NINERTIMES
Student-driven news since 1947 Oct. 21, 2026



CHARLOTTE DEFEATS TEMPLE ENDS 685 DAY FBS WIN DROUGHT

NINERTIMES

OCT. 21, 2026 | VOL. 39, ISSUE 5

READ MORE AT **NINERTIMES.COM**

@niner_times | Niner Network

@niner_times | @Niner Times

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Emmanuel Perkins
editor@ninertimes.com

MANAGERIAL BOARD
Wes Packham WRITING MANAGING
Megan Khor MULTIMEDIA MANAGING

EDITORIAL
Rex Stauss COPY
Kyle Boucher NEWS
Emsley Jackson OPINION
Tre Holland SPORTS
Kaitlyn Fankboner PHOTO
Ava Weaver DESIGN
Jacob Brindle VIDEO

ASSISTANT EDITORS
Syerra Watlington ASST. COPY
Emily Schenkel ASST. NEWS
Ava Harris ASST. OPINION
Shane Reese ASST. SPORTS
Ali Thiam ASST. DESIGN

CONTRIBUTING STAFF
Hayden Herr, Aaron Park, Sean McGuffin, Rolando Vera Hi-fong, Nyjhon Rhymer, PJ Sullivan, Jeremiah Carroll, Aiden Adamo, Chaise Holland, Simone Kahoussi & Lauren Simendinger

LAYOUTS
Cover photo: Courtesy of Charlotte Athletics
Cover graphic by Ava Weaver
Interior layouts by Ava Weaver, Ali Thiam, Megan Khor & Charlie Pearsall

MARKETING DIRECTOR
Madison Washington
mktdirector@charlotte.edu

NINER MEDIA STAFF
Kelly Merges MEDIA ADVISER
Laurie Cuddy BUSINESS MANAGER
Bianca Fruscello ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

The Niner Times is UNC Charlotte's student-run news publication founded in 1947 and has received both state and national recognition.

We cover campus happenings, news and events in the city of Charlotte and North Carolina and topics that are important to students.

CONTACT INFORMATION
9201 University City Blvd. SU 042
Charlotte, NC 28223
Phone: 704-687-7148
Email: inquiry@ninertimes.com



Emmanuel Perkins/Niner Times

Upcoming UNC Charlotte events

Rock Climbing Night at the SAC
Oct. 21, 7-9:30 p.m.
Student Activity Center

Exhibition Reception: Another Other
Oct. 22, 6-8 p.m.
Rowe Galleries

Volleyball vs. Temple
Oct. 23, 12 p.m.
Halton Arena

Campus Beautification Day
Oct. 22, 9 a.m. to noon
UNC Charlotte Campus

Fall Dance Concert: Shift
Oct. 22-25, times vary
Robinson Hall, Anne R. Belk Theater

Softball vs. App State
Oct. 24, 2 p.m.
Sue M. Daughtridge Stadium

From the Charlotte police logs (10/4 - 10/17)

Emily Schenkel | Asst. News Editor

Oct. 12 - Suspicious Person
Officers were dispatched to Atkins Library in reference to a suspicious male sleeping outside by the Starbucks. The male was identified as a non-student, who said he missed his destination train. The male was trespassed from campus.

Oct. 15 - Investigate
Officers were dispatched to Oak Hall in reference to a subject that passed out after arguing with their roommate. Medics responded and transported them to Atrium Health University City.

Oct. 15 - Investigate
Officers were dispatched in reference to threats being communicated. The reporting party said she felt uncomfortable after a former roommate said they would see them after work for money they never received. Officers told them to seek a restraining order from the Magistrate's office.

NOTES FROM THE NEWSROOM:

Take a break

Emily Schenkel | Asst. News Editor



I think we've all gotten a little too comfortable with being busy. With classes, assignments, jobs, clubs and trying to keep our social lives going, it feels like there's always something we need to be doing.

If I have a chunk of free time, it's hard to enjoy it without thinking about assignments or my to-do list. Even if I don't have anything due for days, I find myself working ahead on things that can wait.

And now, we're already over halfway through the semester — it's time to take a break. Not a quick doomscroll on your phone, but an actual break. One where you're just existing, without stressing about what needs to get done next. Grab coffee with a friend, watch your favorite show or spend an afternoon doing nothing. You don't need to justify it, and you don't need to earn it.

We can't focus so much on the end of the semester that we forget to enjoy the days in between.

There will always be another assignment, meeting or thing to do. But the time in between matters too. Give yourself permission to slow down. There's more to look forward to than what's on your to-do list.

How student EcoReps spread sustainability on campus

Hayden Herr | Staff Writer


Courtesy of Office of Sustainability





EcoReps is a nationwide program in which universities offer positions to students who are interested in sustainability and leadership.

In fall 2018, UNC Charlotte Housing and Residence Life launched the EcoRep program with just three students. By spring 2019, the number of students participating in the program rose to nine.

The EcoRep role is available to all students who have an interest in sustainability and communicating with their peers.

This year, there are five EcoReps on campus: Avery Taylor, Harshita Tunara, Justin Lindsay, Jasmine Oliver and Beth Sang.

The day-to-day as an EcoRep

EcoReps' on-campus activities include hosting events, giving presentations, volunteering, tabling and talking to students about sustainability.

The EcoReps, along with the Office of Sustainability and Charlotte Green Initiative (CGI), work behind the scenes to keep campus clean.

Fourth-year student and EcoRep Beth Sang often works after football games with a group of volunteers to sort through the garbage, compost and recyclable materials that collect after large game-day activities.

This group, known as the Zero Waste Crew, was created in 2011 after the Student Government Association passed a resolution to keep the Jerry Richardson Stadium a zero-waste facility. Volunteering opportunities such as this are open to all and are often filled by students looking for volunteer hours.

October is especially busy for EcoReps; in addition to the home football games, it's Campus Sustainability Month, with frequent events and initiatives to keep campus clean.

In the coming weeks, they will be hosting events such as the Sustainability Summit, Campus Beautification Day and the Reuse Rodeo.

Sang is working on the Reuse Rodeo, an event featuring clothing and book swaps, which will take place Oct. 20, 21, 27 and 28.

She is graduating this December and has been an EcoRep since 2024, making her one of the longest-standing current EcoReps, along with Jasmine Oliver.

Sang can often be found tabling on campus, ready to quiz students on sustainability trivia, and starting conversations.

"Another aspect of this job is the education in the classroom. We do a couple presentations and tours at the request of some [professors]," Sang said.

Tours offered by the EcoReps include the "Land and Water" tour by Hech Lake, tours that examine the stormwater system by Toby Creek and tours of UNC Charlotte's own recycling center.

EcoReps also give tours of EPIC, which was built with sustainability in mind, notably the lights and air conditioning. This building has become a standard for new construction at UNC Charlotte.

The EcoReps still maintain a balance between campus sustainability and student coursework. The program is relatively new to the University compared to others across the nation.

"We're still growing, and we're still learning, so there are things that existed and worked at the time but can't work now," Sang said. "Since 2020, a lot of the [sustainability] data has changed because of the pandemic and how we should approach engaging with students."

Charlotte residents march for the No Kings: Vote Early movement

Kyle Boucher & Emily Schenkel | News Editor & Asst. News Editor

On Oct. 17, a large crowd of Charlotte residents stood at the corner of Fairview and Sharon Road, holding signs that said: "Honk if you support democracy" and "Vote Early."

After gathering at this corner for about 40 minutes, the crowd marched to the nearby SouthPark Regional Library, where each person cast their vote.

The march was hosted by Indivisible Charlotte, a non-profit organization that coordinates political events and protests across the Greater Charlotte area. This march was part of a larger national movement called No Kings: Vote Early.

Reasons for the march

The march was an opportunity for participants to express concerns about the country's political direction and encourage people to take part in the democratic process by voting.

Several participants said they were concerned about the U.S. political climate and wanted to make their concerns visible and heard. For them, gathering to rally and march to the polls was a way to speak out about the country's political direction and emphasize the role that citizens have in a democracy.

"We have moved from being a democracy ... into being an authoritarian state, with a lot of people being asleep as this is happening," Charlotte resident Geoffrey Hemenway said. "People need to get out on the streets and let everybody know what is happening to our country."

Others expressed frustration with elected officials and called for action from those in office.

"I'm so unhappy with the spinelessness of our government," Charlotte resident JN Janbusch said. "I want to see something happen in Congress. I need these people to stand up."

Voter participation was also an important issue for participants in this march, as they hope the work they are doing will encourage more people to cast their ballots.

"We've had some pretty dismal turnouts at some of the elections that aren't major presidential ones, and we're trying to increase voter participation," Charlotte resident Renee Reese said.

This march was also connected to Interfaith Alliance, whose CEO, Paul Raushenbush, gave a short speech, brought a "Your Vote is Sacred" tour bus, and handed out signs and donuts to participants. Raushenbush shared the organization's nationwide initiative to bring communities together to vote.

"Interfaith Alliance is going 9,000 miles, 15 states and 31 stops, showing up all across the country with faith communities and broader civic groups to say, 'every voice and vote is sacred,'" Raushenbush said.

A reminder of the 1960s

One participant in the march, Lynn Morgenstern, said this election reminds her of elections in the early 1960s, during the Civil Rights Movement. Those elections had several policies that made it difficult for minority and low-income groups to vote, such as literacy tests and poll taxes.

"I'm old enough to remember when people with dogs and hoses tried to stop people from voting, and I had friends and family who marched alongside the people of Selma," Morgenstern said.

She feels there is currently a lot of fear around voting, and believes that fear is keeping people away from the polls.

"In the South [in the 1960s], they would limit the number of voting places. They tried to intimidate people and scare them. [Today] it's looking very much the same," Morgenstern said.

Another Charlotte resident, Carolyn Raper, added that these scare tactics reminded her a lot of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Several other participants in the march believed the removal of voting centers on various college campuses throughout North Carolina — such as UNC Charlotte — is a form of voter suppression.

"I don't think I've ever witnessed a more dangerous time for our democracy and a more important time for people to vote," an anonymous Charlotte resident said.



Emmanuel Perkins/Niner Times



Emmanuel Perkins & Kaitlyn Fankboner/Niner Times

PaTS Mobility Master Plan: The future of parking and transportation at UNC Charlotte

Kyle Boucher | News Editor

Courtesy of PaTS

Parking and Transportation Services (PaTS) released the Mobility Master Plan, a detailed roadmap to improve the current parking and transportation at UNC Charlotte.

The plan was released publicly on June 30, 2026, and proposed many changes to parking infrastructure, University policies and the transportation tools available to students. The Mobility Master Plan is different from the University's Campus Master Plan, which is focused on the continued growth of UNC Charlotte as a whole.

The Mobility Master Plan is a suggested course of action, not a finalized plan. PaTS will decide independently which parts of the plan they wish to implement, and those implementations may differ from the original plan as new research is done.

The plan outlines three main goals: create a more cohesive mobility system infrastructure, reduce vehicular demand and ensure that the changes last long-term. A more cohesive mobility system refers to several campus changes, including building a more pedestrian-oriented campus, improving road safety and reducing traffic congestion on campus.

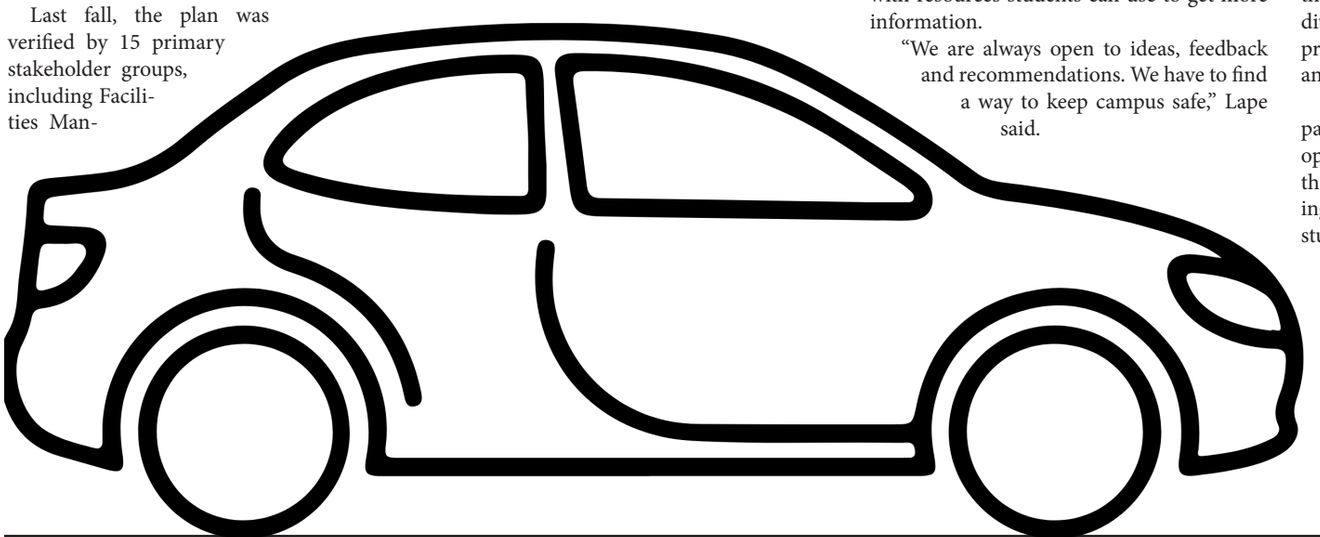
Walter P Moore, a third-party engineering firm, helped to create the plan from August 2025 to June 2026.

Last fall, the plan was verified by 15 primary stakeholder groups, including Facilities Management, the Student Government Association, Police & Public Safety, and the Office of Accessibility and Accommodation.

PaTS will be spending the fall 2026 semester speaking with these stakeholder groups to understand the best way to implement the changes.

"We know campus continues to grow, which is a great thing, but we also have to stay in front of it ... That's what this Master Mobility Plan will help us do," Associate Vice Chancellor for Business Services Douglas Lape said.

> "We are always open to ideas, feedback and recommendations. We have to find a way to keep campus safe."
>
> - Douglas Lape, Associate Vice Chancellor for Business Services



Immediate changes and promoting safety

At the start of the fall 2026 semester, PaTS launched its "Walk your Wheels" campaign, which encourages students to stop using wheeled devices on campus, such as scooters and skateboards. This was PaTS' first step toward a safer and less congested campus as part of the new plan.

Joanna Savold, Director of Marketing for Business Services at UNC Charlotte, described how the campaign aimed to reduce the number of wheeled devices rushing around campus while keeping riders safer in highly congested areas.

"We're trying to encourage students who use these [wheeled] devices to follow the best practices, stop at crosswalks and stop signs, follow the rules of the road, wear helmets and [not] wear headphones," Savold said.

She also encouraged riders to use roads on the outer ring of campus, where there is less pedestrian traffic.

Moving forward, PaTS will promote safety on campus by creating educational videos on social media to teach students how to navigate campus safely, whether on foot, by scooter or by car.

PaTS is also developing pages with safety protocols for drivers and pedestrians, along with resources students can use to get more information.

"We are always open to ideas, feedback and recommendations. We have to find a way to keep campus safe," Lape said.

Changes to parking prices

PaTS does not plan to increase parking permit prices for the 2027-2028 academic year. A regular parking permit currently costs $480 per year. Over the last 15 years, parking permit prices have risen twice, for a total of $30 — a 6.5% increase from $450 in fiscal year 2013.

In the last 15 years, PaTS' operating costs have risen by more than 52%. PaTS is completely self-sufficient and generates its own income. It does not receive funding from tuition or state funding; instead, it receives some funding from the $92.50 Miscellaneous Transportation Service Charge that students pay alongside their tuition.

"We all know how much costs have gone up even in our personal lives in the past 15 years. It's no different in PaTS," Lape said. "We have done a great job of managing our budget to absorb the majority of these expense increases through cost-saving measures, efficiencies gained, etc., but we cannot continue to absorb at the same rate in the future. So, at some point, we will need to make some adjustments to permit pricing."

While prices may not be changing, permit options are. At the start of the fall 2026 semester, PaTS began allowing commuting students to purchase premium parking permits that allow them to park in faculty lots in addition to general commuter zones. Currently, premium parking zones are in Cone, Union and East Decks.

The Mobility Master Plan suggested expanding the current hourly and daily parking options for visitors and students, possibly to the extent of making daily and hourly parking the only options available to commuting students.

While the Mobility Master Plan suggests that these expansions could help reduce overcrowded parking lots on campus, PaTS will continue researching the feasibility of the proposed changes.

"[The Mobility Master Plan gave] a recommendation to eventually look at

moving toward a daily permit as the only permit option, removing the annual or semester permit option, in an effort to encourage [students] to leave their vehicle at home more often. That recommendation will require a lot more research on feasibility, costs, etc., and is not something that would happen short-term," Lape said.

Changes to parking policies

The Mobility Master Plan proposed limiting freshmen to parking locations near the edge of campus to help reduce congestion. These students would be encouraged to use campus transportation such as buses to reach the central campus area. However, PaTS noted that the University currently lacks the infrastructure to support this change.

"This would not be a short-term solution because we don't have any true remote parking that could accommodate all freshmen. Perhaps this is something we can look at down the road, but we'd need to invest in building or obtaining remote parking locations to make it work," Lape said.

The Mobility Master plan also suggested working with the University to improve how class schedules are distributed. The goal would be to create a more balanced flow of students arriving and leaving campus.

Moving forward, PaTS will ask service vehicles not to drive in central campus unless absolutely necessary. UNC Charlotte was not built with service corridors throughout campus, which forces many service and construction vehicles to occupy space where students normally walk.

Changes to parking and transportation infrastructure

Another recommendation from the Mobility Master Plan was for PaTS to work with the City of Charlotte to improve the timing of intersection traffic lights directly outside campus.The goal is to prevent a buildup of cars entering or leaving campus.

The Mobility Master Plan also suggested modifying Craver Road, directly outside the Popp Martin Student Union, to make it more pedestrian-focused. The plan also lists the possibility of demolishing parking lots 15, 16, 30 and Cone Deck within the next five years.

New digital signs may be placed outside parking decks and lots to display parking availability for standard and premium permits.

These new signs would be developed alongside a new smartphone app that tracks parking statistics in real time.

There are also plans to redesign road networks to make them better connected and allow cars to travel around campus more easily.

Four-year implementation plan

The Mobility Master Plan is currently set to be implemented over four to six academic years. The first year, 2026-27, will focus on introducing this Mobility Master Plan to students and faculty through community events and stakeholder meetings.

PaTS will use this time to gather data on how smaller implementations of the Mobility Master Plan affect campus and how students respond to these changes. The plan will also implement data-gathering programs to collect information on traffic and parking trends.

The second year, 2027-28, will focus on implementing freshman parking restrictions, adjusting permit and hourly parking rates, and installing digital signs at parking zones throughout campus.

The third and fourth years will focus on further developing the changes implemented in the first two years and introducing class schedule adjustments.





Megan Khor/NIner TImes

PaTS Mobility Master Plan

Projected to be implemented over 4-6 academic years

2026-27: Dedicated to gathering data

1. Parking permit prices will not increase in the 2027-28 academic year.
2. Asking service vehicles not to drive in central campus unless necessary.
3. Potential changes to timing of intersection traffic lights, demolishing lots 15, 16, 30 and Cone Deck, new digital signs and an official app that tracks parking statistics.

Charlotte ends 685-day FBS win drought against Temple

Aaron Park | Staff Writer

After 685 days, the Charlotte 49ers finally ended their FBS win drought with a 38-31 victory against the Temple University Owls on Saturday. Charlotte's last FBS win came on Nov. 30, 2024, when the 49ers defeated the University of Alabama at Birmingham 29-27.

49ers prevail in Philadelphia

Charlotte football picked up its first win of the 2026 season at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The 49ers entered the matchup looking to get their season back on track, and they delivered with a much-needed road victory against an American Conference opponent. With graduate quarterback Cole Gonzales benched, graduate quarterback Conner Harrell started as Charlotte sought consistency on offense. The 49ers won by seven, improving to 1-6 overall and building momentum heading into the bye week. After a difficult start to the season, Charlotte looks to build on Saturday's performance for the remainder of its schedule.

QB change boosts Owls' offense

Charlotte's offense came out strong, opening with a seven-play, 67-yard drive that ended with graduate running back Khamani Alexander punching into the end zone from one yard out. Harrell helped move the 49ers downfield, connecting with freshman Brody Dawyot for a 29-yard completion to set Charlotte up at the Temple one-yard line. Alexander finished the drive, giving Charlotte an early 7-0 lead. Temple responded with a TD of its own when sophomore running back Keveun Mason broke through for a 21-yard rushing score to tie the game and redshirt senior quarterback Ajani Sheppard entered the game scoring a rushing touchdown to give the Owls the lead. Both teams showed early offensive strength as they looked to establish control. The half ended 14-7 in favor of the Owls.

49ers outpace Owls

Charlotte came out of halftime ready to take control, opening the second half with a six-play touchdown drive to even the score. After the 49ers' defense forced a quick three-and-out, the offense went back to work, with Harrell finding the end zone from eight yards out to give Charlotte a 21-14 lead. Temple responded quickly, however, Sheppard connected with senior tight end Peter Clarke for a 31-yard gain before breaking free for a 44-yard touchdown run. Sheppard broke multiple tackles on his way to the end zone, tying the game and recharging the Owls' momentum. Both teams traded punts as the third quarter continued, setting up a pivotal fourth quarter with the game still up for grabs. Charlotte's ability to respond after halftime was crucial as the 49ers found offensive success, putting pressure on Temple to keep pace.

Standout performances

Harrell led Charlotte to a victory over Temple, completing 23 of 31 passes for 281 yards and two touchdowns. Harrell delivered an efficient performance through the air, completing 74% of his passes and helping the 49ers put together a productive offensive performance on the road. His ability to move the ball downfield and connect with his receivers played a major role in earning Charlotte's first win of the season.

Graduate running back Henry Rutledge led Charlotte's rushing attack with 124 yards on 17 carries, averaging 7.2 yards per attempt. His biggest play of the afternoon was a 48-yard run that helped spark the 49ers' offense and put pressure on Temple's defense.

Junior receiver Derrick Eley was one of Charlotte's top targets, finishing with six receptions for 96 yards and a TD. His biggest moment came on a 24-yard touchdown reception from Harrell, helping the 49ers score in a crucial moment.

In a postgame interview, head coach Tim Albin said, "Derrick Eley keeps being Derrick Eley."

Senior defensive back Collin Gill made a massive impact, recording six solo tackles and eight total tackles in the 49ers' win over Temple. Gill played a key role on defense, consistently getting involved in stopping the Owls and limiting their offensive opportunities.

Sophomore kicker Aiden Bui delivered a clutch moment late in the game, converting a 47-yard field goal with just 1:48 remaining. With the 49ers facing a long fourth down at Temple's 29-yard line, Bui drilled the kick through the uprights; his kick brought the 49ers to a 10-point lead, sealing the win, and capping off a much-needed road victory.

Next up

Charlotte's 38-31 victory over Temple gives the 49ers a much-needed boost as they look to turn their season around. The win moves Charlotte to 1-6 overall, giving the team something to build on heading into the second half of the season. The 49ers will look to carry that momentum into their next matchup against Tulane on Oct. 30 at Jerry Richardson Stadium.



Courtesy of Charlotte Athletics





Midnight Madness: Charlotte basketball's forgotten tradition

Sean McGuffin | Staff Writer

Charlotte basketball has a storied history spanning 61 years. From the iconic 1977 NCAA tournament appearance to the upset win over Indiana University in Simon Skjodt Assembly Hall, Charlotte basketball has grown and made history alongside the University. Over the years, many traditions formed around the team. Throwing the picks up for free throws and tossing a coin into Norm's pan have stuck around to this day, but one basketball tradition seems to have fallen by the wayside: Midnight Madness.

Ask any Charlotte alum who graduated in the mid-2000s or earlier, and they can tell you all about Midnight Madness. They would remember a night when the 49er faithful mad their way across a streetlamp-lit campus before finally meeting at the Gold Mine, where they got their first glimpse of that season's 49ers men's basketball team. Midnight Madness is not unique to Charlotte; many schools did it before and still do. But when did the 49ers start the Madness? And more importantly, when did the Madness die?



Ava Weaver/Niner Times



"We're all mad here"

There is no official record of the first Midnight Madness in school history, although coach Joe B. Hall introduced the concept in 1982 at the University of Kentucky. The "Midnight Special" was devised to get the student body excited for the upcoming basketball season. The idea quickly spread across the country, and soon practically every school was hosting its own midnight pep rally.

The earliest recorded instance of Charlotte holding a Midnight Madness event was 1988. Old VHS tapes from the Atkins Library archives show Midnight Madness in its very primitive form. Students crammed into Belk Gym shoulder to shoulder, chanting "Forty!" and watching players throw down dunks, all while accompanied by the Mean Green Music Machine pep band.

Halton Hellraisers

While Belk Gym was a good spot for a pep rally, it wasn't the home of Charlotte 49ers basketball. Even at the mid-major level, Belk Gym lacked the capacity needed for a school of Charlotte's size. After a decade of back-and-forth between the Charlotte and Bojangles Coliseums, the University built a proper on-campus home arena: Halton Arena.

With Halton's completion in 1997, the 49ers finally had a place that was accessible on foot to students but also brought the arena energy. In the 2000s, the event transitioned to "Basketball Madness," with an earlier start time to give fans and alumni more access. The event marked the beginning of 49er basketball for most of the 2010s, with 2018 being the final Basketball Madness before a brief hiatus. The Madness returned for the last time in 2022 for the Green and White Tipoff, the last Midnight Madness-style event the 49ers have had to date.

Will the Madness return?

Charlotte basketball is trying to return to its roots as a scrappy mid-major expected to make the tournament regularly. The program is currently in the midst of the longest NCAA tournament drought in school history, 21 years since making the big dance. It's no secret that Charlotte basketball has struggled to find its footing since head coach Bobby Lutz left in 2010, but fans see head coach Wes Miller as a chance for the 49ers to return to winning form.

The 2026-27 Charlotte basketball season looks to be a renaissance for the program, featuring a proven head coach with local ties and the strongest roster Charlotte has assembled since the Bobby Lutz era. If a winning tradition returns to campus, there's a good chance the Midnight Madness tradition will also return, and for one autumn night, Charlotte students will become the "Halton Hellraisers" once again.

Honoring Hispanic student-athletes beyond the field

Rolando Vera Hi-Fong | Staff Writer

Hispanic Heritage Month is a time to honor culture, resilience and achievement, and higher education is one of the clearest places this impact shows. Over the past twenty years, Hispanic enrollment has grown across the United States, reshaping classrooms, campuses and athletic programs. North Carolina reflects that same momentum, with Hispanic students becoming one of the fastest-growing groups in colleges and universities across the state.

National data highlights how prominent this rise has been. In 2006, Hispanic students made up 11.1% of all U.S. college enrollment. Looking back to 2000, long-term NCES tables show they represented 9.5% of total enrollment, marking a steady climb in access and opportunity.

College enrollment among Hispanic young adults also increased. In 2006, 23.6% of Hispanic 18- to 24-year-olds were enrolled in college, up from 21.7% in 2000. These slight gains reflect expansion of pathways and growing representation.

UNC Charlotte offers a local perspective of this progress. In the University's 2006 fall enrollment report, 627 Hispanic undergraduates out of 21,519 total undergraduates were enrolled, making up 2.91% of the undergraduate population. It was a small percentage at the time, but an early point in a growth trend that has continued to shape the campus community.

Two decades later, despite the unfavorable 2023 Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard decision, which ended affirmative action policies designed to create opportunities for underrepresented communities, Charlotte has reached a record 5,147 Hispanic students, making up roughly 15.5% of the overall student body. This growth is not only statistical; it reflects a campus that is becoming more diverse, more representative and more connected to the communities it serves.

Across the country, athletics tell a similar story. From 2012 to today, the NCAA has seen a remarkable rise in Hispanic athlete participation across all three major divisions. The number of Hispanic student-athletes has more than doubled, growing from 19,183 to 38,654. Division I shows similar momentum, rising from 7,111 Hispanic student-athletes to 11,758 — a jump of more than 4,600 student-athletes and one of the division's strongest growth periods.

Beyond the numbers, this surge represents something larger. Hispanic student-athletes are reshaping rosters and becoming visible role models for younger students who are watching from classrooms, community leagues and local high schools. Their presence on college fields, courts, tracks and pools shows the next generation that they belong in these spaces, that their stories matter, and that higher education and competitive athletics are places where they can thrive.

Hispanic Heritage Month runs from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15. While a month of celebration is a step in the right direction, recognition of Hispanic culture and inspirational figures shouldn't be limited to only one month.

Charlotte Athletics has many student-athletes from different backgrounds across its 19 teams, including Hispanic student-athletes who should be recognized more than once per year. These athletes have succeeded in their sports and in the classroom, showing dedication to representing their culture beyond their athletic achievements.



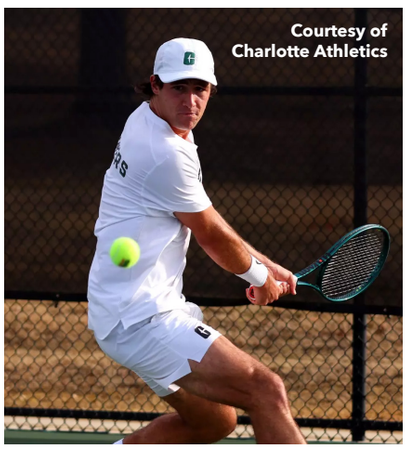
Nyjhon Rhymer/Niner Times

Bella Castelino

Bella Castelino was raised in Weston, Florida, by parents John and Irene Castelino and attended Cypress Bay High School. She led Cypress Bay girls' lacrosse in goals all four years and earned first-team All-County honors three consecutive years. In addition to on-field success, Castelino was named an AP Scholar with Distinction in 2024 and 2025, as well as an AP Scholar in 2024 by the AP College Board.

In 2026, Castelino finished her first season of lacrosse at Charlotte. She played in 14 games, started one and debuted on Feb. 7 against Vermont University. As a freshman, she scored nine goals and two assists, including a hat trick at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) a week after her debut.

Castelino has continued her dedication to education into college, earning American Conference All-Academic Team honors. To be eligible for selection, a student must maintain a 3.0 GPA and complete a minimum of two consecutive semesters or three consecutive quarters of academic work, with a total of 18 semester or 27 quarter credits.



Courtesy of Charlotte Athletics

Andres Medus

Born to parents Soledad and Andres Medus, tennis player Andres Medus is from Bahía Blanca, Argentina, where he attended María Auxiliadora School. Before moving to America for college and professional play, he was an ITF junior semifinalist and competed for Sociedad Sportiva.

Medus spent 2022-25 at the University of Texas at Arlington before transferring to Charlotte in 2025. In 2025, he posted a 17-13 overall singles record and a 9-14 overall doubles record. Medus helped lead the 49ers to the American Conference Semifinals to finish the season. In the 2026-27 season, Medus is 7-2 in singles and 6-1 in doubles.

Medus was also one of 300 Charlotte student-athletes and nine men's tennis players nominated for the American Conference All-Academic Team.



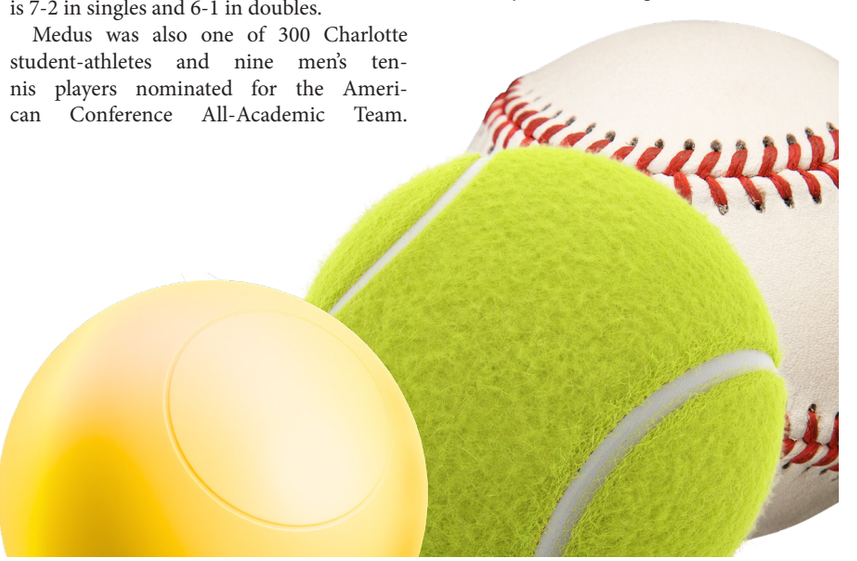
Kaitlyn Fankboner/Niner Times

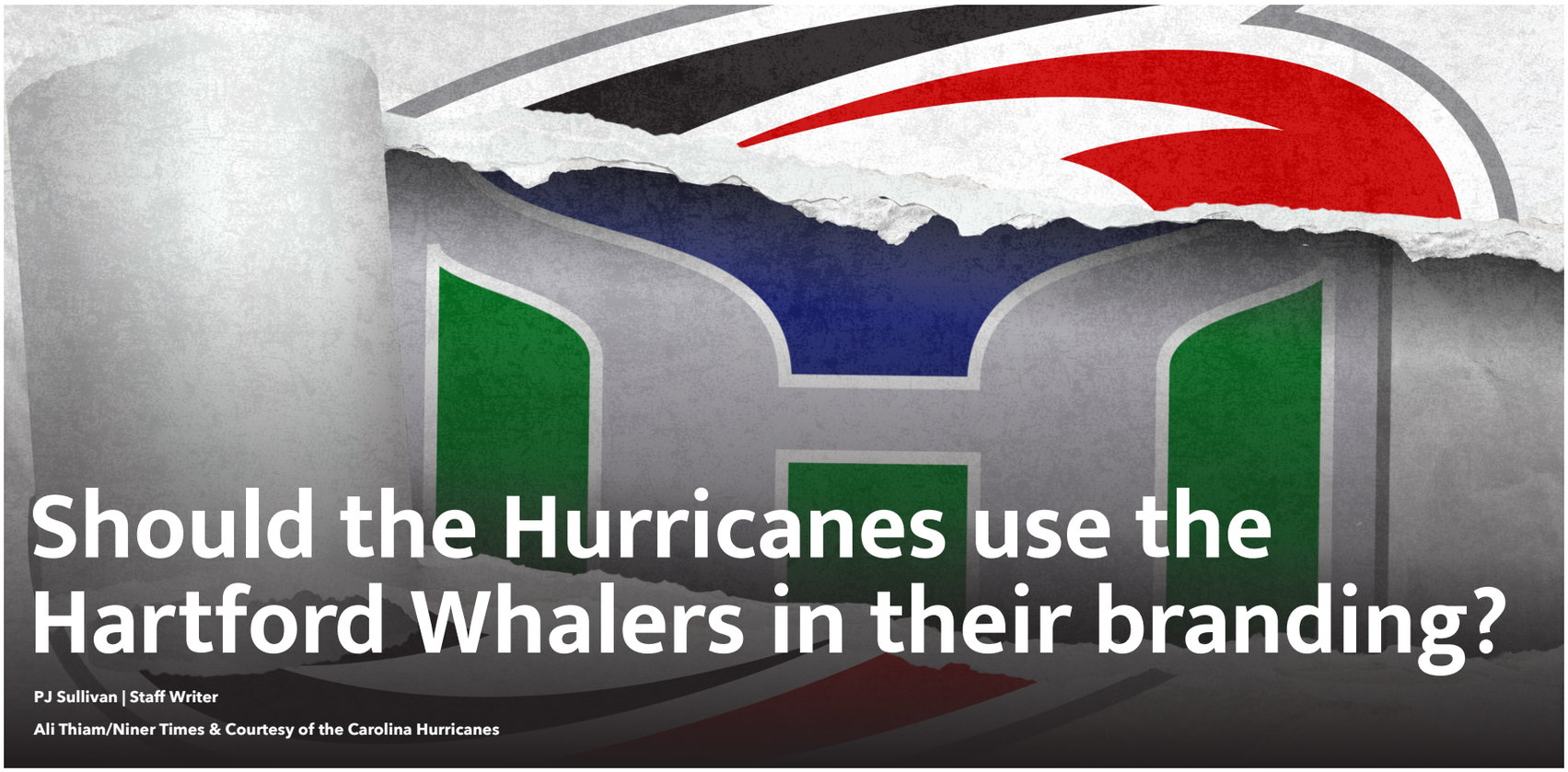
Adrian Jimenez

Jimenez was born in Patterson, New Jersey, to parents Ingrid and Gabriel Jimenez. He grew up in Lilburn, Georgia, where he played four years of varsity baseball, made All-Region teams each year and was named Lilburn High School Player of the Year twice.

In 2025, Charlotte baseball acquired Jimenez, who transferred from VCU. In his debut season with Charlotte, Jimenez was one of five players to play in 56 games, led the team in fielding assists, stole bases three out of three times and was top-5 in walks, triples and double plays.

Jimenez was selected to the CSC Academic All-District Team in June 2026 and was also nominated to the American Conference All-Academic Team as one of Charlotte's student-athletes. This accomplishment further proves that athletic success is not the only success recognized for any student-athlete from any cultural background.





Should the Hurricanes use the Hartford Whalers in their branding?

PJ Sullivan | Staff Writer

Ali Thiam/Niner Times & Courtesy of the Carolina Hurricanes

At the start of the NHL season, the Carolina Hurricanes announced their uniform schedule. It includes a night dedicated to their old identity, "Whalers Night," on Jan. 28 against the New York Islanders. Since 2018, the Hurricanes have intermittently worn the Hartford Whalers' old uniforms. When the Hurricanes wear the Whalers jerseys, they also play the iconic "Brass Bonanza," which was played after every Whalers goal in Hartford.

The Hartford Whalers were established in 1972 and joined the NHL in 1979. At the end of the 1996-97 season, mainly because of failed arena negotiations, the Whalers packed their bags for Raleigh and rebranded as the Carolina Hurricanes. For two decades, the Hurricanes did not wear any Whalers gear on the ice until 2018, when the team finally added the Whalers to its jersey rotation.

While Raleigh fully embraces Whalers Night and even wears Whalers gear at games, some people aren't as thrilled about the Hurricanes using the Whalers as part of their identity. The Hurricanes fanbase enjoys seeing the green and white jerseys on the ice once in a while. Others question why it is part of the Carolina Hurricanes' branding.

Why it works

The Carolina Hurricanes have worn these jerseys for nearly a decade and have kept them as a mainstay in their jersey rotation. Since the 2018-19 season, the Hurricanes have made it a tradition to wear the green and white at least once per season. During the 2021-22 season, the NHL introduced the reverse retro jerseys. The Hurricanes' reverse retro jersey featured a grey Whalers jersey the Hurricanes wore a few times that season, with praise from the fans.

On the first night the Hurricanes brought back Whalers gear, the team made over $2,000 in a single night, a then-record for Hurricanes merchandise sales. The team went all in on the Whalers for the night, and the overwhelmingly positive sales response helped the Hurricanes bring back the night for every season.

Hurricanes wearing Whalers jerseys have been seen as a way to honor the team's past. The Whalers in Hartford had such legends as forward Gordie Howe, who became a Hall of Famer and ranks fourth in all-time NHL points. Forward Ron Francis was also one of the best players in Whalers history; he became a Hall of Famer and later spent time with the Hurricanes, captaining them to their first Stanley Cup appearance in 2002.

The Whalers' history remains tied to the Hurricanes. Francis spent most of his career with the Whalers, with only six years with the Hurricanes. During his time with the Whalers, he still holds the franchise record for most points scored.

Carolina also has the chance to share its history with fans. "Brass Bonanza" was a goal song used only by the Whalers during their tenure in Hartford, and using it at Whalers Night revived it after decades. The Hurricanes also brought back the Whalers mascot, Pucky the Whale, for the night, a mascot some people would never see after the relocation to Carolina.

Overall feedback from the fanbase on wearing Whalers gear has been positive; fans have embraced the old identity and supported Whalers jerseys and merchandise since their return in 2018.

Possible drawbacks

While some see it as a way to honor the organization's history, others see it as a slap in the face to the old team.

In a post on X, Barstool Sports employee Jack MacGuire commented:

"The Hurricanes stealing the Whalers from Hartford and still selling their merch grind my gears to no end."

MacGuire grew up in Connecticut, and seeing the team that left Hartford still wearing Whalers gear brings back bad memories of the relocation for MacGuire and others who lived in Connecticut at the time.

When the Whalers moved away, Connecticut lost its hockey team. Since the Whalers' relocation to Raleigh, the NHL has added five new expansion teams — Hartford is not in the conversation for a new team. While talks of more NHL expansion are ongoing, Hartford may never host another team.

Other teams use old branding in ways that honor both their history and their present-day team. The New Jersey Devils, for example, were the Kansas City Scouts and the Colorado Rockies before landing in Newark, New Jersey. When the reverse retro jerseys were introduced in the 2022-23 NHL season, the team could blend its past with its present "Devil" logo. Carolina embraces the Whalers differently than other teams by not putting anything related to the Hurricanes on their Whalers jersey.

Other NHL teams do not acknowledge their previous branding. In 2011, the Atlanta Thrashers moved to Winnipeg and rebranded as the Jets. Since the relocation, the Jets have not acknowledged their time in Atlanta in any merchandise the team has sold, or on any jerseys the team has worn.

Despite what people might say about the Hurricanes using the Whalers jerseys, it appears the Hurricanes will have a dedicated "Whalers Night" each season, at least for the near future. The revenue and fan support for the Whalers gear are positive among the Hurricanes fanbase, even if some people outside the fanbase oppose its use.

Commentary:
Yo-kai Watch's revival and the question of human hands vs. AI

Jeremiah Carroll | Staff Writer

On Sept. 9, 2026, video game development company Level-5 officially announced its latest installment in the Yo-kai Watch franchise after an almost decade-long hiatus in the West.

Yo-kai Watch 2: Haunted Domain will be the next title in the franchise, an HD remake of the 3DS titles Yo-kai Watch 2: Bony Spirits, Fleshy Souls and Psychic Specters, with new features, story content and many more Yo-kai to obtain.

Hindered by inconsistent marketing, delayed releases, limited platform availability, and constant comparison and competition with Pokémon at the time, Yo-kai Watch's lack of popularity in the West was simply the result of failed potential. This left it behind as nothing more than a nostalgic memory.

Despite the series' abandonment, fans seemed to preserve it entirely in the West through social media. YouTube Creators such as AbdallahSmash, MunchingOrange, 101Leafy and LonelyFubuki made "Let's Plays," deep dives and commentaries, invoking nostalgia and keeping the community afloat.

TikTok creator realrorib2x! also helped popularize Yo-kai Watch among Gen Z and Gen Alpha through modern memes and short-form commentary on the franchise, proving that Western demand for the series had never truly died.



Courtesy of Level-5

The Level-5 AI controversy

However, during the presentation of Level-5 VISION 2026 II: Dreams, a showcase of Level-5's upcoming titles, including gameplay and teasers, fans quickly noticed the company's excessive use of generative AI within the showcase, ranging from the promotional videos of upcoming titles such as Decapolice and Holy Horror Mansion to the presentation material as well.

What should have been a well-deserved victory for fans has now been instantly shadowed by concerns about the company's use of generative AI in the promotional trailers and possibly the development process.

On Sept. 12, 2026, Level-5's CEO Akihiro Hino released a statement on X regarding the backlash from fans. The original post was in Japanese and has been translated into English.

"This time, because we used AI for the footage within the event, it seems that concerns have arisen regarding the content of the works as well, so I would like to provide an explanation. It was entirely due to the desire to make the presentation more spectacular that we incorporated processing that also served as an experiment using the latest AI," Hino wrote.

Instead of reassuring fans, this statement achieved the opposite of what the company was aiming for in the showcase. It completely erodes the creative process and disregards artistic values. It also comes with a higher risk of flattening the unique expression and diversity that gave franchises like Yo-kai Watch their original charm.

"On the contrary, thanks to the time created by AI efficiency, creators are now able to dedicate more time to the essence of creation, and I believe the finished products are turning out to a level that will satisfy everyone even more than before," Hino added, defending the use of AI. "Ultimately, under the plan to shorten the current 5-year development period for major titles to 2 years, we are in the stage of trial and error, and struggling forward."

The ethical concerns of generative AI

Generative AI in video game development can raise many ethical concerns. Generative models are often trained on human art, writing and voice acting performances without consent or compensation.

Additionally, the use of AI-generated textures, background assets, marketing art and many more will result in generic, uncanny or unfinished content that diminishes the creative soul of a game.

This puts extra pressure on developers to fix mistakes in AI assets that could have been prevented by using human-designed assets from the beginning.

According to this year's statistics at the Tokyo Game Show, over 85% of Japanese game developers are now using generative AI — not just for art but also for coding assistance, automated testing, localization and internal ideation.

The statistics also reveal that, besides Level-5, companies like Sega, Capcom and Konami are heavily utilizing these toolsets for asset building and engine prototyping.

In stark contrast, the perspective on generative AI in the U.S. is rather different: according to this year's statistics at the Game Developers Conference, over 36% of American game developers report using Gen AI tools, yet 52% of game developers believe that AI is harming the industry, causing North American studios to proceed with extreme caution or outright ban it.

This data underscores a distinct regional divide: audiences and developers in the U.S. are significantly more critical of AI than companies in Japan, viewing AI as a tool that prioritizes speed over authenticity.

If series revivals become testing grounds for generative AI shortcuts, studios risk permanently destroying the brand equity they've spent decades building, turning a victorious nostalgic comeback into a cautionary tale of corporate greed.

This growing schism erodes consumer trust, with fans feeling cheated when AAA game companies decide to use automated shortcuts instead of investing in human authenticity to continue their favorite franchises, leading to intense scrutiny of the product.

The paranoia paradox

By using AI to generate quick hype and shorten production times, Level-5 has instead created an environment of intense fan paranoia.

Fans now intensely dissect trailers frame-by-frame, searching for any signs of AI in the background, character models or lighting, robbing them of the genuine excitement a reveal should bring.

This hyper-surveillance of AI detection harms the very human artists AI was intended to empower.

Innocent creators are now routinely accused of using AI and forced to defend the authenticity and legitimacy of their works. Rather than easing the workload, corporate AI shortcuts have trapped artists between bad-faith fan scrutiny and the constant threat of studio layoffs.

This incident perfectly encapsulates the tragedy of modern game development. When quick, easy shortcuts are more of a priority, human craftsmanship is one of the highest prices we pay.

Read more at ninertimes.com

Opinion:

UNC Charlotte must recognize employee parking as a workplace necessity

Aiden Adamo | Staff Writer

One of the most common opinions among students here at UNC Charlotte is that on-campus parking is frustrating. It's such a consistent consensus among the student body that it's become an icebreaker we use to converse with one another. You'll get through the routine of "What's your major? What year are you?" And then, quite often, the floodgates of annoyance open when transportation slips into the conversation. "Oh my god," you'll say, "I couldn't even make it to my 9 a.m. because it took me a half hour to find a spot." You might exchange stories about arriving ridiculously early just to find convenient parking. You might even express frustration about bad drivers or backed-up traffic.

Despite how frustrating our grievances are, there's relief in connecting with other students about them, even if the frustration doesn't magically disappear through the sole power of expression. Students have become more aware of this increasingly prevalent issue on campus, and finding solidarity with one another helps us feel the weight of our collective voice. That's because that very solidarity makes these complaints so relentless. It's exactly how you place the issue in the University's hands: by making it unignorable and undeniable, and asking them, "You hear us? What now?"

What about the employees of this campus? What about our professors, our dining hall staff or our counselors? These are people who, like us, come to campus every day to earn a living. People who not only work to educate us or improve our lives, but also to provide for themselves and, often, their families. Solidarity is one of the most important tools for making real progress, and that's exactly why students should know how inconvenient, unconventional and inappropriate employee parking is here at Charlotte.

The University's guidelines require employees to have a virtual parking permit to park on campus, a standard practice at most workplaces in this country. What's not standard, however, is that the University doesn't simply give these permits to employees because they need somewhere to park and, obviously, arrive at work every day. Instead, the University sells these permits to employees, the same way it does to students: standard permits for these spaces cost $480 a year for full-time staff members, and even faculty working 29 hours or less must pay $260 a year. This money comes out of our professors' and staff members' paychecks solely so that they can safely drive and park their cars where they work every day.

By selling this to its employees, the University is indirectly treating a parking space as a privilege rather than a necessity — I mean, technically, you don't have to own a parking permit, right? While you might see the logic behind that decision at first, you can deconstruct its basis fairly easily.

Employees at Social 704, the dining hall in the Popp Martin Student Union, don't seem to share the sentiment that this is a luxury option. "I would say about 90% of our staff purchase a full-time permit," said manager James Smith. Another anonymous employee explained exactly why most staff members make this decision: "They [have] no space outside for you to park ... one way or another, they have to use the parking lot." In a way, the University has monopolized parking: if you intend to drive to work, the only available parking requires you to pay them directly.

Opting out of this permit would mean finding other, more difficult ways to get to and from work. Public transportation might be an option for some, but that requires walking long distances to get to the light rail — and when we consider the late hours many members of this largely female staff are working, walking more than a mile from your work at night is an unsafe option that puts employees directly at risk.

Remember, students of Charlotte, that — just like you — these employees aren't even paying for their own individual spot when they purchase these permits. An available, convenient parking space isn't guaranteed, and as another anonymous employee declared, "There is not enough space for people to be able to park." A sentiment we are all too familiar with. The faculty at your school are having money deducted from their salaries to pay for a non-guaranteed, first-come, first-served parking spot.

Even if those at the University reject the notion that they are profiting off the daily necessities of their employees, or simply don't see that as a reason to change what they're doing, they could at least make efforts to improve the spaces themselves, making the parking lots more convenient and comfortable.

But no, "It definitely is inconvenient," one anonymous staff member said. "The elevator's always broken." This elevator is the only appropriate option for them. "Unless you want to walk all the way to the fourth floor," the employee said, "because we have to use the bottom entrance." They also noted another shortcoming: the school makes no effort to help new hires who have not yet obtained their permits. "You can't just automatically get that parking, so you have to pay 6 to 15 dollars a day ... to work."

Parking frustration is something we share as students — an annoyance we complain about to one another regularly. So why don't we include the employees, the people we see every day keeping this university running, in our solidarity? The school you pay tuition to profits from the faculty members we rely on and their need to come to work. Unless they want to walk long distances — often after late-night shifts — or find another inconvenient alternative, they must deal with broken elevators, limited access and potential additional daily costs just to get to work. As we continue to collectively ask the University these critical questions about parking, let's extend the conversation and remember that our school's employees deserve answers too.



Niner Times File

Opinion: Talk to strangers



Simone Kahoussi/Niner Times

Chaise Holland | Staff Writer

Since the COVID-19 lockdown, my generation has been plagued by another epidemic: loneliness. I call it an epidemic because it plagues youth everywhere. Wherever I go on social media, I see people under 30 bemoaning that they have no friends. They see couples together and think, "Why can't that be me?" Seeing friend groups laugh and smile makes them frown and cry inside. I like to call them social bystanders — people who observe interactions but never partake in conversation themselves.

I empathize with social bystanders — after all, I used to be one of them. My stutter made me averse to talking. I could never build up the confidence to talk to others and ask them to hang out. Silence was more comforting to me than the noise of others. My room became my sanctuary. Despite liking silence, I was deeply lonely and craved any form of social interaction.

I had that loner mindset until this past summer. That summer was not just my transition from my first to second year at school; it was also my metamorphosis from a lonely caterpillar into a social butterfly. I am still not as talkative as I would like to be. But I now have the confidence to talk to others and speak my mind. This is all due to one simple tip I found: talking to strangers.

Now I know many people will hear this and think, "Why would I talk to strangers?" That is a good question. Why would you talk to strangers? You don't know them. Your parents probably taught you to be wary of strangers. But here's the thing you have to realize: everyone is a stranger until you get to know them. After all, how did you make friends when you were a kid? You walked up to other kids your age and started talking to them. You started building meaningful friendships with people you'd only known for a few minutes.

As people get older, many lose the skills needed to talk to strangers. Losing social skills results in a loss of confidence, and people who lack confidence live lonely lives. The lonelier you are, the less sociable you become. It's a self-fulfilling cycle. Communicating with strangers is the only way to break out of the cycle. I am proof of this. Let me tell you how this helped me.

Since the start of this semester, I have been seeking any opportunity to talk to new people. I joined clubs I found interesting, reached out to my friends and even went outside just to see new people. "Talk to one stranger a day" has been my new motto. Taking these steps has benefited me greatly. My stutter has gotten moderately better. Talking to my classmates has become significantly easier. My mood has gotten brighter overall. Almost daily, I walk up to at least one new person and start a conversation with them.

But all of these benefits pale in comparison to the greatest boon I gained from this lifestyle change: higher confidence in myself. It is because I started socializing more that I even have the confidence to do the aforementioned things. Confidence is the key to talking to people. People will listen to you more if you're confident. Standing strong and speaking your mind makes people take you seriously. It shows them you actually believe in what you say.

Having confidence is not only useful for informing others' perception of you. It also helps how you perceive yourself. If you believe you are a great person and nothing could change that, you won't try to be someone you're not. You will talk to people being your authentic self. Being confident and authentic attracts people who share your vibe and interests. You will build a community of people you like to be around, and vice versa.

So, as my final plea to all who feel lonely in college: please go outside and talk to people! Strangers especially! Trust me, you will feel better in the long run.

Opinion:

UNC Charlotte's growing population is a safety hazard

Lauren Simendinger | Staff Writer

Niner Times File



The more students there are on campus, the bigger the campus has to get. This requires construction, and unfortunately, it must occur during the school year — except none of the construction planned for the 2026–27 school year does anything to improve campus congestion.

Key projects include remodeling Burson Hall for the Honeywell Innovation Hub, expanding Jerry Richard Stadium and building the Loy Witherspoon Center for Meditation and Reflection. Additional projects include upgrades to the elevators in the James H. Barnhardt Student Activity Center (SAC) and stair repairs in the Kennedy Building. The asphalt in Lot 26 was replaced this summer, which at least allows students to use it. None of these projects, however, include building new dorms or parking lots.

Accessibility issues

While some of these projects do improve accessibility on campus, such as the SAC elevator upgrades and the stair repairs for Kennedy, the rest of the construction makes campus largely inaccessible. The construction on Burson blocks a major sidewalk — forcing people to walk in the road or cross it — and also removes additional handicap parking for students.

Students with accessibility issues are at a significant disadvantage because of the construction. In addition to losing access to handicap parking, they may have to find alternate routes to class, which may be less accessible than their usual ones. They may also struggle to navigate the crowds on busy sidewalks.

"If I get bumped hard enough, I am gonna fall down," Cat Leonard, a graduate student, said.

Leonard uses a cane to help herself walk and balance due to mobility issues. She worries about people tripping on her cane. She worries about getting around between classes due to the crowds.

Leonard is grateful for the Paratransit Service, which drives students around campus and will drop them off as close to their destination as possible. However, it is frustrating waiting for traffic to move, and finding handicap parking can be hit-or-miss.

"My morning routine in the mornings is: I go into East Deck, and I drive past the handicap spots, and if there's nothing in the handicap spots, I just go ahead, and I head to Lot 6 and try to park as close to the Paratransit pickup as I can," Leonard said.

Other resources face potential strain as well. The Office of Disability Services rebranded this year as the Office of Accessibility and Accommodation in an effort to more broadly support students' needs. Inside UNC Charlotte said nothing of hiring more staff or building more testing centers. How will the University ensure there is enough support for the influx of students with accessibility needs? They cannot expect that only able-bodied students are part of the incoming classes.

There is also the matter of central campus becoming a pedestrian-only zone. This means that there are no wheeled devices allowed in the zone, such as scooters, skateboards, hoverboards, Segways, roller skates or even bicycles. While this is meant to improve safety, as many people on wheeled devices have been hit by vehicles around campus in the past, it poses an accessibility problem.

The Niner Times interviewed a student who shared they needed their wheeled device to get around campus without overheating. If students cannot ride their devices, they either have to drive, take the bus or walk. This contributes to the already heavy congestion and impedes foot traffic, putting students at risk.

Safety concerns

Students also have to navigate the constant trucks going back and forth, potentially falling equipment and added noise. Previous construction, such as on the second floor of Cameron Hall, rendered the entire floor off-limits. The ramp put on top of the stairs at the entrance grew slick in winter, posing even more danger to students.

Besides construction, the mere number of people on campus is troublesome. As previously mentioned, people must navigate thick crowds of students trying to get where they are going. What happens if someone in front of the crowd has to stop suddenly?

A student could trip or be accidentally pushed into the road. They might get hit or run over. What if there is a more serious emergency?

"If there was an emergency situation on campus, I feel like it'd be very hectic," Carly Swann, a fourth-year student, said. "I'd say if there's fire or an emergency, it'd be difficult to access that [location], 'cause it's just a lot of people, and a lot of people would be freaking out or running."

"I just accept I might as well sit there," Leonard said. "I don't know what will happen if I do, but at least I won't get trampled."

It would be hard for professors and police officers to account for students in an emergency. There is also potential for someone to come onto campus and harm someone.

Anyone is allowed to come, of course, but with so many students here, it is hard to notice if someone is doing something they should not. With the crowds and chaos, it might be more challenging for police to stop them. Pedestrians, however, are not the only people at risk.

Traffic troubles

Charlotte is notorious for its traffic problems. With more students on campus, the problem gets worse. Students struggle to get to class on time and even find parking spots, despite having paid for passes.

"If I'm paying for that parking spot, a parking pass, and I can't even find a spot, that's a waste of my money and a waste of my time," Swann said. "It's really frustrating having to leave for your class two hours early. It's frustrating to be late to class due to parking and traffic issues."

Charlotte is a commuter campus, yet the lack of available parking shows the campus was not designed to keep up with commuter demand. Those dropping off students struggle as well. There is no set drop-off zone on campus, forcing drivers to park in lots — taking up space others need — or in unsafe areas.

Parking unavailability is further exacerbated by the fact that freshmen, who are required to live on campus, are allowed to buy parking passes. How is this fair to upperclassmen and graduate students?

Solutions

Charlotte has a wonderful campus with plenty of unique opportunities for students. If it is going to keep growing, though, it needs to address the increasing demand. Focusing future construction on adding more parking and dormitories is a key solution, but Swann shared another possibility.

"Maybe Tuesdays and Thursdays, they're for commuters only," she said.

"Making more commuter parking that's closer. That won't be as difficult for someone with disabilities," Leonard said.

Whatever the solution looks like, to keep being a community people want to be a part of, Charlotte needs to ensure that people can get there.

cost less.
Vote early.



Vote Early By Oct 31 at 3pm

You can register when you vote during early voting.
Remember to bring a photo ID!

Find your polling place: iwillvote.com/NC