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Lotus Magazine Sees Growth in its Fifth Year



by Sydney Garff

Lotus, the Manhattan College student-run lifestyle and cultural magazine, has evolved into something much more than it was when it was established in 2017. Junior communication major, Jilleen Barrett, was named co-Editor-in-Chief of Lotus alongside Lilly Brown. Brown handles the majority of the creative, while Barrett focuses on the journalistic side of the magazine. Barrett has been involved in Lotus since she first came to Manhattan College as a freshman in 2019.

Lotus was created by Communication Department alumna Olivia Paladino and was meant to be a women's lifestyle and fashion magazine. While Lotus still covers these issues, its mission has evolved to be much more.

"Our mission right now is to increase diversity and to make sure that everybody at Manhattan [College] has some sort of voice in Lotus," said Barrett. "We don't necessarily believe in a gender binary, we really want everyone on the gender spectrum to have some sort of fulfillment from Lotus magazine."

Each issue of Lotus typically contains 10-15 articles written exclusively by Manhattan College students. Issues are released each semester, and in Fall 2021 Lotus released its ninth issue titled "Disruption." The magazine is printed by a local printing service, Rickner, producing about 100 copies for each issue. Digital copies are also available on Issuu.com.



Many members of Lotus also write for "The Quadrangle" student newspaper, including Barrett, who discussed the different journalistic strategies when writing for each publication. Lotus is more opinion-based whereas "The Quadrangle" is informative.

"Lotus focuses on topics that are a little more specific to people's interests," Barrett said. "I have to really take myself out of the Quad and remind myself it's okay if Lotus' content isn't necessarily school appropriate."

Lotus is not an official school club and therefore cannot be censored. This allows Lotus' contributors freedom to express themselves how they see fit.

Lotus' biggest growth of late has been in its masthead. When a wave of Lotus members graduated in May of 2021, a fresh lineup of students was prepared to join the magazine at its first meeting in fall.

"When Lilly and I stepped up as Editor-in-Chief this year we had all of these freshmen coming in with all of these ideas," Barrett said. "Our first meeting was huge... so many people came wanting to do different things."

Lotus has also been trying to step up its digital presence, aiming to get more into YouTube and video content. Its website is also very active, with journal entries or "Yours Truly's" written by Lotus members weekly. The magazine has especially become more active on social media, particularly on Instagram.

"Kelly Kennedy was our social media editor last semester and has continued into this semester," Barrett said. "She deserves a lot of credit."

The Lotus account was previously only posting a few times a semester. Since the pandemic, the editors decided to use social media as an asset for the publication.

"Kelly had all these great ideas and we wanted to let her do it," Barrett continued. "It is so much fun to watch our social media presence grow."

One of the things Barrett says that she loves most about Lotus is its ability to push her out of her comfort zone. For example, during her freshman year of college, she was able to write about a Manhattan College alum who practiced witchcraft.

"There was a group of women on the Manhattan [College] campus at some point who were wickenWiccan," Barrett said. "It was really cool to write about."

Barrett says she is continuously impressed by the articles that are submitted by Lotus writers, and that she is excited to see what Lotus has in store for the upcoming Spring 2022 issue.

"I'm constantly like, how could somebody think of this," Barrett commented. "It's so awesome to run a magazine where I still get surprised... even though I worked on it and saw it go to print." ★