



THE CLARION

FREE

FOR STUDENTS, BY STUDENTS



INSIDE: SINCLAIR
CHANGES
LIVES THROUGH
RETURNING CITIZENS
INITIATIVE

CONTENTS

4

Letter from the Editor

5

Senate Bill 1

7

New Library System

8

Summer Scenes

10

Awesome Adjunct

12

Centerville and Mason Campuses

14

Farewell From A Grad

15

Clarion Cuisine

16

Education Behind Bars

18

What You Missed This Summer

20

Piper Photo Shoot

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“From UC to Sinclair, I’m diving into Interior Design with a side of Photography. When I’m not sketching or behind the camera, you can find me thrifting, getting coffee, cooking, crafting, or leading the choir at my church.”- Maliha Bitemo



Clarion Staff: Noah Schlarman, Melissa Wangui Wambui, Maliha Bitemo, Amisha Dahal, Hannah Kichline, and Maliya Ayambire.
JESSICA GRAUE

Welcome back Tartans. As we wave goodbye to summer and enter into a new school year we must take time to reflect. The August blues have gotten the better of me and watching the sun set earlier with each passing day fills me with melancholic despair.

I know I am not alone in this sentiment. However, this is exactly why it is so important to reflect on our current position: To gain an understanding of why we choose to be in the positions we are in.

As I enter my sophomore year here at Sinclair College, I think back to who I was a year ago and how far I have come since then. I was just starting my academic career at Sinclair and the nervous anticipation of a fresh start both excited and terrified me.

My journey to Sinclair was turbulent and had many false starts. I did not think I was college-worthy and had yet to find my passion, but I knew something in my life needed to change and Sinclair beckoned to help.

Walking in on the first day was intimidating; while all the faculty were helpful and friendly, I noticed how every student seemed to know exactly where they were going and thought about how painfully obvious it was that I was lost. I was a true fish out of water.

I filtered in, slightly late, to my class and took a seat in the back. I was determined to fly under the radar and not make waves, as the old childish fear of high school embarrassment radiated under my skin.

However, I quickly found myself warming up to the like-minded people I was surrounded by. Once I realized that everyone is a little shy and apprehensive to stand out, I also realized the folly of such a feeling.

It took one slight gesture of willingness to stand out or speak up and suddenly everyone in my class could talk openly and earnestly to each other. While I do credit a lot of this to the more intimate class sizes and the encouraging nature of my professors, it could not have started if we all did not take the chance to try something new and uncomfortable.

Eventually, in all of my classes, we moved closer to each other, slowly lowered our walls of shyness and even became friends.

By the end of my first semester I was eager to move on to the next step in my career but also saddened to leave the comfort of the classmates I had come to know. While it is okay to be nostalgic and romantic about the past, we must not let this feeling trap us and keep us from moving forward.

Taking chances and putting ourselves into uncomfortable situations is necessary for growth. I chose the position I am in because I believe in the path I have set before me.

Understand that the unease of temporary discomforts amounts to nothing when compared to the unbridled happiness that comes with the sense of accomplishment.



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Noah Schlurman. ESPERANCE AMURI

Put yourself out there, stand out, speak up and help the person that looks lost in the hallways like we all once were. Understand your position, understand your path and understand your growth. We cannot go back to where we once were because we are no longer who we once were.

WE ARE HIRING !

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THE CLARION

Senate Bill 1 Reshapes Higher Education in Ohio

Vague guidelines and unanswered questions lead to uncertainty for faculty and students

Noah Schlarman, executive editor

On March 19, The Ohio House of Representatives passed Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) which will make sweeping changes to higher education across the state.

This bill remains highly controversial. Supporters call it a “student first” approach towards education, while opponents call it an invitation of confusion, chaos and First Amendment violations across all campuses in Ohio.

SB 1 took effect on June 27, ushering in new policies and a new era of higher education. At Sinclair College, some effects of the bill have already become noticeable. In the coming semesters, new and returning Tartans will find changes in terms of class content, requirements for graduation, grants, scholarships and even the potential removal of certain programs.

With the vagueness and ambiguity of SB 1, many faculty and representatives of Sinclair are hesitant to talk about the changes SB 1 has made. While Sinclair remains confident in its mission and ability to provide quality education to its students, there is an err towards caution over the specifics of SB 1.

Sinclair also expects to take on a financial burden due to SB 1. In May, the Board of Trustees allocated \$500,000 to an emergency fund to pay for expected costs of remaining compliant with SB 1.

The fund will be used for the 2026 fiscal year operating budget.

The \$500,000 is only expected to pay for the initial costs. Sinclair estimates the direct and indirect cost of compliance with SB 1 to be \$2 million in the first year of implementation and then \$1 million per year in each subsequent year, indefinitely.

New and returning Tartans will find changes in terms of class content, requirements for graduation, grants, scholarships and even the potential removal of certain programs.

In the latest Board of Trustees meeting held in June, Sinclair stressed that while they have and will remain compliant with all legislation dictated by SB 1, they are confident they can get the necessary resources to students in need.

Sinclair did not respond to our requests for comment on the impacts of SB 1.

However, the Ohio Department of Higher Education states directly what every college must do to comply with SB 1. Below is a list of important changes that could impact students at Sinclair:

- **A ban on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives**

SB 1 bans all DEI initiatives, restricts DEI training, eliminates existing DEI offices and prohibits the creation of new ones. Exemptions are available for appeal, although it is unclear if Sinclair has applied for any.

Certain scholarships for traditionally and currently marginalized groups like physically disabled students and victims of human trafficking have been cut due to SB 1's ban on DEI. Sinclair did not say what, if any, scholarships currently offered have been cut.



Gov. Mike Dewine signs the bill into law on March 28. GOVERNOR.OHIO.GOV

“Senate” continued on Page 6

“Senate” continued from Page 5

• **An American Civics Literacy course**

SB 1 dictates that a new American civics literacy course will be mandatory for any student who will graduate with a bachelor’s degree in the spring semester of 2029-2030 and after.

Sinclair may exempt students who have taken a college credit plus (CCP) program, an advanced placement course and examination, or at least three credit hours in a course on the subject of American history or American government.

The course is defined in SB 1 as a study of the American economic system and capitalism.

In this new course, all students will be required to read the following documents:

- The entire Constitution of the United States
- The entire Declaration of Independence
- The entire Emancipation Proclamation
- The entire Gettysburg Address
- The entire Letter from Birmingham Jail written by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr
- The writings of Adam Smith, including a study of the principles written in “The Wealth of Nations”
- A minimum of five essays from the Federalist Papers

This new course does not apply to associate’s degree programs. Each state institution, including Sinclair, must submit a plan for approval to the Chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education by September 30, 2025.

• **Retrenchment and Program Elimination**

Each state institution must create policies on tenure and retrenchment. Tenured faculty will be subjected to more frequent and in-depth post-tenure reviews.

Tenure used to provide job security and academic freedom. Under SB 1, the institution may create policies defining administrative action for underperforming faculty. Some actions include censure, remedial training or even for-cause termination, regardless of tenure status.

Retrenchment is the process by which the state institution of higher education reduces programs or services either temporarily or permanently. This is to account for a reduction in student population and overall funding.



Protesters gather to oppose SB 1. OHIO CAPITAL JOURNAL

Any program that produces fewer than five graduates annually over a three-year period will be eliminated from that institution.

There are waivers available for submission to the Ohio Department of Higher Education for programs in jeopardy of being cut. If submissions are accepted, programs could be absorbed into a larger, more general degree with a focus on the absorbed program.

No department at Sinclair would comment on any potential elimination of programs.

SB 1 has reshaped the landscape of higher education. Both students and faculty will have to learn how to navigate this new landscape.

At Sinclair, Tartans will have to look to their administrators to lead the way.

SB 1 – CHANGES AT SINCLAIR

Cost to Sinclair:

- \$2 million in the first year
- \$1 million per year in each subsequent year.

Scan to share
#YourVoice on
the potential
impacts of SB 1.



New Library System

Sinclair library launches new system to streamline student research

Maliya Ayambire, reporter

This summer, the Sinclair College library officially launched a new library system aimed at transforming how students

discover and access academic materials. The change, which has been underway for over a year and a half, marks Sinclair's transition to a unified statewide platform through OhioLINK, offering a more efficient and intuitive experience for campus researchers.

According to Andrea C. Atkinson, technical services and systems manager, the project was long in the making.

"We used about a year and a half to switch over to the new system. That gave us time to test and prepare, and we didn't face many disruptions along the way," Atkinson said.

The new system, powered by Ex Libris, brings major changes to how students search for books and other academic materials.

Previously, the OhioLINK catalog was separate from Sinclair's in-house system. If the Sinclair library did not have a book, users had to open a separate link to search elsewhere. Now, searches are fully integrated.

"Students can now search once and get results from both Sinclair and partner libraries without needing to bounce between systems. It's much more efficient." Sinclair library director Debra J. Oswald said.

Oswald added that this shift is part of a larger initiative across all Ohio academic institutions. "Every college and university in Ohio uses the same link now. So, if you transfer to another school, you're already familiar with the system. It's the same search tool, just in a different library," Oswald said.

While the updated system primarily enhances academic search and borrowing, it also introduces student-friendly tools like citation support for MLA and APA formats, saving time for those writing papers or compiling research. Oswald said this is just one of many improvements designed with students in mind.

Looking ahead, the Sinclair library plans to launch mobile-friendly features, including app access and QR code scanning to make locating and checking out books easier on the go. "We're envisioning a future where research is just a few taps away on your phone. It's all about access and flexibility," Oswald said.

To support the transition, the library has developed resources and training materials for students to get comfortable with the updated system. Staff are available to assist both in person and visiting classrooms to meet students, making sure that anyone, regardless of experience, can take full advantage of what the new platform offers.

Ultimately, the launch of Sinclair's new library system is not just a technical upgrade. It is a reimagining of how research happens on campus. With faster search results, broader access and student-focused features, the change promises to empower Sinclair students at every stage of their academic journey.

**"We're envisioning a future where research is just a few taps away on your phone. It's all about access and flexibility."
- Debra J. Oswald**



Debra J. Oswald. CONTRIBUTED

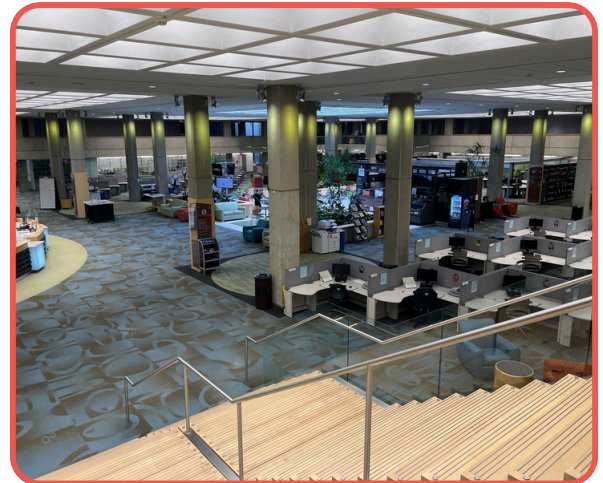


Andrea C. Atkinson. CONTRIBUTED

Summer Scenes

Pictures from Sinclair show a calm and quiet summer

JD Ataji, staff photographer

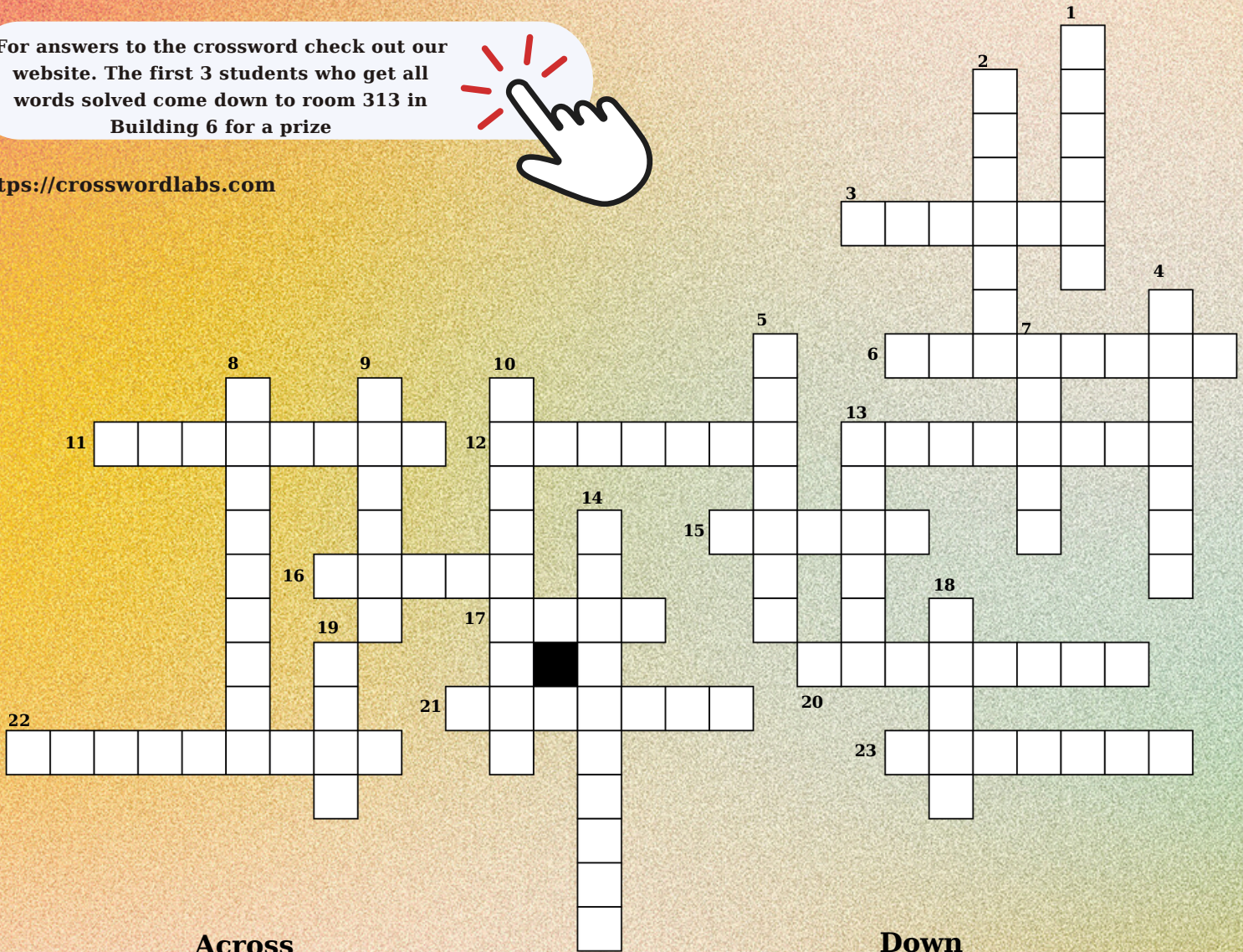


The Clarion Scholar Scramble

For answers to the crossword check out our website. The first 3 students who get all words solved come down to room 313 in Building 6 for a prize



<https://crosswordlabs.com>



Across

Down

- 3. A symbol of Sinclair's identity and Community
- 6. No. 4 top community college in Ohio
- 11. A heavy book used for learning
- 12. Awarded with after Graduation
- 13. A tool for browsing the internet
- 15. Sinclair's Therapy dog
- 16. To gain knowledge
- 17. A coordinated group of people
- 20. Moments that can be remembered for a lifetime
- 11. People you enjoy spending time with
- 22. A college instructor
- 23. Courses you take

- 1. Former faculty and graduates from Sinclair
- 2. College fees
- 4. A quiet place to study on the campus
- 5. Newspaper for Sinclair College made by students for students
- 7. Student Organizations
- 8. Located in the library for refreshments to drink
- 9. A morning pick-me-up drink
- 10. An exciting quest
- 13. The opposite of destroy
- 14. Guiding a team
- 18. Something you aim for
- 19. Our school mascot

Awesome Adjunct

From fighter jets to math classrooms: Instructor Walker Shontese's inspiring STEM journey

Maliya Ayambire, reporter

Instructor Walker Shontese's journey from engineering to mathematics education exemplifies resilience, adaptability and a deep commitment to student success.

Her story not only highlights personal transformation but also underscores the profound impact educators can have on shaping the aspirations of young learners, particularly in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Before transitioning to education, Shontese pursued a career in engineering. She began as a user interface engineer at AT&T in Georgia, designing graphical user interfaces for telecommunications systems. Later, she worked as human factors engineer, developing cockpit interfaces for fighter jets and cargo planes.

Years later, teaching came calling and captured her heart. Shontese's engineering background provided her with a solid foundation in problem-solving and analytical thinking. Skills she now imparts to her students.

After several years in the engineering field and with a growing family, Shontese decided to shift her focus to education. She began teaching mathematics part-time at the International College of Broadcasting, eventually applying for a position at Sinclair College.

Despite initial challenges securing a spot to teach at Sinclair, her persistence paid off after several attempts over a two year period, and she began teaching at Sinclair in the fall of 2024. Shontese described this transition as a calling by a higher power.

"I felt like it was divine intervention... I was supposed to be here; this was my time. In my first class, I was nervous but within five minutes ... I felt at ease and at peace because I knew this was where I was supposed to be," said Shontese.

Shontese thrives on student moments of breakthrough especially for those who begin to be afraid of math. She sees teaching and life through a lens focused on growth.

"I still get goosebumps when students have that 'aha' moment...Those are the best days. You grow through challenges ... every struggle is an opportunity for improvement," Shontese said.

Even in moments of difficulty, Shontese learns and always asks how she can better support a student or communicate a concept.

At Sinclair, Shontese has made a significant impact on her students. She emphasizes the importance of understanding over memorization and strives to create an inclusive learning environment where all students feel valued and capable.

Her approach has led to numerous success stories, with students reaching out for recommendations and expressing gratitude for her guidance.

Shontese's dedication extends beyond the classroom. She is a competitive bodybuilder and shuttles her daughter to soccer tournaments. She also jokes about parking an RV outside her daughter's dorm while teaching online as she begins her freshman year in college.



Walker Shontese. CONTRIBUTED

"Adjunct" continued on page 14

“Adjunct” continued from page 10

“I hope I’m still here at Sinclair ... inspiring students and encouraging them to be their own advocates,” Shontese said.

She is also actively working towards a full-time instructor role, aiming to continue inspiring and motivating students to pursue their academic and professional goals. To students, she offers this advice:

“Do what makes you happy in the moment. Set goals, but don’t carve them in stone. Life is dynamic ... veering off course doesn’t make you a failure,” Shontese said.

Her greatest inspiration comes from students who may not speak at first, but whose faces light up when they understand.

“Those are the students who challenge me ... and remind me why I became an educator,” Shontese said.

As an educator with a background in engineering, Shontese serves as a powerful role model for all students, demonstrating that with determination and guidance, they too can succeed in STEM fields.

Shontese’s journey reflects what research shows about the importance of female role models in STEM: Girls who see women succeed in science and math feel empowered to imagine themselves in those fields.

Like notable STEM educators such as Anne-Marie Imafidon and Sarah Chapman, who co-founded programs to inspire girls across Europe and Australia, Shontese embodies what is possible when passion meets purpose.

At Sinclair, Shontese’s story proves that STEM is not just for engineers in labs. Instead, it is for those who teach, guide and empower others. Young girls seeing her in the classroom may just be the next generation of STEM trailblazers.

“Do what makes you happy in the moment. Set goals, but don’t carve them in stone. Life is dynamic ... veering off course doesn’t make you a failure.”
- Walker Shontese

DID YOU KNOW?

- Sinclair Community College has a large and diverse STEM division, offering over 90 programs and boasting the largest number of students enrolled in two-year engineering technology associate degree programs in Ohio.
- The division also offers specialized programs like the Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (WiSTEM) Institute and STEM Exploration Day to engage students and promote STEM education.

Exploring STEM Internships

WHEN

Wednesday, Sept. 10th,
9:00-10:00 AM

OR

Thursday, Sept. 11th,
1:00-2:00 PM

WHERE

Dayton Campus
Building 2
Room 334
(Third Floor)

For more internship info,
scan QR code



For event questions contact Office of Work-based Learning at

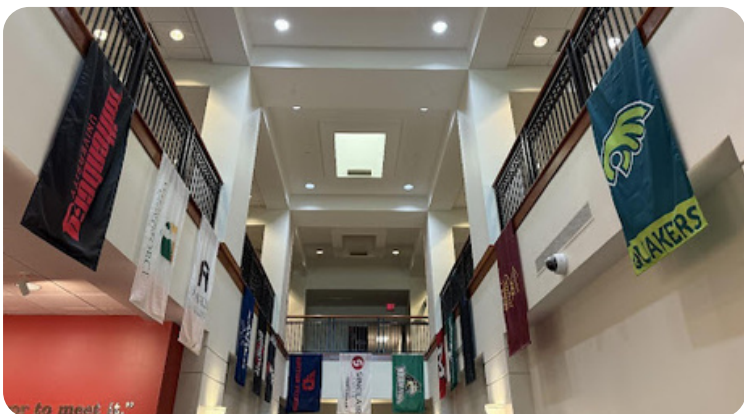
(937) 512-2769 | www.sinclair.edu/wbl

The Clarion | 11



Centerville campus offers expanding amenities and a community focus

Andrew Barnes, staff writer



Halls on Centerville campus shine with school pride. ANDREW BARNES



Centerville's state-of-the-art gymnasium. ANDREW BARNES



Bob Noss with Centerville's campus director Latonia Peak-Brown.
ANDREW BARNES

These vary significantly from an expanding concert hall to a \$1.3 million renovation for a new kitchen. The Centerville campus also uses these amenities to engage with their community.

These places are also very useful when it comes to engaging with the community.

"We rent out our gyms constantly in our auditorium. We just had a big concert in here. Centerville Pops had about 1,000 people here last night. We rent it out every night for local high school and grade school basketball teams that are coming in here. It's really kind of a hidden gem in this area, and I think people are getting to know it a little bit better," Noss said.

A particularly prized addition is a fully furnished, working kitchen, staffed to provide food for the entire campus. The kitchen is prepared to feed not only students, but attendees of events as well.

"It'll open up [the] cafe area a little bit more, so we're going to hope to have lunches for students to buy similar to downtown campus. They have a full cooking kitchen down the hall. They're making strides to do that and open it up to all sorts of different activities and events. We just had a graduation party here on Sunday, so it's just about anything if you want to come out and do something," Noss said.

This space is also available to rent, and will open up the Centerville campus to even more types of events that can help the campus engage with their community even more.

While Dayton's sister campuses may not be as large, they are certainly just as impressive and accommodating for every student, faculty and community members.

Tight-knit and tranquil: What makes Mason campus stand out

Sinclair College's Mason campus is the furthest from the main Dayton campus. It sits in a nice quiet corner of Mason, Ohio, and is quite close to many great restaurants. This campus is the smallest in size and therefore has the least amount of amenities, but it makes up for that by being a tight-knit community.

Rebecca Osborne is the operations manager at the Mason campus, and says that she prefers working at the Mason campus due to its more calm atmosphere.

"I enjoy working here at Mason because we've got a team environment, it's nice and it's very accessible. I think everybody here senses that sense of community," Osborne said.

The Mason campus has this peaceful feeling in the school. One can feel a more calm atmosphere throughout the entire campus.

The calm feeling does not mean that there is nothing going on though. The Mason campus also does a multitude of events to engage with the student body. These events give students opportunities to learn things they might not have otherwise.

A particularly noteworthy upcoming gathering is for the International Club. This is a group that is being organized for the Sinclair student body to both learn about and share new cultures.

"The International club is hoping to really get started in the fall, and that'll be student-driven. So we're gonna see what those individuals want and what that turns into. If it's field trips, or if it's movies, or just sharing ideas, and it's open to all students, not just international students, but also our US-born students who are interested in other cultures as well," Osborne said.

The Mason campus also puts a lot of effort into making the first steps into higher education smooth. Orientations are going to be held to help new students know what to expect out of Sinclair.

"We've got a number of new student orientation events coming up. In August, we have a series of three of those that students can attend and learn more about what it means to be a college student, what it means to be at Sinclair, and learn about advising and accessibility and how to utilize our media center and get around campus," Osborne said.

There are also a multitude of places to eat around the campus. This might seem like a minor thing to note, but it's very useful for busy college kids. The closeness of the places makes it easy to get one's food in less than 15 minutes. This means that when one is hungry between classes, they could go to a nearby place to eat and quickly fill up.

The Mason campus is a great place to learn one's chosen path. The calmer and more intimate feeling gives it a personal touch that one cannot get at busier places. Attending students may find it much less stressful to get through classes.

Dayton may be the "main" campus, but the sister campuses each have their own distinct personality and community that help them stand out with a unique identity.



Sinclair's Mason campus is home to a growing sense of community.
ANDREW BARNES



Rebecca Osborne, operations manager for Mason campus.
CONTRIBUTED

Farewell from a Grad

From dropout to Dean's List

Carter Cousino, staff writer / intern

I first came to Sinclair College in the fall of 2022, freshly out of high school. I lasted two or maybe three weeks before I dropped out.

I could lie and say it was the problems I had with Sinclair, like having to change passwords every three months, or that I didn't like the class content. However, the truth is that I had deluded myself into thinking that there was no further place for me in academia. I was far from a perfect student in high school, so I just see the same results here.

I still do not know what was going through my head when I was 18. I thought I was far smarter and capable than I was. After a string of fast food jobs, serving slop to ungrateful consumers, I was so sick of it, I really did not want that to be my life.

So, I went back to get my degree in Multimedia Journalism. I remember how nervous I was in the first semester. Walking around anxiety-ridden, in between the brutalist architecture, and thinking of all the different ways I can fail.

But I hunkered down and did my assignments, and showed up to my classes, mostly. I still feel the strain in my eyes when I did a ten-page essay for my English composition class in one night.

To my surprise and amusement, I did really well. I got on the dean's list a couple of times, my grades were even good enough to get me into Ohio University, a school I was previously rejected from — twice.

Despite all of Sinclair's sometimes annoying quirks, the school gave me everything it had promised. I had great and insightful professors. I became more knowledgeable and discovered my love for writing and reading.

I once heard this quote from "Star Trek" when I was a kid, "Change is the essential process for all living things." I like that a lot, and it sums up my experience here at Sinclair.

Whether Sinclair is a perfect school or not is up for debate. I think eLearn is frustrating, the password reset is ridiculous, and every time I have to do a discussion post, I get one step closer to going insane.

Despite these annoying quirks, I am still extremely grateful for my time at Sinclair. It broke my preconceived notions of education that were instilled in me during grade school.

My advice for incoming students is to trust the process. If you hated school and think Sinclair will be a similar story, just know that it doesn't have to be.

I saw Sinclair as a second chance, not just in terms of getting better employment, but as an opportunity to grow. To enlighten myself and change the immature notions I had about higher learning.

Now I feel as if I have some control over my life. I can see the pieces of my future being formed and within my reach. I plan to be a freelance journalist after college and I am proud that Sinclair has been a part of that journey and that I decided to come back.



Carter Cousino. CONTRIBUTED



“Sometimes, the opportunity for change just takes a little push.”
- Carter Cousino

Clarion Cuisine

Taqueria del Pueblo delivers the vibrant flavors of Mexican street food

Carter Cousino, staff writer / intern

A common notion about local restaurants is that the older and more sketchier the location is, the better the food will be. Not necessarily a sentiment that always holds up, but Taqueria del Pueblo lends some validity to the statement.

I spent five minutes driving through a strip mall on Springboro Pike., trying to find the location of the restaurant. In my ignorance, I accidentally drove by it five times. I walk up to a neat little stand, adorned with two bright red signs showcasing all the dishes for sale.

The menu consists of street food staples, quesadillas, burritos and of course, tacos. Each of them with your choice of meat from carne asada and carnitas, to beef tongue (lengua) and beef cheek (cachete).

I ended up getting three tacos, carne asada, carnitas, and pollo. Each topped with onions and cilantro with verde and red sauce on corn tortillas. I also got a Carnita torta, which is a style of sandwich.

I am not a super massive taco guy, but these were easily the best tacos I have ever had. All the meats, especially the Carnitas, were spiced to perfection and super flavorful. Both the verde and red sauce tasted amazing and complimented the onion and cilantro. While you cannot outright taste the lime squeezed on the taco, you would miss it if it was not there.

The carnitas had a slight hint of pineapple that tied the taste together with the juiciness and tenderness of the pork. The carne asada and pollo were also extremely good; the pollo was nice and peppery with a subtle lime aftertaste.

The carnita torta was super savory. The bread is perfectly toasted, paired with amazingly marinated pork, fresh veggies and fresh guacamole. The guacamole had a strong lime flavor, which I personally prefer.

I remember when I took my first bite of the torta, sitting at the shoddy wooden picnic table. I felt like I had experienced real, authentic Mexican street food. In the Midwest, Mexican restaurants are a dime a dozen, but REAL authentic Mexican food restaurants are far rarer.

I honestly feel like if I were to walk down the streets of Guadalajara and get street tacos at a stand. I would get similar tacos to the ones I got at Taquerio de Pueblo. A case could be made that the tacos at Taquerio de Pueblo would be even better because of their unique usage of spices.

I was so mad at myself that I ate everything because I wanted to save some for when I got home, but I don't care, it was absolutely worth it. Honestly, two or three tacos, a burrito, and a fruit punch jarrito could sustain me for decades.

There are two locations for Taqueria del Pueblo. The stand where I went is located in the front of a parking lot at 5594 Springboro Pike, Dayton, Ohio. The actual brick-and-mortar restaurant is located at 3555 Kettering Blvd. Moraine, Ohio.

Taqueria de Pueblo is an amazing addition to the culinary community of Dayton. Every little thing from the meats, to the veggies and to the sauces were all sublime. I hope the stand and the restaurant are around for many years to come.

"Taqueria de Pueblo is an amazing addition to the culinary community of Dayton. Every little thing from the meats, to the veggies and to the sauces were all sublime." - Carter Cousino



Appetizing food and menu from Taqueria del Pueblo.
CARTER COUSINO

Education Behind Bars

How Sinclair College is changing lives through its Returning Citizen Initiative

Esperance Amuri, staff writer



Jarrett Maier, prison education pathway coordinator. CONTRIBUTED

At Sinclair College, higher education is not just for those on campus. Through its Returning Citizen Initiative, the institution is expanding its reach into prisons across Ohio, offering incarcerated individuals a second chance at life through education and learning.

Jarrett Maier, the prison education pathway coordinator at Sinclair, never expected his entry-level position in corrections education to define his career. Initially, he wanted to be a parole or probation officer, but Maier soon discovered a deeper purpose.

“When I saw what Sinclair was doing and how Sinclair was changing the lives of these people, it quickly became a passion of mine. It really kind of helped me hone in on, this is what I want my career to be; this is the avenue I want to use to help those who need help,” Maier said.

The Sinclair prison program began with just 200 students in 2014. Today, it serves nearly 2000 individuals across 15 correctional institutions and that number is growing. Starting this fall, the program will expand into two additional facilities, bringing the total to 17 Ohio prisons.

“The goal is to reach as many people as we can because the prison system is tough to get into,” Maier said. “It is high security. The priority is security and safety, so we can’t offer a lot. There are limited rooms, there is limited staff because they need corrections officers to make sure that we can run the program, and there are no security risks.”

Inside the prison system, students participate in classes using monitored Chromebooks and Sinclair’s eLearn platform. Five majors are offered to them that do not require hands-on training while access to other fields becomes available post-release.

Maier and his team guide students toward academic and career paths that align with their legal limitations.

“We have learned to try to draw parallels like, ‘Why do you want to be a nurse? You want to help people? Well, here’s a program where you can help people, just not the way you would as a nurse.’ So, we try to help them find something is opportunistic for them and is doing something that they are skilled at and are passionate about,” Maier said.

To incarcerated students, reentering a world that has moved on without them is one of the biggest challenges they face. After 10, 15 or even 20 years behind bars, things like smartphones, email and online job applications can feel overwhelming.

Despite these challenges, students experience outstanding transformations. At first, many enter the program believing they are “not college material” influenced by past experiences and negative labels from family, friends and educators.

However, as they engage in coursework, Maier observes a rapid shift in their mindset. They transition from seeking enrollment primarily for practical benefits, such as time off their sentences, to discovering a newfound belief in their potential to graduate from college.

Once they begin taking college classes, students often become more passionate and serious about their education, demonstrating an eagerness to learn and actively engage in class discussions.

This transformation also depends on numerous variables, including whether they have a supportive family.

According to Maier, some of the biggest logistical or systemic challenges the program faces are the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (ODRC), a large organization with significant government backing.

"Their priority is first security, so there is a lot of regulation. Sinclair is also a huge organization. I mean, this goes with any higher education. We have to follow the Ohio Department of Higher Education guidelines, we have to follow the higher learning commission guidelines. Now that we are offering Pell grants, we have to follow federal government regulations," Maier said.

Therefore, there is a lot of balancing to be done, including rules and regulations, while working in such a high-security environment. It is challenging to comply with Sinclair policies, as well as those of higher education and ODRC.

Due to these regulations and policies, Sinclair cannot offer certain classes to students in the prison, such as chemistry, which involves labs, hazardous chemicals and sharp objects like glass.

When offering classes to students in prison, Sinclair has designated hours for classes: from 8:00 to 10:30 a.m., 12:30 to 3:00 p.m. and 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.

"We have to make sure students are able to get all the classes they need," Maier said, "but we are only able to do it during those times. The issue with that is that all the other programs are also only available during those times. So the GED program, which also needs classrooms, they only have those times too.

"So, it's very hard to work with all these other different programs that are very valuable and have a great purpose. There are faith-based programs, cognitive behavioral therapy programs and addiction programs, but we have to work with them to make sure everybody has enough space. And there is just not much space in the prisons," Maier said.

Another challenge is that students are not allowed to get in trouble, meaning that if they bunked with someone who brings in drugs, they have to let it be known to the facilitator, or they have a chance of going into segregation.

When it comes to the key partners who make this work possible, Maier said Sinclair plays an important role, thanks to investments and support from its leadership, particularly the president of the institution and other higher-level administrators.

The initiative is also partnered with different organizations that are willing to employ individuals with records, which helps define and design the curriculum of the programs offered inside the prisons.

"When I saw what Sinclair was doing and how Sinclair was changing the lives of these people, it quickly became a passion of mine... This is what I want my career to be." - Jarrett Maier

Despite all the hardship this program faces, its work is not to be taken lightly. Their dedication to ensuring that those in prison who are willing to further their education is recognized by many in society.

While many still question whether incarcerated individuals deserve access to higher education, Maier urges the public to reconsider.

"Some of the kindest, most genuine people I've ever met are in prison; they are not monsters, they are people," Maier said. Thanks to programs like Sinclair's Returning Citizen Initiative, they are people with hope, opportunity and a future.



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Senior Vice President Dr. Rena Sebor. CONTRIBUTED



Entrance to the Dayton Art Institute. JD ATAYI



Bookshelf inside Sinclair's Library. JD ATAYI

Clarion Summer Round-Up

New leadership, inclusive growth, and essential campus changes

Casey Brewer, staff writer

The Clarion has published several stories over the summer that many students may have missed over their break.

From entertaining and topical to helping students understand campus life, discover resources and connect with the community. Here are some insightful stories that might have gone unseen.

Climbing the Ladder: Sinclair Selects Dr. Rena Sebor as New Senior Vice President and Provost

This feature article introduces Dr. Rena Sebor, recently appointed as Sinclair's new senior vice president and provost. It explores Sebor's professional background, leadership experience and her goals for growth in student success.

Sebor aims to bring greater communication and collaboration across departments while enhancing the student experience. This article delves into who shaped academic policy and programs on campus.

7 Underrated Programs at Sinclair College

This story highlights seven overlooked but high-potential academic programs, including fields like unmanned aerial systems, veterinary technology and fire science.

Each program is detailed with job outlooks, hands-on learning opportunities and career pathways, all of which can be ideal for students exploring new interests.

Dive deeper into these stories and more on the Clarion's website.





Outside the Welcome Center at Sinclair College. JD ATAYI

Tartan TOPS Prepares to Welcome the Largest Group So Far for Upcoming Fall Semester

The Tartan TOPS Program, which supports students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, is preparing to welcome its largest incoming class this fall. This article explains the program's mission and services, including job readiness training, academic support and social development opportunities.

It is a celebration of inclusive education and a reminder that Sinclair continues to expand resources for all learners. This place is a must-read for students who value inclusion and accessibility on campus.

WYSO Faces 10% Budget Hit After Congressional Vote, Turns to Community for Support

WYSO, Miami Valley's public radio station, is facing a 10% budget cut following recent federal funding reductions. They are currently trying to gain community support to continue regular programming.

The station is known for its local news coverage, music shows and educational initiatives. WYSO plays a major role in amplifying regional voices and connecting listeners' donations, parentship and local fundraising efforts to sustain the diverse program.

This article is especially recommended to students studying journalism, political science or media. It highlights how policy decisions can directly impact local institutions.

Dayton Art Institute Offers Free Admission for Sinclair Students to Experience a World of Culture

The Dayton Art Institute (DAI) has been a staple of the Dayton community since the 1920s. It is a true gem of the Gem City, home to a wide variety of ancient and modern pieces from around the globe with refreshing exhibits rotating seasonally.

This feature dives into the history of the DAI and the ways they drive accessibility for Tartans. Transportation, admission fees and a reductive view of "what art is" might seem to stand as obstacles, but the DAI is easily accessed by RTA or bike path and provides free admission to Sinclair students.

Now, citing a rise in operational costs and a shift in government funding, the DAI is turning to the community for donations. This article shares insight on the value of immersing oneself in art and how the Institute gives back to the community.

Campus may have been quiet, but that does not mean the summer was uneventful. Staying informed on current events at Sinclair can go a long way in making the semester less overwhelming.

These stories not only highlight important campus updates but also reflect the energy, growth and support Sinclair offers students.

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