, Track and Field secured sixth overall, bringing home personal records and hardware to Northampton. Pria Parker '25 claimed the NEWMAC 1500m title with a time of 4:34.08.

Parker raced alongside Lena Baker '26, Shams Ferver '26J, and Catherine Collins '27 in the 4x400m where they clocked Smith's fastest 4x400m run in over 12 years.

The same day, rowing traveled to Lake Quinsigamond, hoping to take a consecutive NEWMAC title. Though Smith placed third overall this year, following Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) and Wellesley College, the team took open-water victories in the second, third, and fourth varsity eight races. First varsity six-seat Kathleen Bacigalupi '26 and four-seat Greta Stekl '25 earned All-NEWMAC Second Team honors.

What's next for rowing? "Kicking Wellesley's ass," said Sox Whitin '27. The team looks to reclaim their crown at Lake Quinsigamond May 2-3 and May 10-11 in the New England and National Invitational Championships. Crew will face off again against WPI and Wellesley in both races in their attempt to punch a ticket to fight for the national title at the NCAA, May 30-31.

In 2021, when Maggie Thompson '25 began her collegiate lacrosse career at Smith, there were 13 players on the roster. Now, there are 29.

"We've made it further; we've come back harder, better, faster, stronger, every single year," Thompson said.

With athletes breaking records across class years and positions, lacrosse's 2025 season has been one to watch. As Thompson put it, the season was "electric."

After an incredible game, Smith fell to Coast Guard by one point in double overtime. Though the loss was disappointing, the team's spirited support for one another was limitless.

"When you have a roster that cares so deeply about the success of your team and cares so deeply about one another, I think even [the



PHOTO OBTAINED FROM SMITH ATHLETICS

A Bountiful Spring Season for Smith Athletics

ZOE SCHWARTZ '28J blow of] those heartbreak-
HEAD COPY EDITOR ing losses softens because
every single athlete did everything that they could
to put us in the best position,” Thompson said.

As she passes the torch to the rising seniors, Thompson is excited about the program’s future. “I think the NEWMAC should be scared,” Thompson said. “The athletes we have right now are hungry to win. Our program’s hungry to win. Our program is intense and competitive and we do it together and I think that’s the strongest a team could ever be.”

“Our program is intense and competitive and we do it together and I think that’s the strongest a team could ever be.”

For what Smith Tennis lacks in numbers,

they compensate in grit, skill and prowess. Clocking in at nine athletes total, the squad is Smith’s smallest varsity team.

Many players competing this season have battled injury throughout the year. Before their match against Springfield, Marielle Sauber ‘26 said that the team hopes to attack with their full lineup for the NEWMAC.

On April 29, Smith Tennis fulfilled Sauber’s hope and secured a 4-1 win over Springfield College, earning a spot in the Semifinals.

Looking toward the future, Sauber is excited to see the program’s continued growth. “When I came to Smith, we had a full class of walk-ons in the tennis program,” she said. “The culture is completely different now. We’re so competitive, so closely bonded, I want to make sure we continue that.”

On May 3, Smith Tennis will face last year’s reigning champions, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), in the Semifinal round.

After losing nine seniors last year, softball has faced their fair share of adversity this season. With a roster of only 12 players, matching up against teams with 20-30 athletes is challenging. But for Smith, this experience has made each player stronger.

“From where we were at the beginning of this season to where we are now, the team has improved so much,” Allen said. “There has been a big shift [...] [We are] striving to be more intense, striving to be better.”

“Although our record might have been better [last season], it felt like there was less drive [...] This year we want to go out there and win,” she said.

Despite new policies and individual struggles, Smith Athletics remains united and continues to put their all into competition. Whether stepping up to the plate or stepping into the boat, spring athletes are approaching their post-season competitions with togetherness, fortitude and fire.

Editorial Statement

Dear Readers:

We, the 2025 - 26 Editorial Board are proud to present the second issue of our 79th Volume. As professors wrap up final grades and students pack to head home — or wherever the summer may take them — we hope you find some time to sit with our final paper of this academic year.

This year has been a long one; from NCAA championships to presidential elections, Smithies have collectively gone through a gauntlet of emotion. Writers and editors at The Sophian have attempted to capture the stories that matter to our community, whether it be highlighting the work of student activists who rally against censorship or for reproductive rights, detailing the college’s plan of action under the Trump agenda or exploring what it means to be a trans student at Smith. Although independent of the college, The Sophian acknowledges that it maintains a unique role on campus, and at times may operate as more than a student org. It is a crucial component of

how we document and reflect on student life.

Journalism itself has been threatened by the actions of the Trump administration, and “free speech” is a phrase whose definition weakens by the day. Over the past several months, the president has attempted banning reporters from attending White House press conferences over word choice disputes; Rümeysa Öztürk, a student at Tufts, was detained over an opinion piece she published in a student newspaper. These flagrant violations of the First Amendment do not bode well for the future of student journalism, nor journalism as a whole, but The Sophian plans to continue publishing at full capacity when we pick back up in the Fall of 2025.

At the beginning of April, the Student Press Law Center in collaboration with several other national presses issued an alert to student newspapers encouraging them to revisit policies regarding anonymity and the takedown of published material. Particularly, authors or sources “whose immigration status may make them tar-

gets for their lawful speech” may be under intense scrutiny. The Sophian intends to follow their outlined recommendations, including easing our takedown and anonymity standards, maintaining transparency with our sources about anonymity and keeping our staff informed of potential risks. We aim to protect the journalists on our staff, as well as any student who has or will submit guest essays to The Sophian, from legal retaliation or threats to their standing as Smith students.

The Sophian does not publish during the summer session, though we encourage our readers to continue supporting local and independent journalism as much as they can, no matter where in the world they may be. It is critical to protect sources of direct information during this fraught point in history. As always, we thank you for your readership.

With gratitude,
Olivia Petty '26 - Editor-in-Chief
Karen Colmán-Martínez '26 - Managing Editor