

# Spirit Week Policy Changes

## Administration Enacts New Spirit Week Policy

By Addy Davis '26  
and Jaiden Ghumman '26  
STAFF WRITERS

Week, including a shift in scheduling and a firm stance against underage drinking at Spirit Week gatherings. The decision, led by the Dean's office in collaboration with the Director of Schools Mr. Richard Dioli and other school officials, comes as faculty and staff voice concerns over student drinking and safety during the annual event.

The change involves moving "Rock N' Jock" — typically held later in the week — to an earlier date, likely Wednesday. The shift aims to discourage students from organizing parties, which administrators believe pose safety risks due to underage drinking and other behaviors that may compromise student safety. Additionally, students have been warned that if any unauthorized parties take place, the remainder of Spirit Week could be canceled.

SHP's Class Officers were the first to learn of the potential policy shift in an emergency meeting called by assistant deans Ms. Ruth Gomez and Mr. Kai Bell. Duke Tom '26, one Class Officer present, recalled their warning: "The first thing they said is

In an effort to prioritize student safety, SHP's administration is making adjustments to Spirit

there will be no parties during Spirit Week... If there is a party, Spirit Week will be canceled for the rest of the week so they moved Rock N' Jock a day up so that if there's a party after Rock N' Jock, they'd cancel the rest of Spirit Week." He added that Gomez and Bell emphasized the importance of a "cleaner" Spirit Week, including a more balanced representation of gender and diversity in Spirit Week videos. SHP may even be considering more radical changes to future Spirit Weeks. According to Tom, "The administration was even considering no more spirit week, or making it one day, or making it three days, or normal classes but one event a day." From the emergency meeting, the message Tom took out of it was "this needs to be a super clean spirit week. We need to have no issues. We can't have a gender imbalance in the video. We can't have a lack of diversity. We can't have drinking, and we can't have any parties. If all of that doesn't go really, really well, there's a big risk for spirit week going forward."

Dean of Students Mr. Lamont Quattlebaum clarified that while Spirit Week's core events and traditions remain intact, the school is focused on refining how they are structured. "There's no new spirit week policy per se," Quattlebaum explained. "The objective of Spirit Week, what we're doing, how we do it won't change. We're just changing where events are and trying to tamp down what we felt like was getting too heightened." As for the potential rescheduling of Rock N' Jock, Quattlebaum noted that while Wednesday is the most likely date, the final decision has yet to be confirmed. He also addressed the administration's concerns regarding diversity in Spirit Week videos, emphasizing that "we just want more inclusion and it's not necessarily diversity... whatever it is, the video, the lip sync, make it representative of the community, whether that's gender, color, or whatever it is, make it inclusive."

Quattlebaum expressed that the administration's "number one thing is keeping [the] kids safe." Some students argue that Spirit Week parties are not school-sponsored events, so it is not appropriate for the school to make an effort to control them. However, Quattlebaum explains that parties are "not a Sacred Heart sanctioned event but it's tied to Sacred Heart... We are trying to distance gatherings connected to school-specific functions." Since spirit week parties are linked to a school event, even if they aren't directly school-sponsored, and potentially dangerous behaviors are taking place such as underage drinking, Quattlebaum believes that the school can and should implement measures to limit them. "All faculty are concerned about student safety," he said: "That's our job. That's our role."

In response to students who argue that JFA and SSA parties are a part of school tradition, Quattlebaum said, "Ask Mr. Pitchford, Mr. Brady, Mr. Morris. You think there's this long tradition of alliance. There were no alliances back then... it's not this long tradition." Even though current students believe that JFA and SSA are old traditions, it is a relatively new part of school culture that wasn't around when many current teachers went to the school.

Dioli reinforced Quattlebaum's position emphasizing that Spirit Week should be a positive and safe experience.

CONTINUED ON  
THE NEXT PAGE



# Administration Enacts New Spirit Week Policy

By Addy Davis '26  
and Jaiden Ghumman '26  
STAFF WRITERS

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

rience for students. He convened a meeting with faculty and administrators to address the question: “How can we make the best Spirit Week possible while keeping our kids safe?” Beyond concerns about safety and underage drinking, Dioli also acknowledged the impact of Spirit Week partying on classroom performance. “It’s not fair to the teachers if the kids are not well the next day in class or don’t come to school,” he said. Additionally, he confirmed that if parties occur, the administration may cancel the remainder of Spirit Week, including activities planned for Thursday and Friday.

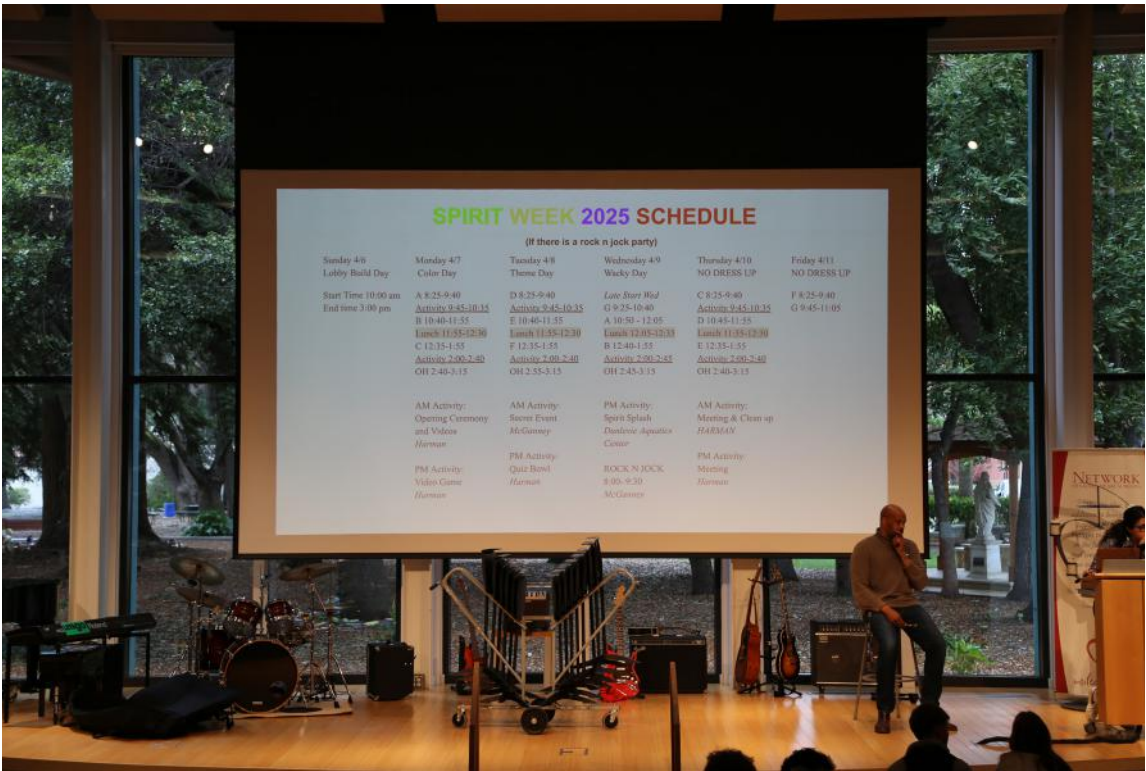
As the school moves forward with these changes, Dioli urged students to consider potential conse-

quences of reckless behavior. “It’s my responsibility to keep the school safe,” he said. “My worst nightmare is something happening to one of you guys... it would be devastating.” He also encouraged students to reflect on the impact their choices might have on their families. “Can you imagine how your family would feel if something happened to you at a party?”

While some students may be disappointed by the stricter approach, the administration hopes that these adjustments will allow Spirit Week traditions to continue in a way that prioritizes safety, inclusion, and respect for the school community. Yet some students remain frustrated, feeling that the changes are an overreach into their personal lives and diminish the excitement and spontaneity that make Spirit Week special.

Some students understand the admin’s perspective and agree with the choice to limit large parties like SSA and JFA, in order to curb potential problems with substance use and alcohol. Rohaan Sanyal ’27 explained his initial reaction to hearing about the changes, saying “I thought it was reasonable. I mean, I can see why they don’t want us going off to parties and such, because it’s such a major thing. It’s almost part of the school’s culture, the parties and all that.” He continued, describing how his grade was addressed by the faculty in Harman, and they “had a whole meeting with the sophomore girls, and then later the sophomore boys, about the drinking that’s going on, and it seems to be a specific problem with this set of people at school.” Students like Sanyal acknowledge the safety benefits that may stem from these new Spirit Week implementations, as placing limits on parties may effectively prevent accidents and bring more control and well-being to the SHP community.

However, while Sanyal understands the rationale behind the restrictions and thinks that the various issues that arise at large parties should be addressed, he also believes there could be better ways to respond to these concerns. “There’s definitely better ways to avoid the problems they’re worried about, while still allowing the kids to have fun on a day that’s supposed to be historically a time to create bonds, especially with different grades.” In



Dean Lamont Quattlebaum explains the new Spirit Week policy at a special lunchtime Q&A session.

Eliza Zuck '25/The Heartbeat

this sense, Sanyal argues that these large gatherings are “one of the main reasons why Spirit Week is such an important event for building school community,” thus the administration may consider other measures to limit unhealthy behavior without placing restrictions on when the event can be celebrated. Goal IV of SHP’s core values emphasizes the building of community, and these parties certainly allow Gators to get to know one another as well as spend time together outside of school and extracurriculars.

Other students share this sentiment, expressing a sense of dissatisfaction with the way the administration chose to limit these highly anticipated events. Many feel that these changes are an unnecessary infringement, and that the faculty should not have the authority to regulate events that occur both outside of and after school hours. Some students, like Chris Smithers ’26, have a stronger reaction to the restrictions. He admitted that when he first heard about the changes, “I was a little shocked, and I thought, there’s no

way [the administration] could possibly do this, there’s no way they have control over what we do outside of school.” His disbelief quickly turned to frustration when he realized that the administration could indeed impose such restrictions, leading him to feel “a little angry.” Smithers recognizes that underage drinking is illegal and can have serious consequences, but he also believes that the school’s attempt to prevent these behaviors may not be entirely realistic. “At the end of the day drinking happens even though it’s not a great thing to be doing.”

Similar to Sanyal, Smithers also emphasizes the importance of these parties as they have become a central part to the Spirit Week experience. “I think it’s definitely very important, because it’s the highlight of the week. It’s right after Rock n’ Jock, so like, the energy’s up, and then everyone goes to the party and everyone’s in a good mood and trying to have fun. It’s the peak of Spirit Week,” Smithers remarks. He explains that the parties play a vital role in helping students bond

with each other, particularly creating connections across grade levels: “You get to know another grade that usually you won’t ever interact with at all.” Without these social events, Smithers worries that students will ultimately miss out on the opportunity to make those new connections, diminishing the full spirit of the week.

While the administration’s intentions to address safety and promote a more controlled environment are understandable, some students feel that the restrictions may reduce the sense of connection and community joy that has traditionally taken place during Spirit Week. These changes raise questions about balancing safety with tradition while maintaining a fun environment encouraging students to build relationships and enjoy themselves. The true impact of these changes will likely only become clear in future Spirit Weeks as students and administrators continue to assess how the event can best serve the SHP community.

## FRESHMEN OPINION

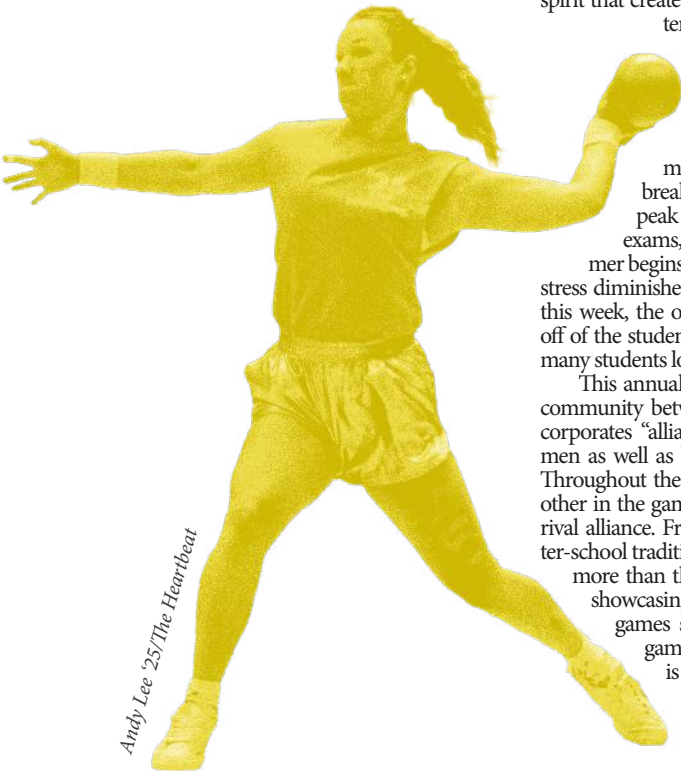
By Nate Avina '28 | GUEST WRITER

### Freshmen Disconnect

Spirit Week, a time of competition and camaraderie between classes and students alike (or so the freshman class has been told), has always been a staple of Sacred Heart Prep — everyone seems to be counting down the days until the fabled week arrives. So naturally, for freshmen, this seems like not only an opportunity to make connections with each other, but most importantly with upperclassmen who otherwise feel miles away in their connection to freshmen. Not only can Spirit Week activities help freshmen get to know other and older students, it’s also a way to get to know the community itself. As a freshman, you don’t know what Spirit Week is even like, but the stories and enthusiasm from others tell you are enough to know just how special it is.

Or, it was, until the recent steps the school has taken to make Spirit Week party-free. These steps include the banning of off-campus JFA (Junior-Freshman Alliance) parties. If Spirit Week is all about building community, why take away some of the building blocks classes have used for years to do that very same thing? After speaking briefly with some of my classmates about the ban and Spirit Week in general, there’s a pretty common consensus that Spirit Week changes are not regarded well with the grade whatsoever. And we haven’t even seen a Spirit Week before! This comes at a time in the school where it seems the administration is taking more and more away from the students than it is giving back. I know there may be good reasoning behind these bans that students are

oblivious to, but right now they just seem like the death of tradition and community. That may seem like an extreme statement, but that’s the general sentiment of the freshman class. Hopefully Spirit Week will still be the event that it was for everyone’s sake, but for now, all we can do is wait



Andy Lee '25/The Heartbeat

## SOPHOMORE OPINION

By Kaitlyn Frauenhofer '27 | STAFF WRITER

### Wrong Move

Every year, Sacred Heart Prep holds a four-to-five day competition between the grades, centered on building community. This essential week of the school year is called Spirit Week and consists of a series of performances, games, and displays of spirit that create a “friendly fire” competition to determine which grade will come out victorious.

Spirit Week is a special aspect of SHP. It allows the students to come together in a time of intense academic pressure. Normally, the week falls just before spring break, meaning that students are in the peak phase of preparing for finals and AP exams, the overall last stretch before summer begins, where the days become longer and stress diminishes. While there is still school during this week, the organized chaos lifts a slight weight off of the students’ shoulders, making it something many students look forward to.

This annual competition inspires a building of community between the students. Spirit Week incorporates “alliances” between Juniors and Freshmen as well as between Seniors and Sophomores. Throughout the week, these alliances support each other in the games and work together to beat their rival alliance. From these alliances comes a fun after-school tradition: a party. However, Spirit Week is more than these after-school events. It is about showcasing our classmates’ talents in the games such as Quiz Bowl and the video game that would otherwise be hidden. It is about teaching students that school can be fun and more than an academic warfare. I cannot think of a better time than Spirit Week, and it

is painful to hear that the administration is threatening to cancel it entirely if an off-campus party occurs.

What confuses me the most is, why now? Why would this years-long tradition be changing now? We have heard that the partying has become uncontrollable, our health is in question, and there have been multiple complaints and concerns from parents and faculty. However, partying occurs year-round, not solely during Spirit Week, and therefore, should not incite a targeted attack on what is, arguably, the most anticipated week of the school year. The administration is within its rights to attempt to decrease the partying of SHP students, and they have reasonable aims in doing so, but I refuse to believe that threatening the continuation of Spirit Week is the smartest way to proceed.

I remember during my freshman year, the class of 2027 had a whole-class meeting, and when asked about our reason for picking SHP as our high school, numerous people said they were drawn to Spirit Week and the school spirit that it invoked. Jack Frauenhofer, an alum from the class of 2022, said, “Spirit Week is about making it fun, not checking the boxes to having a successful Spirit Week. They should let the students rule it, more so than the teachers trying to intervene and change the students’ voices and opinions.” Spirit Week means so much more to the students than the administrators understand. By threatening to cancel it, they are depriving the students of a chance to express themselves. It is so much more than just the parties, but at the same time, they are an integral part of the community building of this week. The parties, although sometimes rambunctious and chaotic, create a steady balance between school and social life.

While the administrators have their reasons for doing so, targeting the specific week in which the students look forward to every year is not the correct path.