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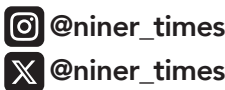
March 12, 2024



Meet the candidates

for student body president and vice president

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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.

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Revolutionary Student Front of UNC Charlotte hosts vigil to honor Aaron Bushnell and Palestinian martyrs

Sunnaya Hadavi | Editor-in-Chief

UNC Charlotte students gathered at the CHHS/COED Plaza on March 1 to hold a vigil for Aaron Bushnell and Palestinian martyrs.

The vigil, hosted by the Revolutionary Student Front (RSF) of UNC Charlotte, allowed students to show solidarity for those affected by the genocide of Palestinians and Bushnell specifically.

"[March 1]'s vigil for Aaron Bushnell was held to honor his courage and sacrifice," says a statement from the RSF. "His actions displayed an incredible and honorable commitment to protesting the ongoing genocide of Palestinians and the complicity of American Imperialism in the commission of these horrible crimes against the Palestinian people. We also mourn the over 30,000 innocent lives ended by Israel's war."

Bushnell was a service member of the U.S. Air Force who died outside the Israeli embassy in Washington D.C. after lighting himself on fire and shouting "Free Palestine."

"We recognize, as Aaron did, that what

seemed extreme about his protest is only what has been made normal for the men, women and children of Palestine. We express our appreciation to those who came and shared a moment of honor and mourning with us in the rain, and our solidarity with those present in spirit," says the RSF statement.

The RSF of UNC Charlotte is a student-run organization that is not registered with the University.

"We are the Revolutionary Student Front of UNC Charlotte, a group of students and activists fighting against bigotry and hate on campus," says a post on the organization's Instagram. "We aim to defend and fight for the rights of students and workers in Charlotte. Students have historically played an important role in the fight for equality and revolution, as an organized front we are capable of achieving emancipation for the working class and all oppressed people."

More information about the Revolutionary Student Front of UNC Charlotte can be found on their Instagram, @uncc.rsf.



The Revolutionary Student Front hosted the March 1 vigil at the CHHS/COED Plaza. | Megan Bentley/Niner Times

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Gov. Roy Cooper speaks with Niner Times about the importance of college student votes in the upcoming election

Sunnys Hadavi | Editor-in-Chief

North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper speaks with the Niner Times about the importance of college student votes in the November elections. Cooper also touches on important issues for UNC Charlotte students, including campus safety, mental and reproductive health and the genocide of Palestinians.

Below is a condensed version of the full Q&A with Cooper.

Niner Times Editor-in-Chief Sunnys Hadavi: Many young voters are feeling lost in this election cycle. What would you say to young voters as we head further into the elections, and how can college students be involved with our state's government?

Cooper: The future of our state and country is in the hands of our young people right now. If our young people decide to engage and vote in this election, they can make a difference. And I can understand how many young people would say, "We're going to have two old guys running for president, and this just really isn't gonna make a lot of difference in my life." You can't be more wrong. Because the differences between these two candidates are stark.

I'm term-limited and cannot run again, and so

about the American people rather than a Donald Trump who wakes up every morning thinking about himself.

Even if you don't like some of Joe Biden's positions, I think it's critical to know that he's made generational investments. He helped us expand Medicaid in North Carolina because of the signing bonus. He's helping us connect poor communities to water systems and get clean water that they didn't have before. He's helping us connect people to high-speed internet that they didn't have before.

I'm supporting Josh Stein, who's the current attorney general. We have a governor candidate for the Republicans, Mark Robinson, who has said men should lead, not women, [and that] there should be a ban on all abortions, no exceptions. He's called LGBTQ+ people filth. He said that he has an AR-15 that he will use against government officials if the government gets too big for its britches. He's denied the Holocaust. A long list of horrible things that do not reflect the values of North Carolinians and, I believe, do not reflect the values of young people.

As frustrating as politics can be, and how it's easier to look away, we've taken our freedoms for granted. We can all go out and we can protest and

believe that we need to ban assault weapons. We need red flag laws to try to keep guns out of the hands of people who are violent, people who are a danger to themselves or others. We need stronger background checks. But you have the Republican legislature that not only doesn't want to do those things, they've sent us backward.

We had a good gun permit law in place in North Carolina where sheriffs could make decisions on whether people could buy guns, and oftentimes, a sheriff knows about someone's propensity to be violent or severely mentally ill. Over my veto, they eliminated that law. So, going to the polls and voting for people who understand that we have to take positive steps to reduce gun violence is important.

I've worked on active shooter training. UNC Charlotte was a pretty good example of the training that we have worked to help campuses put in place to respond to these events as they occur.

We're seeing people be careless with the storage of their guns. Oftentimes, people are leaving guns on their seats in their cars. And these guns are being stolen and used to commit crimes in our community. So, we have a campaign about responsible gun ownership. When you purchase that gun, you are responsible for protecting the

Cooper: I've met with the chancellors of all of the universities, including UNC Charlotte, to talk about ways to help. I've used discretionary money that the federal government gave governors to help with education. We provided millions of dollars to the University to help with counseling, providing help directly to students and training students and professors to recognize mental health issues.

We also have the 988 program in place where people who are feeling suicidal or deeply depressed can call. I'm deeply concerned about this happening on our college campuses and we have to do more to help. I believe that Medicaid expansion will help. It will bring about \$521 million a month to North Carolina to provide more insurance for people. More insurance means more providers will be able to get reimbursed. That means we're going to have more mental health professionals and counselors available to people and more people having the opportunity to get treated by them because there's an appalling scarcity of mental health services. Mental health is just as important as our physical health.

Our Department of Health and Human Services is going to ramp up using this signing bonus money that the Biden administration helped us to get \$1.6 billion, and a lot of that is going to go into mental health and behavioral health to try and alleviate this very real problem.

I just encourage anybody who might be listening to this to get help, your life is valuable. We need you, your family needs you, your friends need you.

NT: With the various rulings and restrictions on reproductive rights nationally and across other southern states, what are you doing still to protect reproductive rights in North Carolina?

Cooper: Reproductive freedom is on the ballot in November. Republicans in the North Carolina legislature passed a 12-week abortion ban in North Carolina. I vetoed it. We had one turncoat Democrat who switched from Democrat to Republican, giving Republicans a one-vote supermajority: a person who had in the past advocated for women's reproductive freedom and told voters that she was for women's reproductive freedom. Yet she and every single Republican voted to override my veto. Every single Democrat voted to sustain my veto; it was over-written by one vote.

The scary thing is that Republican leadership

As frustrating as politics can be, and how it's easier to look away, we've taken our freedoms for granted. We can all go out and we can protest and we can say what we want without fear of reprisal from the government. That could be taken away from us as it has in many countries. So, we have to value that and participate in the process.

- Roy Cooper, governor of North Carolina

in November, we'll elect a new governor. When I talk to young people, many of them are so passionate about a lot of things. [There] are the issues that often inspire young people, but many times, they don't translate into the ballot box.

I urge young people to look at the stark differences here. There is such a big difference between Joe Biden and Donald Trump; people are having a hard time getting their minds wrapped around the fact that this is actually going to be the rematch, but it is. And I'd rather have a Joe Biden who wakes up every morning thinking

we can say what we want without fear of reprisal from the government. That could be taken away from us as it has in many countries. So, we have to value that and participate in the process.

NT: What do you think the UNC system or other North Carolina universities can do to increase and maintain gun control and safety on college campuses?

Cooper: Well, the first thing that students can do is vote. This is where one of those big differences is occurring right now. For example, I

children in your family and the children who may come over to your house, [along with] keeping it from being stolen and used for criminal purposes.

NT: Our campus community and other North Carolina colleges have seen an increase in mental health concerns and suicide attempts, especially in the last year. What are you doing with your office to address mental health concerns amongst younger citizens, especially those on college campuses?

has said they're coming back for more. That's why it's so important that we elect Josh Stein as governor and break the supermajority in the state legislature.

That being said, our administration is doing everything it can to help women get the healthcare services they need as quickly as

“

A woman shouldn't have to almost die to be able to get the treatment and the healthcare that they need. I'm going to continue to fight for women's reproductive freedom every day as governor, but also in these coming elections.

- Roy Cooper, governor of North Carolina

possible. I've joined the Reproductive Freedom Alliance, and we're now fighting cases that are trying to do away with medication, abortion and the safe and effective medication that has been used for years.

We're talking about women's lives on the line, and we're talking about politicians getting into the exam room with women and their doctors and dictating the decisions that they make. A woman shouldn't have to almost die to be able to get the treatment and the healthcare that they need. I'm going to continue to fight for women's reproductive freedom every day as governor, but also in these coming elections.

Donald Trump appointed three new members of the Supreme Court; he's bragging about having overturned Roe v. Wade. And this is one of the few times he's telling the truth. This is what he's actually done.

I know that President Biden and Vice President Harris support federal protections for women's reproductive freedom. So, I encourage all young people who believe in women's reproductive freedom to vote and get their friends to vote.

NT: Many at UNC Charlotte and across North Carolina are calling for a permanent ceasefire to the genocide in Palestine. What is being done on behalf of your office in response to the protests and the demands of North Carolinians?

Cooper: This has been a devastating occurrence in the Middle East. The Hamas-led attack on innocent Israelis, the hostages that are still being held today, the innocent lives that are be-

ing lost in the current war, and the children and women who are suffering. I've met with families who still have family members who are hostages. I have met with Muslim leaders in North Carolina who are telling me personal stories about their families who are under siege, about relatives they have lost and all of

the fighting. I am encouraging the Biden administration, and I believe they are working very hard toward a ceasefire, hostage release and an eventual two-state solution.

I'm hoping and praying every day that peace can come here because people are losing their lives every day. And I know the administration is working hard toward that. And I understand the feelings that so many people have here because this is a horrible, devastating situation.

NT: Is there anything you would like to add regarding the rest of your term, the elections and your endorsement of Josh Stein?

Cooper: I've known Josh personally for a couple of decades. I know that he has the integrity and the grit to do this job, to not back down on women's reproductive freedom, to continue to lead this state forward, recognizing the value of public education and of keeping communities safe. I believe that if we elect an extreme candidate, like Mark Robinson, not only will that affect people's lives that he has expressed hatred toward, [it] is going to hurt us economically.

We'll go backward if we elect Mark Robinson [and] Dan Bishop as attorney general. Jeff Jackson is a great candidate for attorney general. In the superintendent of public instruction race, which is important for public schools in North Carolina, Mo Green is a fantastic candidate that we need to elect. His opponent, if she's elected, will be a disaster for the state.

We have a lot of work to do. Going into November, and again, young people hold the key to this election.



Courtesy of the National Governors Association

North Carolina governor primary results

Statistics courtesy of Politico on March 10

GOP candidate				Democrat candidate			
		Votes	Pct.			Votes	Pct.
✓	Mark Robinson	663,917	64.8%	✓	Josh Stein	476,448	69.6%
◦	Dale Folwell	196,108	19.2	◦	Michael Morgan	97,908	14.3
◦	Bill Graham	163,757	16.0	◦	Chrelle Booker	45,695	6.7
99% of expected vote in				✓	Other candidates	64,096	9.4
				99% of expected vote in			



From UNC Charlotte Police Logs: Increasing numbers of welfare checks and suspicious individuals on campus

Matthew De La Rosa & Sunnya Hadavi | Writing Managing Editor & Editor-in-Chief

The following are some of the descriptions from incidents logged in the UNC Charlotte campus police logs. The logs referenced are from Feb. 27 to March 9, 2024.

Feb. 26

Intoxicated Person - Sanford Hall

Officers responded to Sanford in reference to a female student that was breathing but unresponsive. The student was evaluated by CFD and Medic and transported to Atrium University for further care. It was unclear what, if any, impairing substance had been consumed.

Follow Up/Suicide Attempt - Denny

CAPS called and stated they had a non-resident student last week fill out paperwork, and on that paperwork, the student had reflected suicidal ideations. An attempt to make contact was made last week to no avail. Today, CMPD was called and checked his house, and he was not home. UNC-Charlotte Officers checked his classroom that he was scheduled for, and he was not in class. Multiple phone call attempts were made and there was no answer and no way of leaving a message. An email was sent requesting to make contact.

Suspicious Person - Miltimore Hall

Dispatch received a call about a female sleeping in the lounge on the sixth floor of Miltimore Hall. After verifying the subject had a trespass order on file, the individual was placed under arrest for 2nd-degree trespassing. Search incident to arrest revealed the subject had a firearm in their possession, and Officers also charged the individual with having a firearm on educational property as well as carrying a concealed weapon without a permit. The individual was issued a new trespass order, and a Maxient was completed.

Feb. 27

Suicide Attempt - Early College High School

CMPD called dispatch to report a student at the early college was suicidal and getting violent.

Officers responded and spoke to the student and his mother, and they stated that he was not violent but wanted to jump out of a moving car or off the overpass onto I-85. Medic arrived on scene and transported the student to CMC Main, and the mother would be following.

Feb. 29

Suspicious Person - Lynch Hall

Dispatch received a call from a student RA in Lynch Hall in regard to a male subject urinating on the drinking fountain. Officers responded to the area and promptly located the subject, who provided false names and ultimately refused to identify himself. Officers placed the subject under arrest for Resisting Delaying and Obstructing (RDO) and second-degree trespass. Officers offered to take the reporting person to the magistrate's Office to obtain a warrant for the indecent exposure he witnessed, but he declined. Environmental Health and Safety was contacted for the decontamination of the drinking fountain. An incident report, a trespass and a Maxient were completed.

March 1

Assault - Atkins Library

Student came to report that she was assaulted at the library by her ex-boyfriend. The two students were videotaping each other in the library, and he did not want to be videotaped, so he grabbed her wrist in an attempt to grab her phone.

Investigate - Robinson Hall

A non-resident student flagged down an Officer to report that someone put a boot on her vehicle that was parked on Suther Road. The student then went on to explain she paid the person using a Cash App to have the boot removed. The student explained that there were multiple boots being put on vehicles and that the person collecting the money was a scam. The student was referred to CMPD as the issue was taking place off campus, and information was added to the CAD. The CID section was made aware after another student called PPS.

March 3

Welfare Check - Boulevard 98

Dispatch received a call from a faculty member in reference to a request for a welfare check. The R/P stated they received a concerning text from a student in regard to academic frustrations. Officers made contact with the student at their residence who denied any thoughts of self-harm.

Investigate - Hunt Hall

Officer was flagged down by a resident student. The student felt threatened by a phone conversation she had with her ex-boyfriend. Dispatch alerted officers that a vehicle registered to the ex-boyfriend had entered campus minutes prior to the call. A canvas was made for the vehicle, with negative results. A report was taken. Due to it being after hours, the officer advised her to contact PPS in the morning if she wanted a ride to the Magistrates Office to file for a DV Protective Order.

Investigate - Cone Center

Dispatch received a call from a Chartwells employee in regard to an indecent solicitation that occurred in the male's restroom. Officers responded and met with the reporting person, who stated that while using the restroom, a male UNC Charlotte worker approached him

and signaled him for what appeared to be an unsolicited and unwelcomed act of sexual nature. The reporting person did not want to pursue any charges and stated no actual assault took place.

March 5

Welfare Check - Witherspoon Hall

Dispatch received a call from the parents of a UNC Charlotte resident student requesting a welfare check on their daughter in Witherspoon Hall. They had not been able to communicate with their daughter in a month and did not report anything else unusual. Officers responded and knocked on the room's door, but no one answered. Officers then proceeded to make entry and found no one in the room and didn't observe anything abnormal, it appeared all residents were away for spring break. Officers called the student's listed phone number and the emergency contact and left voice messages.

March 6

Investigate/Suicide Attempt - Hunt Hall

Officers responded to the Hunt Hall after CMPD receiving a call regarding an individual wanting to harm themselves. The Individual is a resident student of Hunt Hall. The Officers requested Medic, and the individual was transported to Atrium University for a psychological examination.

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Student Government Association president and vice president election voting March 19-20

Madison Hasley | Staff Writer



Courtesy of Grayson-Citrin

About the Grayson-Citrin ticket

Isaiah Grayson and James Citrin are running for student body president and vice president for the 2024-2025 academic year. Grayson and Citrin’s “Charlotte Over Everything” platform focuses on three key pillars: build, unite and grow. They hope to create a more robust and supportive academic and professional infrastructure by expanding student career opportunities, promoting accessibility and collaboration and ensuring academic flexibility for mental health. More information about their campaign can be found on their Instagram, @grayson.citrin. Grayson is a graduating third-year from Hendersonville, N.C., double majoring in political science and history with a minor in religious studies. In fall 2024, he will begin pursuing a master’s in public administration. Citrin is a sixth-year from Wilmington, N.C., double majoring in business management and political science with a minor in economics.

Grayson is the current vice president of the Student Government Association (SGA). Previously, he was a College of Liberal Arts & Sciences senator, parliamentarian and speaker pro tempore. Grayson was also the 2023-2024 president of Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity, UNC Association of Student Governments’ (ASG) secretary for the Select Committee on Internal Operations and one of the students selected for the Niner 9 homecoming court. Citrin serves as president of UNC Charlotte’s Interfraternity Council. He was also the president of Omicron Delta Kappa and Pi Sigma Alpha honor societies. Within the SGA, Citrin’s has served as upperclassman at-large senator, internal affairs vice chair and junior class council member. Citrin has also been an orientation counselor, UNC Charlotte’s ASG liaison and the director of finance for Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity.



Courtesy of Green-Effon

About the Green-Effon ticket

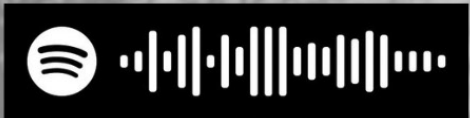
DJ Green and Dede Effon are running for student body president and vice president for the 2024-2025 academic year. Green and Effon’s “A New Way of Leading” platform includes inflation-based pay, creating a multicultural center, improving campus accessibility, increasing student involvement in academics and creating equity in the classroom. More information about their campaign can be found on their Instagram, @dj_and_dede. Green is a third-year from Walkertown, N.C., majoring in psychology and minoring in biology. Effon is a third-year from Fayetteville, N.C., double majoring in public health and communication studies. Green is a current upperclassman at-large senator and the chair of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee for the Student Government Association (SGA). Outside SGA, Green is a Charlotte social media ambassador, a Housing and Residence Life ambassador and

a mentor for the Student Advising for Freshman Excellence (SAFE) program. Additionally, Green is the founder and president of the I Want To Go To College organization. Effon is the chair of the Student Activities Fees Commission (SAFC), the founder and president of the Reproductive Justice Collective student organization and the Lead Peer Health Educator at the Center for Wellness Promotion. Effon has also served as a Niner Aux Guide and participated in the Student Union Advisory Board and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

VOTING IN THE SGA SPRING ELECTIONS WILL BE FROM MARCH 19-20 AT VOTE.CHARLOTTE.EDU

STATE OF AMERICA

WEEKLY PLAYLIST MARCH 11



Ronnie Taylor | Staff Writer

As primaries finish, many are thinking about the impending election. There are resources and people teaching about elections and helping with voter registration around every corner on campus. As students think about who to vote for, they also think about the America we live in today and the one they want to see in the future.

The Niner Times State of America playlist consists of songs from several genres, including pop, metal, indie, rock and hip-hop, that discuss the current feelings of citizens. With songs about war, women’s rights, beauty standards and more, this playlist will get you pumped up and ready to make a change.

Grayson-Citrin plan for a better academic and professional student infrastructure by prioritizing community feedback

Madison Hasley | Staff Writer

Isaiah Grayson and James Citrin are running for student body president and vice president for the 2024-2025 academic year.

The Niner Times interviewed Grayson and Citrin about their campaign ahead of the election. The following Q&A has been edited and condensed for clarity.



Niner Times: There are almost 30,000 students, and only two of you. How do you plan on representing the student body?

Grayson: You can't effectively represent the student body without engaging with and talking to them. In my previous administration with the student body president, Tife [Olusesi], we increased the Instagram following from a stagnant 2,400 to around 3,100. We also spent our entire budget on things and events for students. You can't effectively engage with and give student feedback unless you're talking to students on campus. We've been on campus every weekday, talking with students, tabling and getting feedback. That's the most simple way to engage with students. Just by standing in front of the Union or Prospector, you can engage with an extremely diverse amount of the student body.

NT: What makes you

qualified to run for this position?

Grayson: We are the most qualified because we are the most experienced. I have served in the student government since high school as a class representative and student body president for two years. I've also served as chapter president for my fraternity, along with six other positions. I currently serve as the fraternity leader educator, [was on] the Niner 9 homecoming court, [am the] director of media for Charlotte Poker Club and secretary of the Select Committee on Internal Operations for ASG.

Citrin: I was president of Omicron Delta Kappa and Pi Sigma Alpha honor societies and am currently the Interfraternity Council president. I've been an orientation counselor and done extensive honors research at the University. On top of our leadership experience alone, what comes with that is the relationships we've developed. I've had the pleasure of five one-on-one meetings with Chancellor [Sharon] Gaber, and recently, I met with Dr. Kevin Bailey, vice chancellor of student affairs. We're serious about our jobs. We go that extra step to foster better relationships, [meaning] we can better lead our respective students.

NT: Are there any specific organizations or groups you're looking forward to working with?

Grayson: As many as we can.

We've worked with a lot of organizations this past year that we have direct connections to, but we want to expand that. Under my previous administration, we established the Presidential Advisory Board, and a lot of concern is that we can only get the ones we have direct connections with involved. We want to expand that to

as many organizations as possible, which you can only do if you talk to the organizations. I have a list of every single student organization and their contact person from my advisor, and we want to reach out to every person and say, "How can we help you?" "Can we come to your meeting and present or talk to you at any point?" Town halls are a great way to do it; we've only had one or two, but if we do those more frequently, they'll be effective because it's an open forum. If we advertise them properly by talking to students, I believe we can get more people to come out.

NT: If you could change anything about Charlotte, let's say within the first month, what would it be? Or what pressing issues do you want to tackle first?

Grayson: Safety and security. We saw what happened on Feb. 1 and instantly asked Chief [Jeffery] Baker, "What's going on?" The Niner Times posted about an armed [individual] on campus; students were also confused. We want to hold Emergency Management accountable. Why are students not being informed of possible threats to campus? Why not swiftly? We want to call for more enhanced features in the LiveSafe app and more frequent and direct communication. [We want to] ensure that students are informed because they should feel safe when they're coming to campus. And the fact that we don't see that is unacceptable.

NT: Why should people vote for you instead of the other candidates?

Grayson: Because we want it. We're out there showing we want it, which the other candidates haven't done at all. We've been on campus every day; I haven't seen them a single time. We are talking to students, [and] we're actually taking action. I heard at a fraternity conference that "Execution is always going to be better than any words you say." That is exactly what we're doing: going out there and engaging with students. We want to support students, engage with them, be involved with them and represent them. And we've proven that time and time again.

NT: Any other comments?

Citrin: Instagram is our direct line of communication. On average, we respond in about two hours. If you want to talk to one of us in particular, put our name at the start of the DM, and we'll answer it.

Green-Effon hope to change the culture of Student Government, prioritizing involvement and equitable spaces

Madison Hasley | Staff Writer

DJ Green and Dede Effon are running for student body president and vice president for the 2024-2025 academic year.

The Niner Times interviewed Green and Effon about their campaign ahead of the election. The following Q&A has been edited and condensed for clarity.

Niner Times: There are almost 30,000 students, and only two of you. How do you plan on representing the student body?

Green and Effon: We recognize the importance of a diverse and inclusive team. While our individual identities may align with some aspects of the student body, we acknowledge the limitations in connecting with all communities. Our strategy involves building a comprehensive team that spans across a spectrum of campus identities. Collaboration is a cornerstone of our values, emphasizing mutual understanding and allyship. We aim to create a supportive environment for all communities, contributing to the collective growth and well-being of our diverse student body.

NT: What makes you qualified to run for this position?

Green and Effon: Our qualifications stem from a unique leadership tenure on campus. Throughout our engagement, we've not only collaborated closely with campus administration but have also nurtured genuine relationships with them. Beyond administrative interactions, our impact extends to the student body through initiatives. These efforts are rooted in a commitment to service for the community, which has played a significant role in serving members of the Charlotte community. With experience in housing; reproductive justice; diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), we plan on using our experiences and understanding of the campus to bring these initiatives to life.

NT: What motivated you to run together? And what's the message behind your platform?

Green and Effon: We have known each other since our freshman year. Both serving on the DEI committee of SGA and several University Advisory Boards, we found a common understanding of what the campus wants and what we also want to provide to the campus. Our working dynamic feeds off each other, and we are a powerful team that brings our efforts together.

The message behind our platform is to be au-

thentic. It's easy to lose yourself in leadership, but we believe that we have been authentic since the start and want to maintain that. We want to create an authentic community with our peers that we do and will learn to know. One that does not only represent the student body but also advocates and works to understand the student body.

NT: Are there any specific organizations or groups you're looking forward to working with?

Green and Effon: We are excited to work with all organizations. Especially our multicultural organizations, as we are expanding our search for a multicultural center on campus and inviting that we started. We are also looking to work with all organizations to improve the funding so students can produce more events on campus. With Dede's experience as Chair of the Student Activity Fees Commission this past year, she has gained great insight into how the funding process can be improved. We are also excited to work with leaders who are bringing new organizations to the campus and how we can help them grow and become sustainable in succession.

NT: If you could change anything about Charlotte, let's say within the first month, what would it be? What pressing issues do you want to tackle first?

Green and Effon: We want to work closely with [SGA's] the Student Involvement Team and Organizational Ways and Means Committee (OWAM) to reassess the grant process. We want to change the application on Niner Engage, as well as the process in which OWAM reviews its grants.

NT: What stands out to you as your favorite part of Charlotte, or what do you appreciate most about the community?

Green and Effon: We appreciate the opportunities that the Charlotte community provides. Not once have we not felt that there

was not a space for our leadership growth and community engagement.

NT: Why should people vote for you instead of the other candidates?

Green and Effon: Students should vote for us because we are looking to change the culture of Student Government. We are not looking for your typical leaders. We are looking for the stakeholders — students who are doing things behind the scenes. We want everyone to be part of our journey.

NT: Any other comments?

Green and Effon: Being Black leaders at a predominantly white university comes with

its own challenges to overcome. By overcoming it with a community of other leaders we are not only implementing our vision but everyone's vision. We see the work that you are doing, and we want to help you with those things, too. We are all students, and we have to look out for each other.

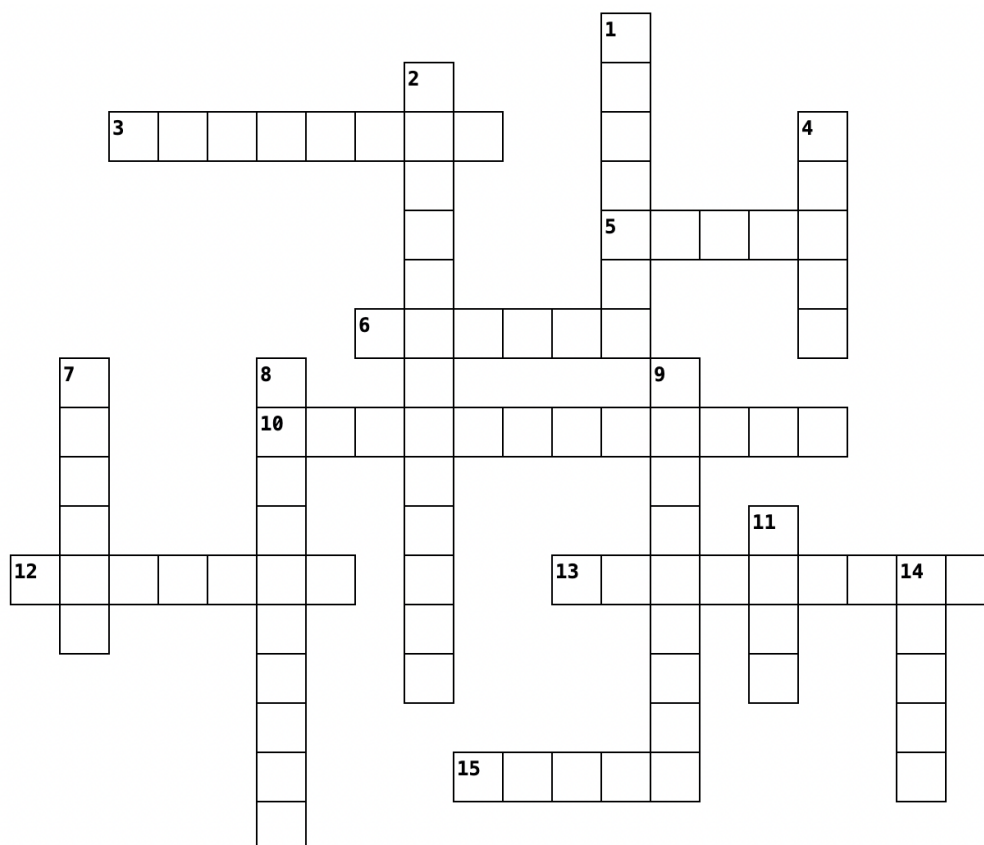


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THE CHARLOTTE HORNETS BASKETBALL TEAM GETS ITS NAME FROM BRITISH GENERAL CORNWALLIS, WHO DESCRIBED CHARLOTTE AS "A HORNET'S NEST OF REBELLION" DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR.



Across

3. Main character of Dune, Paul _____
5. Candidate who Roy Cooper is endorsing for governor
6. President of Fine9, Teyana _____
10. Location of 2024 NFL Combine
12. Co-founder of Jamil Niner Student Pantry
13. Governor of North Carolina
15. Presidential candidate running under “A New Way of Leading” platform

Down

1. Current vice president of the Student Government Association
2. _____ Student Front
4. Residence hall in which a drinking fountain was urinated on
7. Newly renovated dining hall, _____ 704
8. Director of Dune, Denis _____
9. Type of injury that Charlotte baseball's redshirt senior right-handed pitcher, Tony Rossi, is recovering from
11. Positive spin on FOMO
14. _____ Okie-Anoma of the 2024 NFL Combine

Crossword by Niner Times Editorial Board

Higher education must recognize food insecurity among students on campus

Dakota Currier | Asst. Opinion Editor

Food insecurity is the lack of consistent access to healthy food that allows someone to live a healthy and active lifestyle. Universities must recognize students with food insecurity and better promote campus resources.

According to Dr. Nicole Peterson of the Anthropology Department at UNC Charlotte, roughly one in five college students experience food insecurity. This number needs to change.

Efforts throughout the campus among professors and students work to reduce this number. Food pantries such as the Jamil Niner Student Pantry and The Bulb partnered with the Levine Scholars Program, provide food and fresh produce to students.

Dr. Kim Buch and Sean Langley co-founded the Jamil Niner Student Pantry with three goals in mind.

“Our first goal is to serve the food insecurity needs of our students, the second goal is to raise awareness and educate the campus community about the problem, and the third goal is to provide this service learning site for our students to learn how to serve,” said Buch.

Recognizing the problem

Food pantries provide students with a free, non-judgmental resource to get good nutritious foods and food advice. They provide access to fresh produce and dry goods to help students and staff combat their busy schedules.

Faculty can play a major role in helping find students access to these kinds of resources and, in some cases, even become the ones providing them.

“Sean [Langley] was seeing it in his work, but I wasn’t seeing it in the classroom,” said Buch.

Both began to realize the struggle of food insecurity on and off campus.

“I found one student over the summer who was sleeping in a closet in the Cone building. He was an international student; he didn’t have enough money to go back home in the summer,” said Langley.

International students need access to supportive services and resources on and off campus in order to provide for themselves.

Students need help finding the time on top of their studies to work a job and provide meaningful income for themselves.

“That time element is something I’ve looked at, especially with college students, as being an important factor,” said Peterson.

Access to free time is a major barrier to students’ ability to feed and sustain themselves. This type of limitation gives students two choices: hunger or education. A choice that no one should feel pressured to pick between.

Awareness

Having to acknowledge that students cannot eat is something neither people or institutions want to bring into the light.

“One of our barriers was always awareness. I think some people didn’t want to know there was a food security issue on campus. I think that was a difficult realization for administration and something they weren’t interested in reporting,” said Buch.

Taking time to acknowledge these issues is one thing, but the true struggle lies in addressing them, often addressing them long-term as well.

“It’s not as if just during the school year they’re going to struggle with food insecurity; it’s a year-long cycle,” said Langley.

It is important to recognize food insecurity as an ongoing issue for many, not just a one-time college student problem. Faculty and staff can also struggle with food insecurity. Efforts should also be made on behalf of these staff members, and similar struggles should be acknowledged.

Facing stigma

Stigma can play a huge role in why people do not seek out the help they may need, for fear of what others will think or simply do not understand they are facing the need for help.

It is important to eliminate the stigma around food pantries and seeking help for finding nutrition assistance.

Food pantries like the Jamil Niner Pantry and The Bulb need support, either by visiting them if you need help or volunteering to spread awareness.

“We have helped to raise awareness and educate the campus about this problem. Yes, it is a problem, and no, we don’t need to push it under the rug. We need to acknowledge it and do everything that we can as a campus to show we are aware of it,” said Buch.

FOMO counters independence and a strong sense of self

Brandon Farrington | Contributor

Students miss out on opportunities to have fun, enjoy life or get away from stressors daily. Even worse, sometimes missing out can cause more stress. There are ways to accept missing out on these kinds of events and use them as opportunities to take care of yourself instead.

It could be anything from missing a movie or TV show near release or missing a night out with friends. At some point, everyone struggles with the “fear of missing out” (FOMO).

There are two causes of FOMO to consider: financial and social causes. An example that makes use of both might be a TV show that friends like or even a dinner invitation. Not everyone’s financial priorities are the same, and that is natural.

You may want to keep up with your friends but may not be able to afford the service to watch the show or may not feel okay asking for someone’s login information. And yet there are worse, more harmful situations to find one’s self in with FOMO.

The Cleveland Clinic suggests the “joy of missing out” (JOMO) as a solution to FOMO.

Their recommendations for playing out this idea include taking time away from technology and setting boundaries socially. Although it may work for some, is breaking from technology not excessive?

Technology, like cell phones, is a core part of modern life and of one’s productivity. Why should anyone cut out digital technology to make other people or other factors stop making them feel bad?

Perhaps it is not the technology we use but how and why we use it. A key part of the discussion of JOMO missing from the previous article is a strong sense of self — a conviction.

“In the past, I never really did the things that I wanted because my friends didn’t do it. And whatever they did, I followed because I didn’t want to feel left out,” said fourth-year Charlotte student Steven Xiong. “So I put myself through an on-campus program for a few weeks. It was probably the best time of my life. I made new friends and learned more about myself as a person.”

As Xiong did, processing stress and anxiety may prove to be the key to managing FOMO and discovering JOMO.

Tchiki Davis, as referenced in the CNET article on FOMO, suggests that FOMO is created inside us, not outside.

“Why do we even get that feeling? Are we feeling like we want to be socially connected? Are we feeling lonely? Or are we feeling anxious or sad, or is there some sort of emotional motivator that gets us to want to purchase things, or to want to do things that we don’t normally do or that we aren’t invited to?” said Davis.

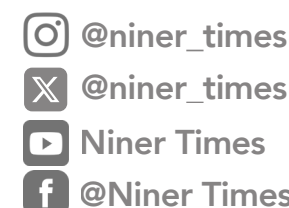
When looking at the root of the problem with FOMO, we need to consider ourselves as part of the problem. What do we want, and how do we want it? Do we need it? Can we live without it? Can this be put off to have at a later time? The concept of ‘missing out’ has a built-in time-sensitive nature to it.

TV shows on subscription services, products that are mass-produced and those that have little-to-no time constraints and can be enjoyed

another time. And when it comes to having one’s time and money demanded of them, it requires a strong conviction of self to deny that demand.

A better way to see JOMO might be to view it as coming from security rather than by which the insecurities of FOMO are maintained. This happens to be a way that companies and social media use FOMO to make their customers and users feel worse about not buying things or not engaging with content.

FOLLOW OUR SOCIALS!



Charlotte baseball's Tony Rossi from the mend to the mound



Charlotte baseball's redshirt senior right-handed pitcher, Tony Rossi, getting ready to throw a pitch in a game against West Virginia on Feb. 24. | Chris Crews/Niner Times

Sam Perry | Staff Writer

Nothing is more terrifying than when you find out that one of the few constants in your life could be gone forever, and for pitchers, that fear floods when you hear the words “Tommy John surgery.”

This fear became very real for Charlotte baseball's redshirt senior right-handed pitcher Tony Rossi as he suffered Tommy John in May of 2022.

When someone faces a life-altering hardship, they either question what they believe or stand tall in their beliefs and use it to fuel their comeback. Rossi chose the latter as he turned to his faith in God to power through his rehab process.

“I would say I really strengthened my relationship with God, and looking at that every single day helped me through my faith,” said Rossi.

Rehab 2023 season

The 2023 season was a very successful season for Charlotte baseball as a whole, going on to win the Conference USA (C-USA) tournament championship, but Rossi had a different experience. He had to watch from the bench as he rehabilitated his elbow.

He was not alone in the rehab process as graduate student left-handed pitcher AJ Wilson was rehabbing an injury having surgery a couple of days from when Rossi had surgery, so they went through it together, pushing each other to get back.

“Some people that helped were Donna Nimmo and Eric McKibban. I had surgery two days apart from AJ Wilson, so it's kind of a day-to-day thing that all four of us really just attacked from a day-to-day perspective,” said Rossi.

Wilson returned during the 2023 season while Rossi was still on the mend. He had to watch as his teammates found success lifting the C-USA trophy and making an NCAA regional. He used that to fuel his recovery, wanting to find that success for himself and the team in 2024 as a part of the American Athletic Conference.

“I didn't travel to the conference tournament, so seeing them dogpile on TV was just extra motivation [to get back],” said Rossi.

2024 expectations and growth

Coming into the 2024 season, Rossi was highly touted, as he was listed as the No. 49 best relief pitcher coming into the season with high hopes and expectations in his first season back

from Tommy John.

“It's awesome, but at the end of the day, it doesn't really matter because we still gotta win,” said Rossi. “[We] still want to go to Omaha and still want to win as many games as possible. So that's more the focus than a ranking.”

Rossi not only rehabbed his injury in 2023 but also grew as a leader, with Head Coach Robert Woodard seeing him as a leader in the bullpen. Rossi used his time out with injury last year, to develop his leadership capabilities and add more value to himself in the 49ers clubhouse.

“When I was rehabbing, I wasn't necessarily a fan; I still felt like I was a part of the team but kind of outside looking in,” said Rossi. “I saw how some of the older guys at that time led and held people accountable.”

Returning to the mound and finding success

Rossi returned to the mound for Charlotte during the team's opening weekend series against Virginia Tech on Feb. 18. Making the return after all the ups and downs of battling back from the injury was emotional yet fulfilling, seeing his faith fulfilled, knowing he could come back but seeing it come to fruition against the Hokies.

“The rehab process — there were times I was in tears, and I mean, it was tough,” said Rossi. “When I finally got back on the mound, the joy and adrenaline kicked in. I was just so happy to be back on that.”

Rossi threw 2.2 innings in relief, not allowing a hit while striking out four batters, earning the win and giving the 49ers their first victory of the season.

Rossi has found significant success on the mound, making six appearances with a 1-0 record, not allowing a run while striking out 22 batters with just five walks over 12.1 innings pitched on the season. He also recorded four saves, which tied him No. 3 in the nation for saves.

Woodard has used him in high-leverage situations all season, helping be the stabilizing force out of the bullpen whenever needed. Having the confidence from the coaching staff has given him a boost this season, helping him gain confidence in himself to succeed.

“It's huge, especially being an older guy and coming back from rehab, just like still having it. It means a lot that he [Woodard] still trusts me in those situations,” said Rossi.

Charlotte football's Eyabi Okie-Anoma participates in the 2024 NFL Combine

Kelli Blackburn | Staff Writer

As the NFL Combine was brought back to Indianapolis this year, all eyes have been set on those who had made their mark in college football. One of those prospects is Charlotte's very own defensive lineman, Eyabi Okie-Anoma from the class of 2023.

From Feb. 26 to March 3, 2024, Okie-Anoma participated in the week's activities at the 2024 NFL Combine. As 49er Head Coach Biff Poggi confirmed, Okie-Anoma was invited to the Combine on Jan. 31.

Additionally, the lineman was recently named to the 2024 East-West Shrine Bowl, which was played on Feb. 1. He totaled two tackles for the game as a substitute but had electric workouts through practices and drills.

Details from the Combine

Okie-Anoma took part in the measurements and media sessions at the Combine but opted

out of the 40-yard dash and drills. He checked in to be 6 feet 4.50 inches and 260 lbs, with a 79.38-inch wingspan, 33.50-inch arm length and 9.50-inch hand size.

During interviews, several teams did not hesitate to ask about Okie-Anoma's past, as he was dismissed from Alabama and Houston for undisclosed reasons.

"A lot of things have humbled me," said Okie-Anoma. "Eighteen-year-old Eyabi is not 24-year-old Eyabi."

Scouting assessment

In 2018, Okie-Anoma was the No. 4 ranked player in the high school recruiting class. He lined up alongside familiar NFL faces like Trevor Lawrence, Micah Parsons and Justin Fields.

Okie-Anoma received a 5.96 Prospect Grade on NFL.com, with a 65 average through the NFL Next Gen Stats. With desirable size and

exceptional athleticism, he has many traits that scouts have been looking for.

He is also remarkably quick for a rusher, creating a great speed-to-power conversion for his gameplay.

The defensive lineman wrapped up his 2023 season with 23 solo tackles, 5.5 sacks and one forced fumble. As for career totals, he closed out his calling of college football with 83 tackles, three passes defended, 9.5 sacks and one forced fumble.

Okie-Anoma's mature mentality

The 2023 American Athletic All-Conference Second-Teamer has not only been trying to make a name for himself before the upcoming 2024 NFL Draft through his gameplay but also the mentality and attitude he shares among coaches and teammates.

"My ability has never been questioned. It's about how mature I've gotten," Okie-Anoma told Queen City News in Indianapolis. "Having to rebuild my brand just gives me a different perspective to be grateful for every opportunity given to me."

Poggi has expressed his fondness for Okie-Anoma as he was one of Poggi's high school players from St. Frances Academy before rekindling at the University of Michigan and landing at Charlotte in 2023.

"Overcome great obstacles and much heartache in his life," said Poggi in response to a tweet about Okie-Anoma's struggles. "I'm really proud of him and love this kid."

Looking to the draft

Okie-Anoma could potentially be in the league with other Charlotte alumni as this year's NFL draft will take place from April 25-27 in Detroit. Wide receiver Grant DuBose was drafted by the Green Bay Packers with the No. 256 pick in the 2023 NFL Draft.

Other notable defensive players from Charlotte who are currently in the league include Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker Alex Highsmith and defensive tackle Larry Ogunjobi.

Come draft day, teams who are looking for a dynamic edge rusher will certainly have their eye out on Okie-Anoma. He has plenty of potential to make room for growth and success for any given defense in the league.

For Okie-Anoma, the NFL Combine is just another step towards the dream of making a 53-man roster in the NFL.



Charlotte football's graduate student defensive lineman Eyabi Okie-Anoma jumps over three defenders in a game against Georgia State on Sept. 16, 2023. | Aravind Pasupathi/Niner Times

CLT CHARLOTTE 49ERS SCOREBOARD RECENT GAMES MARCH 1 - 10

MEN'S BASKETBALL
March 2: South Florida 76, Charlotte 61
March 6: Charlotte 69, Rice 64
March 9: Charlotte 82, East Carolina 72

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
March 3: FAU 56, Charlotte 56
March 5: East Carolina 71, Charlotte 66

SOFTBALL
March 3: Minnesota 11, Charlotte 8
March 4: Minnesota 14, Charlotte 4
March 8: USF 4, Charlotte 3
March 9: Charlotte 12, USF 1
March 9: Charlotte 5, USF 1

BASEBALL
March 3: Old Dominion 3, Charlotte 0
March 5: Charlotte 5, Western Carolina 2
March 8: Charlotte 9, Maryland 5
March 10: Maryland 13, Charlotte 2
March 10: Maryland 3, Charlotte 2

WOMEN'S TENNIS
March 2: Charlotte 4, William & Mary 0
March 2: Charlotte 4, South Carolina State 0
March 8: Charlotte 4, Columbia 1

MEN'S TENNIS
March 1: Louisiana 4, Charlotte 3
March 3: Tulane 5, Charlotte 2

OVERALL STANDINGS
Men's basketball: 19-11, 13-5
Women's basketball: 16-14, 9-9
Baseball: 8-8, 0-0
Softball: 12-9, 2-1
Men's tennis: 11-5, 0-0
Women's tennis: 7-4, 0-0

Film Review: Denis Villeneuve delivers a masterpiece in ‘Dune: Part Two’

Davis Cuffe | Asst. Sports Editor

Warning: This article contains spoilers for “Dune” (2021).

As a follow-up to the acclaimed 2021 film “Dune” with six Oscar wins, director Denis Villeneuve provides a generationally great sequel in “Dune: Part Two.”

The film is a live-action adaptation of Frank Herbert’s 1965 novel “Dune.” The book follows the story of Paul Atreides, the heir to the powerful Atreides family tasked with ruling the world of Arrakis.

Timothée Chalamet plays Atreides as the lead actor in both “Dune” and “Dune: Part Two.” Chalamet is nothing short of brilliant in this role, especially so in “Dune: Part Two.”

The film opens up directly after the conclusion of its predecessor. In “Dune,” House Atreides’ Arrakis settlement was decimated at the hands of the villainous House Harkonnen. This leaves Atreides, now the Duke of Arrakis, following his father’s death to survive with the Fremen, the native people of Arrakis. Paul’s supposed destiny as the messiah of the Fremen and the visions that plague him because of this weigh heavier than his new crown. This internal battle between his humanity and his prophesied role as the universe’s savior drives the story.

With Atreides at the center of the film’s plot, Chalamet’s performance is crucial in making the movie as good as it is. In the third act, Atreides

undergoes massive changes to his character, making him almost entirely different. Chalamet flawlessly handles this change and everything that comes with it. He commands attention in every scene.

While Chalamet is outstanding, he does not entirely steal the show. Supporting actors Austin Butler and Zendaya shine in their respective roles as Feyd-Rautha Harkonnen and Chani. Butler’s Feyd-Rautha acts as the foil to Atreides. Butler is unrecognizable in this role, Feyd-Rautha is deeply unnerving and a character you cannot take your eyes off of. On the other hand, Zendaya’s Chani is the perfect complement to Atreides. While the love interest to the film’s main character, Chani is robustly dynamic and humanizes the film.

These performances are two of many standout supporting acts in this film. Rebecca Ferguson’s Lady Jessica and Javier Bardem’s Stilgar, among others, bring extra firepower to an overwhelmingly well-acted movie.

Performances may not even be the primary attractor in this film. Even grander and more otherworldly than the film’s prequel, the visuals in “Dune: Part Two” are stunning. The cinematographer, Greig Fraser, earned an Oscar for cinematography for the first “Dune” movie and may be in line for another following the sequel.

Shot deep in the Arabian Desert, Fraser captures the essence of Arrakis in every scene

of this film. The film was shot entirely in IMAX, leaving room for the pure grandiosity of this movie.

The budget for “Dune: Part Two” was \$190 million, and not a penny went to waste. The movie captures an entirely alien world and blends practical effects and CGI to create a delicious visual feast. Not a second of poorly crafted visuals sent me from Arrakis and back to earth. Even the more outlandish scenes of skyscraper-sized sandworms and explosive action sequences had me enraptured.

The costume design is extraordinary. Everything from the more regal wear of universal royalty to religious garb worn by Fremen and Bene Gesserit figures to suits worn in battle is crafted masterfully.

The sound design by Hans Zimmer, the two-time Academy Award-winning composer, is as masterful as the rest of this movie. Zimmer grips the audience with an awe-inspiring sound that pushes the movie forward while pulling the audience in.

Despite the otherworldly film and its imposing story, it remains grounded, providing an immersive experience for the viewer. The film is devoid of clichés that typically make characters likable, but it is impossible not to find yourself irreparably attached to these characters and this story.

The 166-minute runtime is paced perfectly. I genuinely would have sat in the theatre for days; there was not a dull or unimportant moment in the entirety of the film. While the plot is complex and grand, it is easy to follow; Villeneuve tells the film’s story in an easily digestible manner.

It is challenging to find a gripe with this film. Villeneuve and Chalamet were operating on another level in the making of this. “Dune: Part Two” is truly a modern accomplishment of filmmaking, a massive moment in cultural history. Rarely does art have this level of tremendousness and audacity. “Dune: Part Two” cements itself among the greatest films ever.

Rating: 10/10



Courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures

MARCH 2ND to MARCH 23RD

ISSUE 55
ART EXHIBITION

RECEPTION
Wednesday, March 20TH
5PM to 7PM

Fine9 creates a comfortable space for K-pop enthusiasts and dancers at UNC Charlotte

Guadalupe Aguilar Sosa | Asst. Arts & Culture Editor

Many students are unable to showcase their passions outside of academics. At Fine9, students can let their artistry shine by teaching choreographies, learning dances and meeting those with the same interest in K-pop.

Fine9 is a K-pop dance club that focuses on helping students at UNC Charlotte improve their dancing skills. This club gives those interested in K-pop music and dance opportunities to interact with others who share the same interests.

Teyana Hudson, second-year student and president of Fine9, aims to make students feel empowered and confident in their dancing ability. She wants to create a safe space where students can freely show their love for K-pop.

As president of Fine9, Hudson has learned to respect other people's differences.

"There are a lot of different people in Fine9 — different hobbies, majors, walks of life. I like being around people who are so different from me. We have similar interests, of course, but I like learning about other people," said Hudson.

In Fine9, students can join the dance crew, which performs for covers and showcases. Students can join the club without needing to join the dance crew. Members can learn just as much about dancing as the dance crew by attending workshops.

"I like the community we have. I feel so at home in Fine9. I feel like [my members] can be themselves. I want it to be like that for new [members]," said Hudson.

On Jan. 24, the Fine9 dance crew was invited by North Carolina State University's K-pop club, KPACK, for their showcase. At the showcase,

Fine9 spotlighted their dancing skills and performed in front of schools all over North Carolina.

One of Hudson's main goals as president of Fine9 is to be more active on social media.

Creating relationships with other universities and K-pop groups, like KPACK, would allow their social media to expand. Hudson hopes to find a way to invite other universities' K-pop dance organizations to UNC Charlotte for their own showcase.

"I want more connection with other K-pop groups. Being able to talk to other school's K-pop groups is really cool. I feel like we're trying to find a way we can invite other groups here, too. I think social media and more connections would be good," says Hudson.

In Fine9, seven dance coordinators teach

and hold auditions for the dance crew. The final lineup has around 40 students chosen for the year and can perform in dance covers. Dance covers are shared on their social media and YouTube channel, which has gathered over 20,000 views.

The most recent dance cover performance was "In Bloom" by Zerobaseone. This cover showcased nine dance crew members.

While there are multiple dance organizations at Charlotte, Fine9 stands out with its members' diverse backgrounds and the genre of music. There is no requirement to join as long as students like K-pop and are interested in the dances.

More information about Fine9 can be found on their Instagram, @fine9.uncc.



Fine9's dance cover of "ICY" by South Korean girl group ITZY. | Courtesy of Teyana Hudson/Fine9

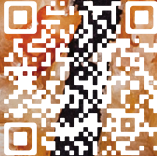


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