

NINERTIMES

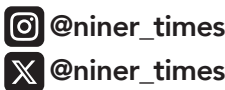
Student-driven news since 1947

Sept. 12, 2023



ON PAGE 10

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF CHARLOTTE FOOTBALL



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Student-driven news since 1947

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

The Niner Times aims to provide accurate and fair news to the UNC Charlotte community. We cover campus happenings, news and events in the city of Charlotte and North Carolina and topics that are important to students. We publish written, photo and video content online (ninertimes.com), on social media and through our weekly email newsletter (sent every Tuesday at 9:30 am). We also produce a supplemental bi-weekly (every other week) in-print newspaper that hits stands on Tuesdays.

NEWS

THE 49TH ACRE TAILGATING PAVILION OPENS AHEAD OF FOOTBALL SEASON KICKOFF 3

FOOTBALL DOCUMENTARY 'MINING FOR GREATNESS' BEGINS AIRING 3

UNC CHARLOTTE ANNOUNCES PHASE XVI COMPLETION BY NOVEMBER 2023 4

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION HOLDS FALL ELECTIONS 4

GAMES, P. 5

OPINION

OFF-CAMPUS APARTMENTS EXPLOIT STUDENTS 6

THE INITIAL SUCCESS OF THREADS TURNS INTO DISAPPOINTMENT 7

PHOTOS

CHARLOTTE 49ERS' FIRST FOOTBALL GAME ON AUG. 13, 2013 8

SPORTS

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF CHARLOTTE FOOTBALL 10

'MINING FOR GREATNESS': 'MEET COACH BIFF' TAKEAWAYS 12

BAILEY VANNOY'S NEXT CHAPTER: FROM THE DIAMOND TO UNKNOWN HORIZONS 13

ARTS & CULTURE

WOMEN + GIRLS RESEARCH ALLIANCE ELEVATES THE STANDARD OF WHAT RESEARCH SHOULD LOOK LIKE 14

NPHC'S ANNUAL YARD SHOW CELEBRATES BLACK CULTURE AND COMMUNITY 16

THE 49TH ACRE TAILGATING PAVILION OPENS AHEAD OF FOOTBALL SEASON KICKOFF

Bryson Foster | Editor at-Large

The 49th Acre opened on Saturday, Sept. 2, as the Charlotte football team defeated the South Carolina State University Bulldogs 24-3 in the 2023 season opener inside Jerry Richardson Stadium.

The project started in February 2022, but the opening was delayed a year.

Multiple organizations hosted tailgating events before the Sept. 2 season opener against the Bulldogs.

The CLT Gold Mine, the official student section of the Charlotte 49ers, had a cookout open to everyone.

"The Gold Mine had a tailgate open to anyone because that's who we are. The tailgate had that big-time college feel to it that the Gold Mine has been wanting to implement here at Charlotte," said CLT Gold Mine President Nate McPherson.

"The 49th Acre is huge for Charlotte football. It is perfect to get students ready for game day and have a great time," said former student and Gold Mine leader Sanad Musafer.

Charlotte's Beta Phi Chapter of La Unidad Latina held a Latinx tailgate with unlimited food and drink for a \$15 fee on gameday.

McPherson said multiple organizations will hold pre-game events throughout the season.

"It was just a great atmosphere, and all the organizations involved did a great job making it feel like a big deal," said McPherson. "We are looking forward to building off this atmosphere and continuing to be the best student section in the Carolinas."

Charlotte's Auxiliary Services announced that fans can order Domino's and Bojangles delivered to the 49th Acre through the season by using the Niner Diners app from 2-4:30 p.m.

The 49th Acre is a three-acre outdoor complex created for students. The facility will primarily be used for tailgating before football games throughout the season and is accessible to students.

Tailgating starts four hours before kickoff and ends 30 minutes before kickoff. Fans can reserve a spot on the 49th Acre Niner Engage page.

"My friends and I were super excited to have our own place to get set up and have some fun before the game. It is definitely an upgrade from the parking lot tailgates, as having access to electricity is super convenient," said Musafer.

The facility was created through a \$10 million anonymous donation. The 49th Acre can hold 2,500 students and has an entertainment pavilion.

FOOTBALL DOCUMENTARY 'MINING FOR GREATNESS' BEGINS AIRING

Jenny Kase | Asst. News Editor

The Charlotte football documentary "Mining for Greatness" airs every Thursday at 7 p.m. on ESPN+, with 12 confirmed episodes analyzing each game. The first episode hit the screens on Sept. 7.

Emmy Award winner Mickey Holden is producing the documentary, with David Ravin as the executive producer. As a Raven Media Production, the goal is to film each episode in accordance with every game.

"I think it will be great for the University and for the city. I told them there needs to be 15 episodes because we are planning on playing 15 games," said Charlotte's football coach, Biff Poggi.

Poggi was hired in January 2023 as Charlotte's new head football coach. He was previously the associate head coach of the Michigan Wolverines, leading them undefeated in back-to-back Big Ten Championships. He will be Charlotte football's third head coach since its founding in 2013.

The first episode is titled "Meet Coach Biff," and the second episode, airing Sept. 14, is called "The Homecoming." This is the only episode-related information available to the public at this time.

"This is not just about football. It is about second chances, third chances, fourth chances and fifth in some cases. We are helping kids turn their lives around so they can be productive members of our community and have productive lives going forward," said Poggi in an interview with WCNC on NBC.

Additionally, Poggi has big plans for his team this season.

"Our goal is very simple. We want to win the AAC, and we want to get to the college football playoffs," said Poggi in the official "Charlotte Football — Mining for Greatness" documentary trailer.

This goal greatly exceeds Charlotte's football statistics from previous years, as the team went 3-9 in the 2022 season.

If Charlotte football goes undefeated, there will be 15 episodes in total. Whether or not the team is undefeated, there will be a minimum of 12 episodes in the entire docuseries.

For more updates on "Mining for Greatness," check out Charlotte Football's Instagram or NinerNation.net.



The 49th Acre tailgate pavilion project started in February 2022, but the opening was delayed a year. | Photo by Justyn Ramseur

UNC CHARLOTTE ANNOUNCES PHASE XVI COMPLETION BY NOVEMBER 2023

Kathleen Cochrane | News Editor

UNC Charlotte announced that Phase XVI will be completed in time for students to move in for the Spring 2024 semester in an email sent to residents on Friday, Sept. 8.

According to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Kevin Bailey, construction will take until November 2023, and students will have the opportunity to move in before the start of the spring semester.

Bailey stated in the email that New Atlantic Contracting has had problems cutting out ceilings and reworking existing pipes and hardware, resulting in the Phase XVI delay.

"We apologize to you for the inconvenience and uncertainty this situation has caused. This is not the experience we ever intend for our residents," Bailey stated in the email. "We are working hard with the contractor to get every issue resolved to ensure Phase XVI offers a

wonderful living environment for our residents."

Students initially assigned to live in Phase XVI will have the choice to stay in their current assignment or move into Phase XVI. If students choose to move, they can do so before or after winter break.

Housing and Residence Life (HRL) will send confirmation emails to students in December as well as any needed information for move-in.

Construction for Phase XVI was originally contracted to be done by July 1, 2023. After the initial delay announcement at the end of July, 450 students were displaced to other on-campus housing or the Hilton Charlotte University City Place Hotel.

Anyone with questions about updates or the move-in process can email phase16mailbox@charlotte.edu for more details.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION HOLDS FALL ELECTIONS

Jenny Kase | Asst. News Editor

UNC Charlotte's Student Government Association (SGA) will hold its Fall Elections Sept. 20-21 for freshman class president, at-large senators and vacant college senators seats.

Students can vote online at vote.charlotte.edu beginning Sept. 20.

According to the Division of Student Affairs, SGA's objective is "through effective leadership and collaboration, we strive to address student concerns and advocate for positive changes in

campus policies and facilities."

Additionally, SGA candidates seek votes from students to serve as a spokesperson for the student body's needs.

"I joined SGA with a strong desire to promote inclusivity, sustainability and collaboration across UNC Charlotte's campus," said second-year University College Senator Landon Luebke. "We can create a more vibrant and harmonious university environment for everyone."

Nominees and members of SGA can support

and amplify the voices of any organization or group at Charlotte.

"I wanted to be an advocating voice for myself and my university. Working directly in the Publicity and Operations Committee, I get to work firsthand with publications of events throughout the entire University, along with educating my peers about many topics," said third-year At-Large Senator Savannah Saunders.

Beyond addressing the student body's concerns, SGA is a community within itself that

leaves a lasting impact on its members.

"I joined SGA to help address any problems I and other students have seen at our school. I also joined SGA to make lasting friendships. I like SGA because of the lessons I have learned from it and the connections I have made through it," said second-year At-Large Senator Chris Frederick.

For more information regarding SGA and its upcoming elections, check out their website or follow their Instagram @clt_sga.



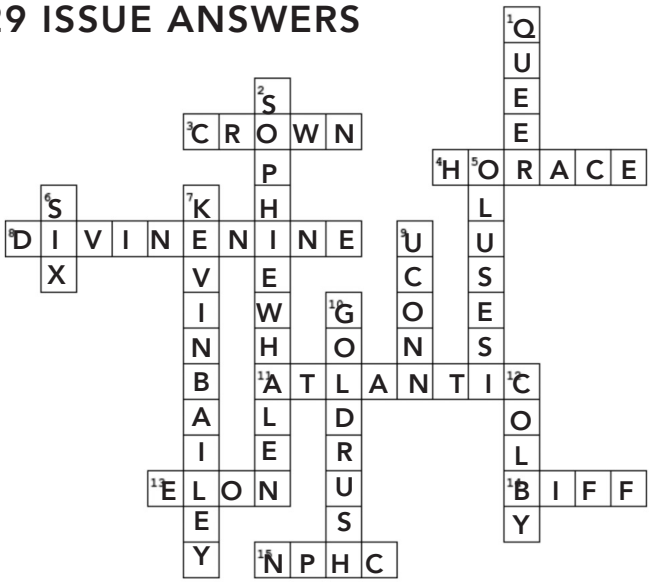
Student Government Association 2023 End of Year Banquet | Courtesy of UNC Charlotte SGA

CHECK THE NEXT ISSUE (9/26) FOR THE ANSWERS TO THIS WEEK’S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU!

NINER TIMES SUDOKU

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8/29 ISSUE ANSWERS

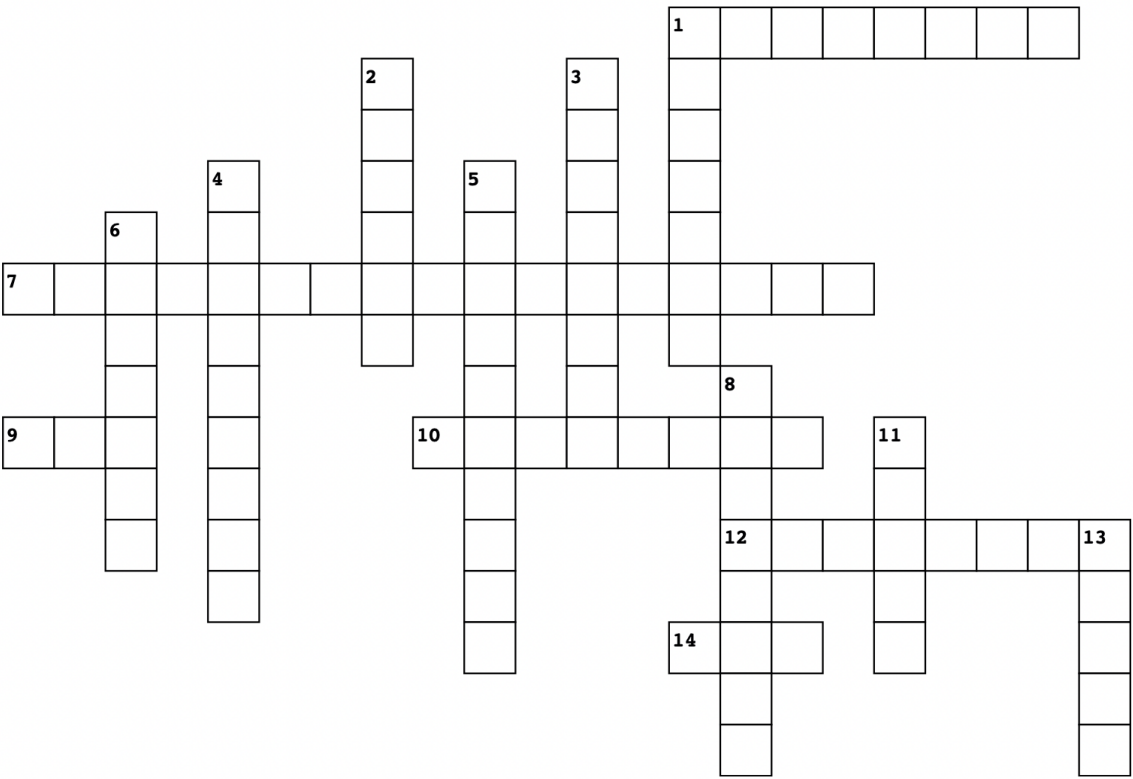


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2	7	5	8	3	4	1	6	9
4	6	3	1	9	5	8	2	7

DID YOU KNOW?

BEN & JERRY ORIGINALLY WANTED TO START A BAGEL COMPANY. THE PARTNERS ENDED UP IN THE ICE CREAM BUSINESS BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT AFFORD A BAGEL MACHINE.

NINER TIMES CROSSWORD



Across

- 1. Day of week when Mining for Greatness episodes air
- 7. Now-deleted Instagram account detailing East Village living conditions
- 9. Bailey Vannoy’s nickname
- 10. Aug. 27 NPHC event (two words)
- 12. Third-year At-Large Senator Savannah _____
- 14. How many years ago Charlotte’s football program was created

Down

- 1. Off-campus apartment near Greek Village (two words)
- 2. What the SGA elections are for
- 3. Sept. 9 football opponent
- 4. Mining for _____
- 5. Available at 49th Acre
- 6. WRDS professor _____ Campbell
- 8. CEO of Threads
- 11. Starting quarterback Jalon _____
- 13. How many NPHC organizations are on campus

Crossword by Niner Times Editorial Board

OFF-CAMPUS APARTMENTS EXPLOIT STUDENTS

Natalie Monson | Staff Writer

When enrolling at Charlotte, one of the first things on students' minds is choosing housing on or off-campus. The Charlotte community must prioritize students' health and safety or off-campus housing exploitation will drive away potential and returning students, damaging Charlotte as a whole.

The affordable housing crisis is a widespread and complex issue, but there are unique ways in which it has manifested in off-campus housing for Charlotte students.

The first is through high rent prices that have increased by 20% in the last three years. Higher rent prices cause many students to work while going to school, impacting their learning experience and stress levels.

Despite this, many apartment complexes' conditions do not reflect their high rent.

Apartment complexes surrounding Charlotte have gained notoriety for poor management, water leaks and safety concerns. Students in these apartment complexes may feel lied to and taken advantage of.

One student created an Instagram account aiming to expose inadequate management and poor living conditions in the East Village apartment complex. The Instagram account, @realeastvillagenc, was taken down due to legal actions taken by the apartment complex.

The University is not solely to blame for the inadequacies of off-campus housing. Charlotte has on-campus living options and they are in the process of creating more housing.

However, on-campus housing is difficult to acquire due to over-enrollment. Additionally, some students prefer to live off-campus.

A recent graduate of Charlotte, Mason Pendergrass explains, "I much preferred living off-campus because it gave me the opportunity to create a place for myself away from the school."

Therefore, there are things Charlotte could do to benefit students who choose to experience living off-campus.

One possible solution includes increasing off-campus housing participation in the Charlotte Niner Choice program.

The Niner Choice program includes a variety of standards that prioritize student safety such as crime thresholds, surveillance systems and deadbolts. It would be beneficial if the University or community encouraged more

apartment complexes to participate in the program.

Standards should not only include security but cleanliness as well. Off-campus housing such as East Village is not a part of the Niner Choice program and has reports of rampant pet waste indoors and an accumulation of trash.

Pendergrass, who lived at both The Mill (which is a part of the Niner Choice program) and East Village, said, "Both of the apartments were filthy all of the time."

When attempting to contact East Village and The Mill, they did not respond to calls to provide a response.

While expensive, subsidizing newly built off-campus housing could provide students with better living conditions that they otherwise would not be able to afford due to increasing rent prices.

Another solution for affordable living could revolve around creating roommate connections. Charlotte already has a form students can fill out to connect with others looking for roommates. However, in-person events might be more effective.

While there is not a single fix to the problem, it is evident that local government also plays a crucial role.

The city of Charlotte should put more effort into creating an affordable, safe environment for students in the Charlotte surrounding area.

"To my knowledge, all of the housing options close to the university are either incredibly expensive or complete dumps. Some are both," said Pendergrass.

The students at Charlotte support the local economy by living, shopping and working off-campus. Since students are an integral part of the community, they should be treated as such.

Apartment complexes should receive prompt reprimanding for violating health and safety codes, and the city should advocate for student concerns.

For the mental and physical well-being of students, the University and city must stand up for cleanliness, safety and affordability in off-campus housing. Doing so will foster a better learning environment at Charlotte and will benefit the surrounding area by showing students they are valued members of the community.



East Village apartment complex outside UNC Charlotte. | Photo by Sunnya Hadavi

THE INITIAL SUCCESS OF THREADS TURNS INTO DISAPPOINTMENT

Mariah Jolie | Contributor

Threads' emergence shook the world of social media as it reached over 100 million users within its first week in early July. However, since then, there has been a huge tank in users, activity and buzz from the app.

Threads is a social media app similar to Twitter, now called X. Twitter, for many, was the go-to app to share your thoughts and get most of the exclusive news and gossip. Nevertheless, after billionaire Elon Musk bought the app and made changes, people started to miss the 'old' Twitter.

We thought Threads was coming to the rescue. The app is an extension of your Instagram account, keeping all of your followers and is supposedly X's upgrade. But can an app that has been around since 2006 with 450 million users be replaced? According to Business Insider, "Threads is foregoing everything that made Twitter special."

"I believe the transformation in writing habits is underway right before us on Threads and across several apps and platforms, including X," said writing, rhetoric & digital studies (WRDS) professor Malcolm Campbell. "So posting on Threads or Instagram, writing or composing texts, direct messages, even emails, all of that is transforming not only how we write but how we think, as well."

After six weeks of being released, Threads is already seeing a huge decline in users. After averaging about 50 million users a day, their numbers have decreased to 10 million, which, according to Time Magazine, "is less than a tenth of X's user-ship."

What caused this huge decrease in Threads? It could be the lack of hashtags and a discovery page, or perhaps it is just another boring app.

"When Twitter first launched, it was fascinating having sort of first-hand access to folks you never would have been able to reach before," said WRDS professor Justin Cary.

As a WRDS professor, Cary must keep up with social media platforms that are trending to keep up with his students. For Gen Z, social media and the internet have played a big part in their lives.

Always having access to the internet can alter the way they view the world. Using apps and texting has also affected how they communicate, like using abbreviations, such as LOL and BRB.

"Social platforms help to evolve how we think about and use language," said Cary. "So in this



Courtesy of Dado Ruvic/Reuters

way, students who use these platforms are exposed to and learn new ideas about language and ways to use it."

However, when it comes down to it, one of the biggest reasons Threads is unsuccessful may be Threads is owned by Meta, which raises questions about the safety of user's privacy while using the app.

Earlier this year, Meta paid a \$725 million lawsuit after Facebook was caught giving out their users' information to Cambridge Analytica, a British political consulting firm, during the 2016 elections. The user's information was given out without their consent. Since then, it has been hard to trust whether or not your information is safe, and META has not made a statement denying any claims against them.

"Meta continues to face many allegations and criticism that put profits over employees and user security, so we'll see," said Cary when asked whether Threads will succeed.

Feeling safe is the most important thing when using the internet; one's privacy should not be taken lightly. Your information and identity are

at risk when using certain social media platforms.

"There are some very dangerous trends and messages coursing through Meta's other platforms like Instagram and Facebook, and I do fear that if these social media companies continue to put profits over users, the platforms will be inherently unsafe," said Cary.

According to Business News Daily, identity theft through social media apps is growing more and more.

"Twitter was always my go-to platform, and I really loved it; the recent change of Twitter to X has sort of made me move away from social media generally," Cary said.

Threads was created to replace X but is failing miserably. The app lacks so many of the classic charms Twitter had, and despite Musk's changes, Twitter will still have a special place in the hearts of those who use it.

SEND US A LETTER TO THE EDITOR!

IS THERE ANYTHING ON YOUR MIND ABOUT THE NINER TIMES, CAMPUS, CHARLOTTE OR OUR COMMUNITY? GET YOUR THOUGHTS OUT THERE BY SENDING US A LETTER!

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- BETWEEN 200-500 WORDS
- SIGNED BY AT LEAST ONE PERSON (ANONYMOUS LETTERS ARE NOT ACCEPTED)

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EMAIL: opinion@ninertimes.com

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PHOTOS: CHARLOTTE 49ERS' FIRST FOOTBALL GAME ON AUG. 13, 2013

Niner Times File Photos

Joey Ellsworth | Sports Editor

On Aug. 31, 2013, the Charlotte 49ers made history with a commanding 52-7 victory over Campbell University in their inaugural football game, drawing in a crowd of over 16,000 fans. The 49ers gave fans an incredible showing, outsourcing the Camels 32-0 in the first half. Quarterback Matt Johnson threw for 282 yards and three touchdowns. The team combined for 211 yards on the ground, while Kalif Phillips and Corey Nesmith Jr. earned Charlotte's two touchdowns on the ground.



CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF CHARLOTTE FOOTBALL

Sam Perry | Staff Writer

The beginning of the 2023 season marks the 10th anniversary of Charlotte 49ers football. Through those years, the team has produced lots of talent and has had plenty of highs and lows. The new season marks the beginning of a new era with a new coach, conference and opportunity to celebrate the young history and build for the future.

2013-14: FCS years

Charlotte began their journey in collegiate football as a Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) Independent for their first two seasons, going 10-12 in the two years to start the program.

In 2013, the 49ers hosted the Gardner-Webb University Bulldogs, ranked No. 23 at the FCS level. Charlotte defeated their first nationally ranked opponent at Jerry Richardson Stadium 53-51 after a 29-point fourth quarter leading the comeback.

2015: First FBS year

The 49ers, like most first-year Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) programs, took their hits on the season as they went 2-10, with both of their wins being in the first two games of the season. Their first FBS win came against Georgia State, where Charlotte secured a 23-20 victory on national TV in their FBS debut.

2016: First Conference-USA (C-USA) win

In 2016, the 49ers bounced back from the 2-10 FBS debut and improved to 4-8 and gained their first win in C-USA competition, taking a 28-23 win over Florida Atlantic University (FAU) after a game-winning Hail Mary was overturned upon replay review.

2018: Last year of Coach Lambert

After going 1-11 in 2017, where the team's lone win came in overtime, Charlotte turned it around in 2018. The 49ers went 5-7 while competing well in C-USA, going 4-4.

Despite the significant turnaround from 2017, the 49ers' first head coach, Brad Lambert, was not retained at the end of the season, and new Athletic Director Mike Hill brought in Will Healy to lead the program the rest of the way.

2019: Bowling in the Bahamas

Healy struck gold with his squad in his first year, going 7-5 in the regular season and reaching a bowl game for the first time in program history. The 49ers were led by walk-on quarterback Chris Reynolds, who started under center for all 13 games after showing promise in the 2018 season.

In the team's last home game of the season, Reynolds and crew battled through a rainy evening to beat the Marshall Thundering Herd 24-13 to become bowl-eligible, showing the promise of what the program could be moving forward.

Charlotte was invited to the Bahamas Bowl, where they took on the University at Buffalo in Nassau, Bahamas, and lost their first-ever bowl game 31-9.

2020: COVID-19 season

Like all programs trying to navigate the problematic coronavirus conditions in 2020, the team got limited to just six games, where they went 2-4 after all the postponements and cancellations, not allowing the team to build off the momentum of the bowl season.

2021: The season of two halves

The 2021 season saw what felt like two entirely different teams play the first six games compared to the final six games, where the team finished the season 5-7.

Opening week, the 49ers got their first-ever Power Five win as they hosted and defeated Duke 31-28 after Reynolds found Shadrick Byrd for an 11-yard touchdown with only 33 seconds left on the clock, getting the team the victory. The team built on that to open the year 4-2, only needing two wins to reach bowl eligibility for a second time.

After a 38-9 loss to FAU that left Charlotte riddled with injuries, it sent the team on a downward spiral, going 1-5 to end the season, only beating Rice in overtime on Homecoming weekend.

2022: Swansong for Reynolds and farewell to Healy

The 49ers began with a rough stretch in 2022, going 1-4 to open up the season before ending the year 3-9. After falling 34-15 to Florida International University on



Installation of the football player statue outside Jerry Richardson Stadium in January 2013. | Niner Times File Photo

Homecoming weekend, the plug was pulled on Coach Healy, bringing in interim head coach Peter Rossomando, who led the team to a 2-2 record in the final four weeks.

Reynolds played out his final season as a 49er, battling through injuries and fighting his way on the field on senior day. He went out with a home victory over Louisiana Tech 26-21, giving Reynolds and crew strong closure to the team's 10th season.



NFL Talents

Over the 10 seasons played, Charlotte has had five players drafted in the NFL, beginning with Larry Ogunjobi (Cleveland Browns, Rd. 3, Pk. 1, 2017), Nate Davis (Tennessee Titans, Rd. 3, Pk. 18, 2019), Alex Highsmith (Pittsburgh Steelers, Rd. 3, Pk. 38, 2020), Cameron Clark (New York Jets, Rd. 4, Pk. 23, 2020) and Grant Dubose (Green Bay Packers, Rd. 7, Pk. 39, 2023).

Highsmith has shown out well at the NFL level as an edge rusher, being named to the First Team All-Pro in 2022 and recently signed a 68 million dollar contract extension.

Charlotte's all-time sack leader, Markees Watts, made the buzz in the preseason this year as an undrafted free agent with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, where he earned the second-best PFF grade of all defensive rookies, getting him on the final roster for the Buccaneers.

Record holders

Charlotte has had some strong records set by their players over their 11-season career.

Reynolds holds the record for passing yards with 10,266. The career rushing yards holder is Kalif Phillips with 4,020, and Austin Duke had 3,437 yards receiving both during the 2013-16 seasons. Phillips also holds the record for touchdowns with 43 in his career. Blake Brewer holds the record for career field goals made, with the 49ers making 45 field goals over the 2013-16 seasons.

On the defensive side of the ball, Ben DeLuca holds the record for tackles (313),

forced fumbles (nine) and recovered fumbles (six) over his career over the 2016-20 seasons. Terrance Winchester holds the 49ers record for interceptions with 10 during the 2013-16 seasons. Watts set the record for sacks in his final year in Charlotte with 21.5 over the 2018-22 seasons, while Ogunjobi holds the record for tackles for a loss with 49.0 over the 2013-16 seasons.

2023: A new era has begun as the 49ers leap into the unknown

The 49ers celebrated their young history under new leadership in Head Coach Biff Poggi as they jumped to the American Athletic Conference. So far on the season, the team is moving in the right direction, with the early chapters of the 2023 season being written already.

Charlotte opened up the year with a solid defensive showing as they beat the South Carolina State Panthers 24-3 after a strong showing from true freshman Durell Robinson, who had 71 yards on 11 carries. Against the University of Maryland Terrapins, Charlotte carried a lead into the third quarter, showing an impressive display against a top-rated Big Ten team before falling 38-20.

The rest of the pages in season 11 will continue to be written, with many stories left to be told. Charlotte returns to Jerry Richardson Stadium on Saturday, Sept. 16, at 6 p.m. against the Georgia State Panthers.



49ers' first head coach, Brad Lambert (above) and Charlotte's first game against Campbell University (bottom) | Niner Times File Photos

CLT

CHARLOTTE 49ERS

SCOREBOARD

RECENT GAMES

AUG. 28 - SEPT. 10

FOOTBALL

Sept. 2: Charlotte 24, S.C. State 3
Sept. 9: Maryland 38, Charlotte 20

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Aug. 31: Charlotte 0, UNCG 0
Sept. 3: Charlotte 0, Virginia Tech 0
Sept. 7: Florida 1, Charlotte 0
Sept. 10: Charlotte 3, Richmond 2

MEN'S SOCCER

Aug. 28: Charlotte 1, Wofford 0
Sept. 3: Charlotte 0, Lipscomb 0
Sept. 9: UNCG 2, Charlotte 1

VOLLEYBALL

Sept. 1: Northern Colorado 3, Charlotte 0
Sept. 2: Colorado 3, Charlotte 0
Sept. 3: Charlotte 3, Xavier 0
Sept. 8: Louisiana 3, Charlotte 0
Sept. 8: Texas Southern 3, Charlotte 0
Sept. 9: North Florida 3, Charlotte 2

OVERALL STANDINGS

Football, 1-1, 0-0

Women's soccer: 3-3-2, 0-0

Men's soccer: 1-1-1, 0-0

Volleyball: 5-4, 0-0

UPCOMING GAMES

Football:

Vs. Georgia State on Saturday,
Sept. 16 at 6 p.m.

Women's soccer:

Vs. UAB on Thursday, Sept. 14 at 7 p.m.

Men's soccer:

@ UAB on Saturday, Sept. 16 at 8 p.m.

‘MINING FOR GREATNESS’: ‘MEET COACH BIFF’ TAKEAWAYS

Itza Ochoa | Asst. Sports Editor

Charlotte’s football documentary “Mining for Greatness” released its first episode, “Meet Coach Biff,” on Thursday, Sept. 7 through ESPN+. The 28-minute episode follows the 49ers after their 24-3 home opener win against South Carolina State University on Sept. 2.

Here are some takeaways from episode one.

Biff Poggi’s plan

Head Coach Poggi opens the documentary, talking to the team about the turnaround for Charlotte football.

“Our goal is very simple. We want to win the AAC, and we want to win it repeatedly,” said Poggi.

Poggi said he is grateful for the opportunity as he was the right person chosen to take on the challenge.

“I am the best on the planet at coaching and healing broken, wounded kids,” said Poggi. “Get ready for the ride because you’re going to love it.”

The past

The producers highlighted the 49ers’ 2022 season, going 3-9 overall and have yet to win a bowl game in its 10-year history.

“People don’t expect us to win anything,” said senior quarterback Jalon Jones.

After being ranked last in the AAC predictions with a 12% to make a bowl game, the 49ers are using the media to fuel their redemption.

“Everybody thinks this is still the old Charlotte, and it’s not anymore,” said senior running back Shadrick Byrd.

AAC media day

Poggi got his first look at how the media perceived Charlotte after attending the AAC Media Day on July 25. He waited at the podium in silence, waiting for questions to roll in.

“There were three questions, and one of them wasn’t even from the media,” said Poggi.

In attendance with Poggi, Jones sat by the ESPN prompter, watching his coach.

“We jumped a little bit,” said Jones. “We hear him talking, and all of a sudden, we hear [bang].”

Poggi thanked the media for giving the

team motivation, walked off the stage, and then ate a cookie.

Bringing back familiar faces

Reconstructing an entirely new team with 51 transfers, Poggi brought in 23 players from his former coaching position at St. Francis Academy located in Baltimore.

“When he reached out, I just had to go with it,” said senior defensive end and Michigan transfer Eyabi Okie-Anoma. “Anything he wants me to do, I’m going to do.”

For some players, it was easy, but sophomore Jonathan “Wall” Wallace had a different story. Wallace was enrolled in a community college, working at a nearby pretzel factory.

Poggi called Wallace to announce his position at Charlotte and offered him a spot on the team. Wallace told Poggi he was done with football; Poggi responded, “Football is not done with you.”

Jones was also on that list, named as the starting quarterback on the Charlotte roster.

“This man saw something in us that was so good that he wanted to keep us here and be a part of his team,” said Jones.

Game one vs. South Carolina State

Pro Football Hall of Famer Brian Dawkins joined the 49ers in the locker room prior to kick-off to emphasize the new era of the Charlotte football program.

In a sold-out crowd, the 49ers stormed onto the field to commence the first game of the season.

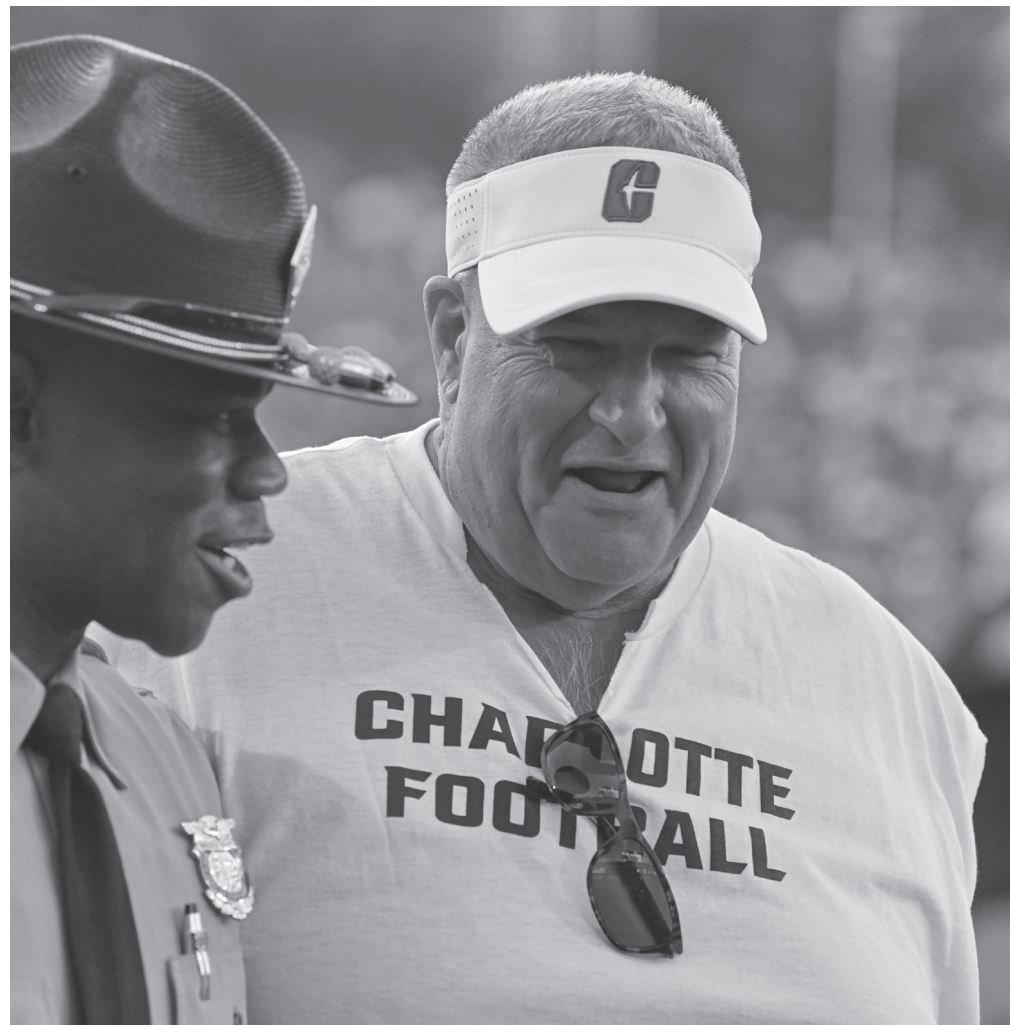
“It was great to see every seat filled,” Poggi said. “The student section is a raucous group of lunatics, which I love.”

Highlight footage showcased the touchdowns, tackles and interceptions created by the 49ers. Fireworks lit up the sky as Charlotte took the first win of the season 24-3.

“That was a gritty football win, and we are a gritty football team,” said Poggi, heading back into the locker room.

Episode two

Charlotte travels to take on the University of Maryland on Sept. 9, with the respective episode titled “The Homecoming” coming out on Sept. 14 through ESPN+.



Head Coach Biff Poggi at Charlotte’s victory over SC State. | Photo by Chris Crews



Charlotte 49er fans at Charlotte’s victory over SC State. | Photo by Chris Crews

BAILEY VANNOY'S NEXT CHAPTER: FROM THE DIAMOND TO UNKNOWN HORIZONS

Joey Ellsworth | Sports Editor

Bailey “Boo” Vannoy, the inspiring starting catcher who has been the face of Charlotte softball for the past five years, embarks on a new chapter beyond the college diamond. As she steps into uncharted territory, her path is paved with newfound opportunities and an unknown future that promises to redefine her life.

A remarkable career

Vannoy's journey on the softball field was nothing short of exceptional, as her remarkable career at Charlotte is one of talent and dedication.

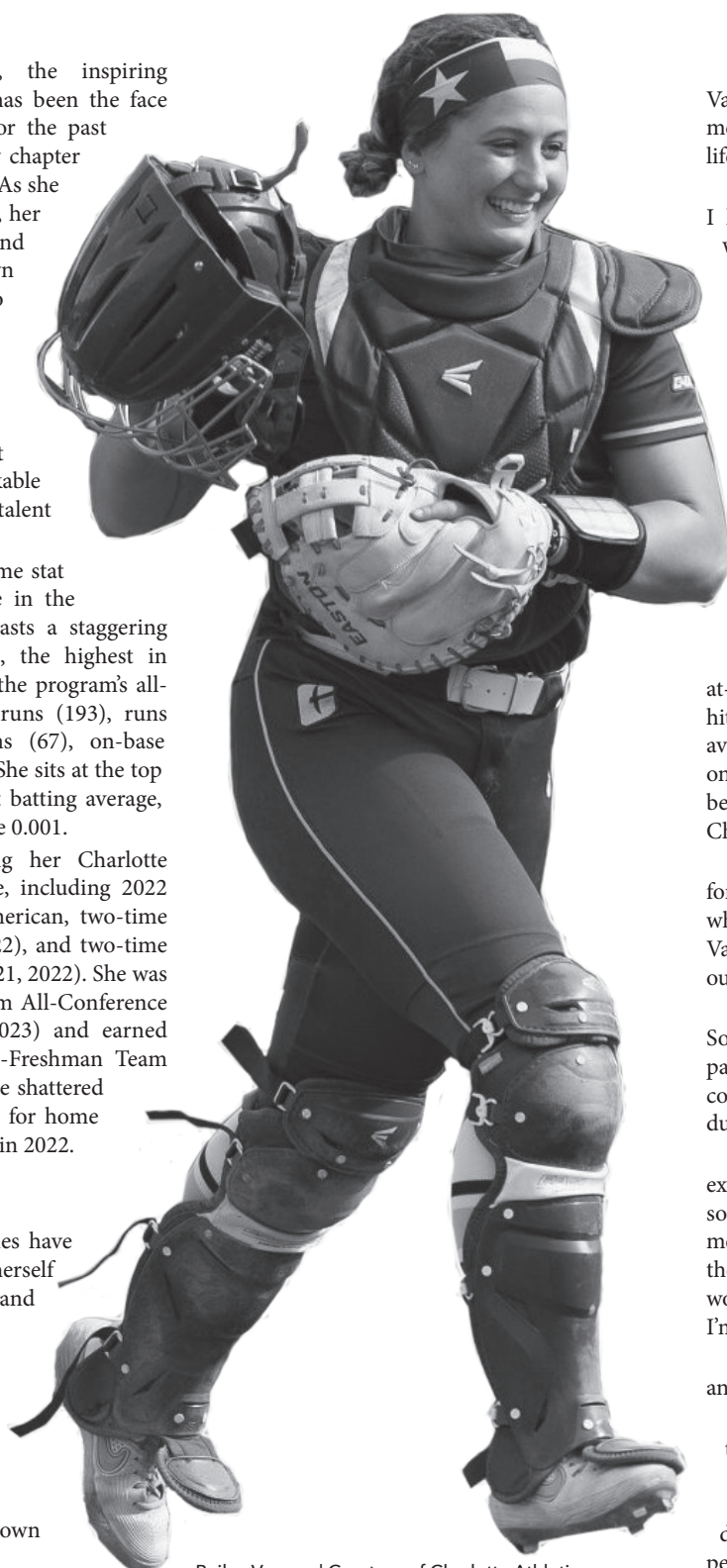
As one of Charlotte's all-time stat leaders, Vannoy's dominance in the game is undeniable. She boasts a staggering slugging percentage of .745, the highest in Charlotte history, and holds the program's all-time records in hits (257), runs (193), runs batted in (187), home runs (67), on-base percentage (.462), and more. She sits at the top in all batting statistics except batting average, where she falls short by a mere 0.001.

Vannoy's accolades during her Charlotte career are equally impressive, including 2022 NFCA Second Team All-American, two-time NFCA All-Region (2021, 2022), and two-time C-USA Player of the Year (2021, 2022). She was a four-time C-USA First Team All-Conference player (2019, 2021, 2022, 2023) and earned recognition as a C-USA All-Freshman Team selection in 2018. Notably, she shattered C-USA single-season records for home runs (13) and total bases (77) in 2022.

A true leader

Vannoy's leadership qualities have not only been recognized by herself but also by her teammates and coaches.

“Bailey has taken it upon herself to become one of our leaders, both on and off the field,” said Head Coach Ashley Chastain in a 2021 interview. “She has a lot of experience that she can pass down to others.”



Bailey Vannoy | Courtesy of Charlotte Athletics

Drawing from her years of experience, Vannoy believes she excels as a leader and mentor in both the game and other aspects of life.

“I think that I work well with people, and I know how to meet them where they're at whenever they need something; I cannot say that I was always good at that,” said Vannoy. “I think that the Lord has grown me in the aspect of learning how to listen and then solve problems. I think leadership and teaching go hand in hand, and I think those are two assets that I have really well.”

New experiences

Not long after graduation, Vannoy embarked on new endeavors, starting with a step into her professional career.

In May, Vannoy was selected by the Florida Vibe, a professional softball team, to continue her acclaimed career. In her 63 at-bats for the Vibe, Vannoy had nine runs, 20 hits, two home runs, 18 RBIs, a 0.317 batting average, a 0.492 slugging percentage and an on-base percentage of 0.400. With this, Vannoy became the first Charlotte softball player under Chastain to play professionally.

“I really enjoy who we are and what we stand for and being able to grow the game for girls who want to play softball past college,” said Vannoy. “It's really cool to know that there's still outlets where you can get paid to play now.”

In June, Vannoy participated in the USA Softball National Team Camp. Players participate with the hopes of being chosen to compete in future events for the national team during the 2023 season.

“Oh, my gosh, it was so much fun, truly an experience of a lifetime,” said Vannoy. “That's something that nobody can ever take away from me. I was the only mid-major representative there, which was really cool because, obviously, I wouldn't want to represent any other university. I'm a Charlotte 49er 'til I die.”

Vannoy was one of 28 athletes at the camp and the only one to come from C-USA.

“Seeing the girls that competed in and won the national championship, but also seeing them not as an athlete was really cool,” said Vannoy. “We had meals together, had different meetings together and seeing their personalities off the field is really cool and

something I didn't realize I'd appreciate so much.”

Although Vannoy has graduated, she will remain in Charlotte as Charlotte Athletics' assistant to the executive team/student-athlete development. She is an intern under Director of Student-Athlete Development Krystion Obie Nelson.

“It's been so much fun,” said Vannoy. “I think it's cool that I get to work with the athletes without being responsible for the athletes, so I do the fun stuff with them.”

Up next for the 49er legend

The path for Vannoy remains uncertain as she embraces her life's ever-changing course.

“Truthfully, every time I have a plan, the Lord so quickly humbles me and says, ‘Hey, like, actually, you're gonna go here instead,’” said Vannoy.

While she aspires to remain involved in the game for the foreseeable future, Vannoy reflects on her goals for the next decade.

“Hopefully, I'll be a stay-at-home mom, happily married, with beautiful kids running around. Within that timeframe, I would also like to go overseas and be a missionary for a little bit, and I would really like to invest in some local communities that may be in low-income areas, but other than that, who knows where I'm going to be.”

With each swing of the bat, each moment of leadership and every new opportunity, Bailey “Boo” Vannoy continues to carve her unique path, leaving an indelible legacy that transcends the softball diamond and promises to inspire others for years to come.

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WOMEN + GIRLS RESEARCH ALLIANCE ELEVATES THE STANDARD OF WHAT RESEARCH SHOULD LOOK LIKE

Sofia Fuentes | Staff Writer

Established in 2006, the Women + Girls Research Alliance (W+GRA) provides the UNC Charlotte community a space to focus on crucial research and education on women's issues. Their work focuses on civic and political engagement, economic security and violence against women.

The alliance is a unit of Charlotte's urban-CORE, which focuses on the challenges preventing women from success. They host events that extend their work and create conversations about the challenges of womanhood in the greater Charlotte area.

"We focus on the challenges here in the Charlotte Metropolitan area that impede the thriving of women and girls," said Michelle Meggs, executive director of W+GRA. "We look at health and well-being, economics, employment, education, socio-political issues. We look at all of those challenges, and we work through convening."

Advocating with research

The event expands on Janaka Bowman-Lewis's, a member of the W+GRA advisory committee, research on Black women's wellness.

"We do community engagement research, so we work with local nonprofits that help expand their capacity to do the work that they are doing," said Bowman-Lewis. "So we are not only engaged in helping faculty to extend and expand their research, but we also help local nonprofits with the work that we do to enhance their work and make it more meaningful."

Bowman-Lewis researches Black women's health and mobility in part with the Gambrell Faculty Fellowship with sociology professor Kendra Jason and education professor Tehia Starker Glass. Their project, "Searching for Stability: The Pandemic's Impact on Black Women and Their Families In Charlotte," will explore Black women's lived experiences on health, economic mobility and the changes in Black mother's roles following the COVID-19 pandemic.

"[We're] thinking about what Black women need for socioeconomic mobility. Our narratives weren't even present," said Bowman-Lewis.

W+GRA has previously supported Jason, Starker Glass and Bowman-Lewis to have a Black mother's summit and a Charlotte family summit, the 2023 Charlotte Black Families



The Women + Girls Research Alliance event, 'Mind, Bodywork, Spirit,' focused on reflecting and connecting with one's mind-to-body relationship. | Photo by Jade Suszek

Summit. These events held a space for a discussion on economic mobility and family dynamics and to listen to the community's needs. They ensured the attendees an opportunity to participate in the dialogue on wellness, education, policy, housing and other contemporary issues.

Dedication to mindfulness and dialogues

W+GRA's Sept. 7 event, "Mind, Bodywork, Spirit," joined Spiritual Sundaze and Phoenix Rising Fitness for an evening filled with reflection and connection with one's mind-to-body relationship.

It was a moment to sit down and get to know oneself. Students and faculty members had the opportunity to discuss their experiences on

their mental and physical health.

"This piece is an extension of how we stay well as women, how writing connects to our wellness, how movement promotes our wellness," said Bowman-Lewis. "It is a nice way to follow up in the fall what we did in the spring with the Charlotte family summit and to open up to faculty, staff, students and community the opportunity to think about wellness through writing and movement."

The event began with a writing and meditative activity about our intentions for the session and the next four months. This meditative exercise allowed us to be present at the event and also allowed us to envision the future with optimism rather than the usual fears that surround

our thoughts on the next four months.

Following the meditation and journaling exercises, we focused on mind and body movement. Being conscious of how our breath can affect the exercise and being able to concentrate and breathe through the Pilates workout was serene. The skills taught on how to be focused and present in the workout taught attendees how to move with intention and have a purpose for the present and our future.

Having the time to not catalog what homework needs to be done or anxiously ponder about the next four months and silence the overflow of thoughts is an excellent way to re-establish one's energy and a better way to re-evaluate our current ways of living.

“I felt like today’s experience was pretty wholesome,” said Spiritual Sundaze instructor Cheyenne Booker. “I got to talk to a biology student who told me that she heavily needed the rest and sleep because she has been studying nonstop, so it was pretty heartwarming to hear that.”

Phoenix Rising Fitness owner and instructor Victoria Habersham shared her thoughts on the experience.

“I felt restored just by the energy in the room and the support, and I felt love in this room, so I really felt restored afterward and during,” said Habersham.

The experience truly was rejuvenating, as it

gave all attendees a chance to be their authentic selves and created a dialogue on women’s physical and mental health, which is a continuation of the work of Dr. Bowman-Lewis.

Oftentimes, students and faculty feel a need to be productive and put aside their needs constantly. Being constantly on the go takes a physical and mental toll on oneself, and the “Mind, Bodywork, Spirit” event taught attendees about the importance of taking care of oneself and created a social event for like-minded individuals to learn and grow as a collective group.

How to get involved

For students who are interested in joining the

W+GRA, Meggs encourages undergraduate and graduate students to participate in events and involve student organizations with the alliance.

“We are always looking for opportunities for students who are looking for internships, who want to work with us,” said Meggs. “Students who are interested in possibly publishing essays or articles, students who just want to share the work that we are doing with others and why this works, because women and particularly women of color sit at the intersection of so many issues that are happening in our culture, and I stand firmly planted in my womanist land.”

Upcoming events this fall include the 2023 W+GRA’s Leadership Cafe on Oct. 17. Students

are encouraged to attend the cafe to join the conversation with faculty and community leaders.

There are also spots open to volunteer for the event. This opportunity is open to all Charlotte students and faculty, not just women, and it provides the occasion to have open conversations about one’s connection to the issues that affect women today.

“When you free all women of color, you free everyone because in the middle of those intersections are issues of race, gender, sexuality, all of the things,” said Meggs. “When you free women of color, you free everyone, and that does not mean that you are excluding people.”



The ‘Mind, Bodywork, Spirit’ event hosted by the Women + Girls Research Alliance, Spiritual Sundaze and Phoenix Rising focused on women’s physical and mental wellness. | Photo by Jade Suszek

NPHC'S ANNUAL YARD SHOW CELEBRATES BLACK CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

Kennedy Brooks | Contributor

On Sunday, Aug. 27, UNC Charlotte's National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) hosted their annual Yard Show at the Star Quad.

Seven different NPHC organizations performed choreographed strolling and stepping routines, which contained elements of movement, chanting and oration.

"Stepping and strolling are how we show our love for our orgs," said fourth-year Kennedy Thornton, NPHC president. "The strolls and steps that we do have a lot of personal meaning to us within our orgs."

The event opened with the Unity Step, a collaborative performance featuring members from all of the NPHC organizations on campus.

Charlotte is a predominantly white institution, so when the NPHC organizes events like the Yard Show for celebration and fellowship, Black Charlotte students show up and show out. This year's show was no different; attendees spilled out past the Star Quad and all the way to the J. Murray Atkins library.

"This is definitely one of the best events of the year," said third-year Mya Allen. "If you weren't at this year's Yard Show, I don't know where you were, but you definitely need to be at the next one."

Despite its popularity with Black students on campus, the event is for everyone in the Charlotte community. The crowd was filled with alumni, members of graduate chapters of the NPHC organizations, and even members of some of the other non-NPHC Greek organizations on campus.

"I'm part of Chi Omega, and we paired with the Kappas last year for Airband," said third-year student Ellie. "So I'm here to support Greek Life."

The event was also heavily attended by Charlotte parents decked out in their organization's paraphernalia to support their children who are legacy members of their organizations.

"Membership is lifelong," said Michelle Lee, a Charlotte mom and member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. "It's about sisterhood, leadership and service. I'm here to support my daughter, and I'm also here to support my organization."

NPHC members on Charlotte's campus also emphasize that membership is lifelong, but they do not think that should intimidate potential newcomers.

"If I could give any advice to people who are



The NPHC Yard Show is a yearly welcome back to school event hosted by Charlotte's historically Black sororities and fraternities. | Photo by Richard Nuzzo

thinking about joining an NPHC organization, I would probably just say to keep an open mind and ask questions," said Thornton.

Charlotte is home to eight of the nine historically African American sorority and fraternity organizations: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.; Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.; Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.; Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

While the organizations all have their own unique value systems, they all share a strong commitment to academics and community service.

The members of the NPHC work with organizations like Operation Big Bookbag, the Salvation Army and USA Swimming to help reinvest in Charlotte's Black community. Other than their service opportunities, they also serve the Black community here on campus by creating spaces for Black students.

"Scholarship comes first, and there's no going

back and forth on that," said Thornton, a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. "At the end of the day, we're here at college for school."

In addition to participating in the typical activities of fraternities and sorority life, the NPHC also holds study sessions and academic planning workshops throughout the school year. These events help ensure that their members are able to perform in line with the level of academic rigor that is expected of them.

"These students are looked at as the leaders of the African American community here on UNC Charlotte's campus," said Michelle Guobadia, director of Sorority and Fraternity Life.

If members of the NPHC organizations are seen as leaders by Black students on campus, they certainly do not shy away from the mantle. Organizations use their platform to host events that facilitate open conversations about topics that college students may find hard to talk about.

"We want to build an opportunity for people to see the NPHC organizations as a giver here

on campus," said fourth-year Jamari Tyson. "If anyone needs anything, we want them to know that we've got them."

While people may have preconceived notions about Greek life's excessive partying or the maintenance of archaic value systems, members of the NPHC use their reach to push back against these negative stereotypes.

Tyson, a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., said that his organization will be hosting an upcoming panel discussion tackling how male students can work to deconstruct toxic masculinity.

"If I see problems that are in my community, in Charlotte, or just in general, our fraternity pushes us to be change agents," said fourth-year Ian Tom-Johnson, a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

If you missed the Yard Show this semester, you will have another chance to see the organizations perform at the Stroll Competition in October. To learn more about the NPHC organizations, attend Meet the Greeks on Sept. 25.