

# Welcome Back Week Offers Students Fun and Connection

By: Isaiah Clark

Spring semester is officially underway; but before classes began, the Student Government Association kicked off the third annual Welcome Back Week. The week was packed with exciting events, from a silent disco and bowling to bingo and a worship night featuring an inspiring message from Morgan Gibson.

Members of SGA were recently asked how these events came together. Grace Pratt and Catheryn Starr explained that the Student Activities Board, a group of 12 students led by Emma Moore, vice president of social life, began planning Welcome Back Week in late November. They noted that the board needed approval for key aspects, such as the silent disco playlist and the dance floor, which had to be purchased in advance. Effective communication with external contacts outside MVNU was also crucial. While SAB handled much of the planning, other members of SGA assisted with setup and teardown.

Roller skating and bingo have been Welcome Back Week traditions for several years, while the silent disco was reintroduced after being held on campus in the past. Moore typically generates event ideas and presents them to SAB, which then creates and executes the plans. The team thought bringing back the silent disco would be a fun way to engage current students.

“One challenge we faced was that Bingo Night coincided with an Ohio State playoff football game, which made us nervous about attendance,” Starr said. “To address this, we decided to stream the game on the TVs in the cafeteria, and we believe that helped boost turnout significantly. In the end, over 300 people attended the event.”

Moore highlighted how SGA aimed to make the events inclusive for all students. “We made a concerted effort to ensure our international students felt included, especially with the playlist for Neon Night, which was our silent disco on Saturday,” Moore said. “We included Afrobeats, African gospel and Latin pop songs that students suggested. Everyone at the silent disco seemed to really enjoy them.”

She also emphasized the importance of collaboration. “We could not do what we do without partnerships,” Moore

said. “Every event starts with brainstorming sessions with SAB, and I couldn’t do it without my team of four amazing people. We also worked closely with the cafeteria for Bingo Night and with facilities to get supplies where we needed them.”

Elizabeth Rollison, a member of SGA, shared insights into future goals for the event. “If I were to do Welcome Back Week again, I’d add more student-centered events that provide moments of rest during the busy first week,” Rollison said. “Quick stop-in activities with food or competitive bingo games with great prizes would be ideal.”

She also highlighted the value of these events for fostering community. “Planning these events helps us understand what the student body enjoys, allowing us to tailor events to their needs,” Rollison said. “These moments create meaningful connections with students and foster a sense of community that extends beyond the events.”

To promote Welcome Back Week, SGA used creative Instagram reels featuring SGA members involved in planning. “These reels performed better than static posts,” Rollison said. “Word of mouth also played a huge role, as students brought their friends along to the events.”

SGA’s efforts paid off as Welcome Back Week gave students a chance to reconnect, de-stress and celebrate the start of a new semester.

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# THE VIEWER

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# WELCOME BACK!



Photos provided by SGA

**Also in this issue:**  
Teresa Maggio Record Breaking  
Dr. Madtes’s Ministry

Cover designed by Marhin Chismar  
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**MVNU’S STUDENT NEWS SOURCE**



After a 40-year-long career in higher education, 36 of those years spent faithfully here at Mount Vernon Nazarene University and 24 as department chair, biology professor Doctor Paul Madtes Jr. has decided that it is time to move on to something new and will be retiring at the end of this semester. Madtes's long career as a scientist and teacher boasts numerous awards and publications and even took him overseas to teach in Germany and Kenya.

However, Madtes preferred not to focus on the topic of his achievements in science and education, as his deepest calling was to be a spiritual mentor to his students. It was a calling that led him not only to a PhD in Biochemistry but also in Biblical Counseling. He began mentoring at a California college in 1987 but was told he could not move forward in his career if he spent so much time investing in his students. Unable to reconcile this, Madtes left his old position. He said this was when God led him to MVNU (then MVNC) in 1989, where he began his student ministry again and has now mentored more than 140 students whose pictures still adorn his office walls.

It is this same calling that brings the lifelong professor to retirement, though Madtes preferred not to define it as that. "I'm not retiring," he said. "I'm being recommissioned." Instead of teaching (though Madtes said he might continue as an adjunct professor if needed), he will soon spend his days working on The Virtues and Character Development Project. He and the 30 others working in collaboration (half of whom are his own former students) on this project seek to create a program that will teach godly habits and Christian virtues to students of all ages and backgrounds. With the project still in its beginning stages, though God has opened many doors already, Madtes is uncertain of what comes next but said, "Whenever God's taking you down the road, there's assurance that He's gonna lead."

Deciding to leave his days as a full-time professor behind and devote his time to an uncertain future may be new to Madtes, but the only change coming to the deep passion that defined his time at MVNU is that it will soon be shared with many more students than just the ones on campus.



## Dr. Paul Madtes Jr.: Retiring Professor Begins New Ministry

By Zoey Hover



Photos provided by Mallery Thompson



## Teresa Maggio has a Record-Breaking Start

By Abby Almodovar

Not only was this season the start of Teresa Maggio's time playing in Ariel—it was the arena's first time seeing the precedent she set on the court. Maggio is a new face on the Mount Vernon Nazarene University's women's basketball team who made a university record by scoring 41 points in a single game.

Maggio is a transfer student, and she explained that she attended two other schools in her collegiate journey before landing at MVNU. Here, she values the faith-based culture both on and off the court, as well as the program that allows her to pursue her desired degree. Maggio is majoring in communicative sciences and disorders and plans to enter the field of speech pathology.

Maggio shared that her experience on the team has been positive, describing a unified and welcoming group

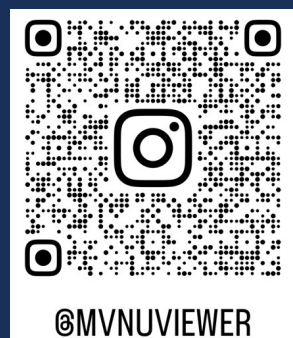
dynamic. She said, "We all get along pretty well, and we all have the same goal in mind, so I think that we're on the same page when it comes to that."

Having been a part of multiple programs, Maggio explained that each one has different beliefs, values, and systems for how they play. "Every year and every game has shaped me into the player that I am," she reflected.

This season, Maggio is certainly demonstrating those years of experience and hard work. In the rush of the record-breaking moment, she described, "I didn't even realize I had broken it—I just kept playing." This statement seems to sum up Maggio's mindset of appreciating the rewarding experiences in her career while aiming to continue to play and grow as an athlete.

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