

MAKING A RELATIONSHIP WORK



WHEN YOUR LIFE IS BUSY

Tips for a healthy relationship for the active student, pg 11



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POLICE BLOTTER

Driving while impaired 2/2

An officer observed a crashed vehicle off the roadway. One subject was transported to Mecklenburg County Intake, and issued two North Carolina State Citations and a trespass order.

Larceny 2/3

Officers responded to a building in reference to a larceny of a laptop and cell phone charger.

Drug Related/Arrest 2/3

Officers responded to a building in reference to an odor of marijuana. One subject was transported to Mecklenburg County Intake and issued a North Carolina State Citation and trespass order.

Assault 2/4

Officers responded to a building in reference to an individual that was struck by a paint ball.

VIEW FULL BLOTTER AT
[HTTPS://POLICE.UNCC.EDU/POLICE-LOG](https://police.uncc.edu/police-log)

TABLE OF CONTENTS



NEWS

UNC Charlotte students and alumni run for public office: how their time at UNC Charlotte prepared them for office **Page 3**



OPINION

Athletes: the college cash drop: do student-athletes deserve a paycheck? **Page 5**



SPORTS

Coach Dink: Byron Dinkins is bridging the gap between the past and the present **Page 6**



A&E

The best films of the 2010s: picking out the best films of the past decade genre-by-genre **Page 8**



LIFESTYLE

Keep up the communication: and other tips on managing a relationship when you're busy **Page 11**

Five reasons why you should compost **Page 12**

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UNC CHARLOTTE STUDENTS AND ALUMNI RUN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

How their time at UNC Charlotte prepared them for office

by Megan Bird
News Editor



NEWS

UNC Charlotte students and alumni are running for elected office in the Nov. 2020 election cycle with primaries on March 3. They come from a wide range of graduate classes, but all attribute the University in some part with fostering their political aspirations.

Cade Lee

UNC Charlotte senior Cade Lee is running as a Democrat for the District 3 seat of the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners. Lee is outspoken about gun control, has started a chapter of March for Our



Photo courtesy of Cade Lee, by Paul Wesp

Lives at UNC Charlotte and has hosted a town-hall with former presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke. He also hopes to affect environmental policy and create more affordable housing.

Lee says he decided to run after the UNC Charlotte shooting that left two students dead and four others injured.

"While I didn't know them personally, Riley Howell and Reed Parlier are a huge reason I'm in this race. Drew Pescaro, Emily Houpt, Sean DeHart and Rami al-Ramadhan are also the reasons I'm in this. These individuals inspired me to stand up, call out corruption, complicity and ineffectiveness, and do everything in my power to end the elitist nature of local politics," Lee said.

Originally from Raleigh, Lee moved to Charlotte in 2017 to pursue degrees in international studies and political science at UNC Charlotte.

"UNC Charlotte helped prepare me to run for office because of the corruption the very institution propagates. UNC Charlotte indirectly taught me to question those in positions of leadership and to call out corruption wherever I see it, from the Chancellor's office to the Board of County Commissioners' dais."

Lee will face incumbent and current Chairman George Dunlap in the March 3 primary.

Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell

Democrat Susan Rodrigues McDowell is seeking reelection for the District 6 seat on the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners.

During her first term she served on the Health and Human Services, Environment, Intergovernmental, Economic Development, and Performance and Review Committees and was the Board liaison for the Domestic Violence Advisory Board and the Child Fatality Prevention and Protection Team.

"I have always been fiscally conservative, but I believe people are what matter," Rodriguez-McDowell says on her website.

Born in New York and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Rodriguez-McDowell received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from UNC Charlotte in 1993. Prior to assuming office in 2019, she worked as director of counseling services at Colorado Christian University, owned her own photography business and volunteered as vice chair for precinct 227.

Rodriguez-McDowell is currently the only Democrat running in District 6.



Photo courtesy of mecknc.gov

Tera Long

Tera Long is running as a Democrat for an at-large seat on the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners. Long hopes to prioritize healthcare and currently serves as chair of the Health Care Justice North Carolina legislative committee as well as a member of the Charlotte Area Fund Board. She earned a BA in anthropology and psychology and a graduate certificate in teaching



Photo courtesy of votelong2020.com

secondary education from UNC Charlotte.

"I will always owe a debt of gratitude to UNC Charlotte for helping me to develop the skills and providing the requisite background for public service as a future member of the Mecklenburg County Commission," said Long.

Lee will appear on the March 3 ballot with seven other Democrats, including two incumbents, all competing for three seats on the County Board of Commissioners.

Jacob Baum

UNC Charlotte senior Jacob Baum is running for the Republican nomination for N.C. House District 75 which encompasses his hometown of Kernersville.

According to Ballotpedia, Baum is particularly passionate about traffic and pedestrian safety, education policy and criminal justice reform. Baum is the Senate President Pro Tempore of the Student Government Association and is pursuing a degree in political science.

Baum says he was inspired to run by UNC Charlotte founder Bonnie Cone and UNC Charlotte alumnus Jake Johnson who began his political career at 19 years old and currently serves on the N.C. House.

"UNC Charlotte has provided ample student leadership positions which have helped develop my character and experience in public office through organizations like the Student Government. Our university administration, perhaps more than any other school in the UNC System, promotes student leadership and opportunities for students to be public officers," said Baum.

Baum will face incumbent Donny Lambeth in the March primary. If elected, he would be the youngest person to ever serve on the N.C. General Assembly.



Photo courtesy of Jacob Baum

Jonathan Peebles
Jonathan Peebles is running as a Democrat for N.C. House District 102. Peebles aims to increase the minimum wage to \$15/hour, expand Medicaid and build a high-speed rail from Richmond, VA to Atlanta, GA, among other goals.



Photo courtesy of Jonathan Peebles

Originally from Springfield, VA, Peebles moved to Charlotte in 2012 to pursue a second bachelor's degree in political science. After completing just a few undergraduate classes, he entered the Master of Public Administration program and took night classes while working during the day.

"I had a great experience at UNC Charlotte. I loved it. The professors were brilliant. They had such amazing life experiences and had done so much research that they were able to use it to explain real-life situations."

After graduating from UNC Charlotte, Peebles worked for the American Pitbull Foundation and is now at the Latin American Coalition.

Peebles says he's running because young people need more representation.

"There are probably a lot of UNC Charlotte

students in my situation; trying to pay high rent, working 2-3 jobs. With a bachelor's degree, many of us are still living paycheck to paycheck. One part of that is that we have to pay student loans that are way too high," said Peebles.

He will face off against three other Democrats in the March 3 election, including incumbent Becky Carney who has served for 17 years.

Terry Brown

Terry Brown is running as a Democrat for N.C. House District 92. Brown wants to address the school-to-prison pipeline, ensure improvements to Highway 160 and expand Medicaid, among other issues. He currently works as a litigation attorney at Womble Bond Dickson.

Originally from Fayetteville, Brown ('09) moved to Charlotte to pursue a bachelor's degree in political science. During his time at UNC Charlotte, he served as class president, campus activities board live entertainment director and student body secretary of student affairs.

"One of the most important things to me is making sure that they are engaged in the process," said Brown. "I want to ensure that students know they have a voice in our legislative process and allow them an opportunity to take an active role."

Brown is the only Democrat running in District 92 and will appear on the ballot in the November general election.



Photo courtesy of Terry Brown

Representative Mary Belk

Democrat Mary Belk is running as an incumbent for N.C. House District 88. She was first elected in 2017 and has since served two terms.

After raising four children, Belk came to UNC Charlotte and graduated with a bachelor's degree in political science. She has lived in Charlotte since 1969.

"UNC Charlotte taught me discipline, the relationship between the individual and government and how to deepen my knowledge about the philosophy and the practical application of political science. I had wonderful professors who were experts in their fields," she told the Niner Times.

"It makes me so proud to see how many more students and disciplines we teach at UNC Charlotte," she said.



Photo courtesy of ncleg.gov

During her time in office, Belk has sponsored a variety of bills including an act to limit solitary confinement for the mentally disabled, an act to protect individuals with preexisting medical conditions and an act to require the registration of assault weapons.

Belk will face Republican David Tondreau in the November general election.

State Senator Joyce Waddell

Democrat Joyce Waddell is seeking reelection as representative for N.C. Senate District 40. She has served three consecutive terms as state senator and has sponsored many bills related to education, law enforcement, Medicaid and more. Waddell is the first woman of color to serve in the Senate from Mecklenburg County.

Waddell earned a Master of Education degree from UNC Charlotte. She worked in the Charlotte Mecklenburg School district for over 21 years and served on the School Board.

Waddell is running unopposed in the primary and will face Republican Bobbie Shields in the November general election.



Photo courtesy of ncleg.gov

State Senator Mujtaba Mohammed

Democrat Mujtaba Mohammed is seeking reelection to N.C. Senate District 38. During his Senate career, Mohammed introduced bills to reinstate the income tax credit, modify school performance scores and grades, reenact a childcare tax credit and to raise the minimum wage to \$15/hour by 2024.

Originally from Toledo, Ohio but raised in Charlotte, Mohammed earned his bachelor's in history from UNC Charlotte and his juris doctor from North Carolina Central University. Prior to assuming office in 2019, he served as a public interest attorney.

Two other Democrats are running for Mohammed's seat in the March primary.

Depending on where they are registered, students will see many of these candidates on their ballots in March and November. Early voting will be held in Belk Gymnasium from Feb. 13 to Feb. 29.

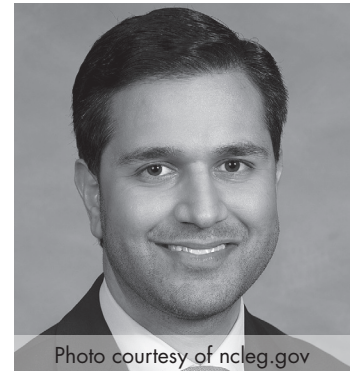


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ATHLETES: THE COLLEGE CASH CROP

Do student-athletes deserve a paycheck?

by Isaac Naylor
Staff Writer



College sports bring home big money for coaches, managers and the schools they serve. However, there's always one group missing who makes the whole show possible: the players. Student-athletes aren't paid and with the amount of revenue they generate for their schools, that undeniably raises an eyebrow, no matter your opinion.

In 2018, all of the men's sports raked in almost \$5 million for UNC Charlotte and nearly \$6 million just four years ago according to College Factual. March Madness, an almost-sacred national spectacle, brings in over \$1.32 billion in TV advertisements alone. It's a big business and much of that money is spent on new equipment, refurbished facilities and merchandise, but not a penny on the players.

That may be changing sooner than you think. In California, the NCAA recently started allowing student-athletes to profit off of their likeness. This is a complete 180 for an organization that has, for a long time, banned student-athletes from taking money. Setting a new precedent, this rule could spread nationwide, potentially ending the days of penniless players for college sports; however, the chance of this happening is slim to none, which leaves student-athletes on this campus and elsewhere unpaid under the pretext of being students, not athletes. Coining the term "student-athlete" was the courtesy of Walter Byers, the first-ever NCAA executive, back in 1964. The term then was used as a flimsy defense against worker compensation for these students.

Student-athletes do deserve paychecks. Here's my rationale: I am a student-journalist. My studies come first, but I'm still paid for what I do for this school even though it is recreational, not academic. The same should be said about athletes. They may be students, but they still work like employees. For many, sports are their career, and just like I will get a deposit for this story, they should be paid for their next game. To say otherwise is cowardly, greedy or both. If basic hourly pay is not an option, there should at least be a small stipend that comes as part of their scholarship. The one caveat for universities (including our own) is to provide compensation to cover medical bills in case a player is injured. That way, players won't lose out and get thrown out of school over a broken neck; college isn't cheap and the NCAA knows that.

To its credit, the NCAA does force all college athletes to have health insurance — it's a lucky rebuttal to my argument. But what it doesn't do is force colleges to pay the health costs for athletes. Should a player be injured, their parent's insurance is considered the main insurance for covering the cost of the injury. On the official NCAA website, the organization states that "during NCAA championships, the NCAA provides supplemental insurance of up to \$90,000 in medical expenses for student-athletes who are injured." However, colleges have the choice to deny any coverage for that \$90,000, making it useless. It comes down to cost. According to Duke Law Professor Paul Haagen, "A better system would cost a lot."

Another common counterargument I hear from people is that student-athletes are paid, not in cash but in sports scholarships. But on the contrary, you can't call it a payment if a player is injured and said 'payment' is taken away from them. Scholarships are a privilege that can be suspended if a player breaks a knee during the game or takes a knee during the national anthem. In a sense, players are at the mercy of their coach, the university and

their friendly neighborhood scholarship distributor.

It's easy for some angry armchair to say that players shouldn't be paid; they just want to see players grab the ball and run for their entertainment. But being an athlete in college isn't easy. When you're constantly practicing, lifting weights and balancing schoolwork all at once, free time dwindles and players run the risk of exhaustion. Let's not forget that the "student" in student-athlete comes first and a good GPA is the most important score; however, in a 2014 investigation, it was revealed that UNC Chapel Hill found a loophole around grades. For years, the school held fraudulent so-called "paper" classes to boost athlete GPAs. It's funny how when it comes to classes, they are athletes who need an easy A, but bring up a paycheck, and they're students who need to focus on their studies. It's bullshit.

Regardless, everyone should be paid for their work, whether it be at Waffle House or on turf. And denying anyone pay is a bad look. However, this school can be different. We don't have to follow in the footsteps of UNC Chapel Hill and can instead be the first in the UNC system that treats our athletes fairly. Payment and a decent education; that's the way.

There are two kinds of people who aren't paid: slaves and interns. And, to my knowledge, a student-athlete is neither.

**INTERCEPTION!
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Illustration by Isaac Naylor



COACH DINK

Byron Dinkins is bridging the gap between the past and the present

by Sam Palian
Sports Editor

“Can I say something bad about him? Because I can’t find anyone that will,” Charlotte 49ers Head Coach Ron Sanchez said about Byron Dinkins.

Dinkins, or “Dink” as he is more well-known, is in his second season as director of player development for the 49ers’ men’s basketball program. He may speak softly, but he has a loud love for basketball and everything that’s come of that love. Those who cross paths with Dinkins are likely to agree with Coach Sanchez. It’s difficult to find someone who has something negative to say.

“It means a lot. I do hear Coach all the time saying, ‘My goal is to find somebody that’s going to say something bad.’ And I think you can, if you look hard enough,” Dinkins said. “But to hear the things that have been said about me around here, it just makes me feel really good about trying to be who I say I am or talking to the kids about a way to do things.”

Asking Dinkins to join his staff was an easy call for Sanchez and was one of the very first calls he made after getting the head coaching gig. A Charlotte alumnus, Dinkins played for the 49ers from 1985-89 after growing up in Charlotte and attending East Mecklenburg High School. In an effort to stay close to his family, he was only really considering a couple schools not far from home and landed at Charlotte without even truly visiting the campus before committing.

Having attended a camp at Charlotte in the ninth grade, Dinkins caught the attention of Melvin Watkins who was an assistant coach at the time. Though he wasn’t really thinking about playing in college just yet, it turned out to be the perfect place for him.

“This place was beautiful even then. And what Coach (Jeff) Mullins was selling was a new attitude: We’re going to make this place good again. I remember the ‘77 team, I remember the final four team. Coach Watkins was coaching on the staff and he was a part of the team, so I wanted to do that; I wanted to help put this program back. And fortunately enough, we did progress each year, and the third year we won the conference tournament and made it to the NCAA, which was a big deal,”

Dinkins said. “So I think everybody kind of says our class revitalized the program and now, coming back as a coach, I’m coming back under similar circumstances. Program’s down, haven’t won a lot of games and I tell the guys all the time it can be done because I was a part of it, so you’ve got to believe in what Coach (Sanchez) says.”

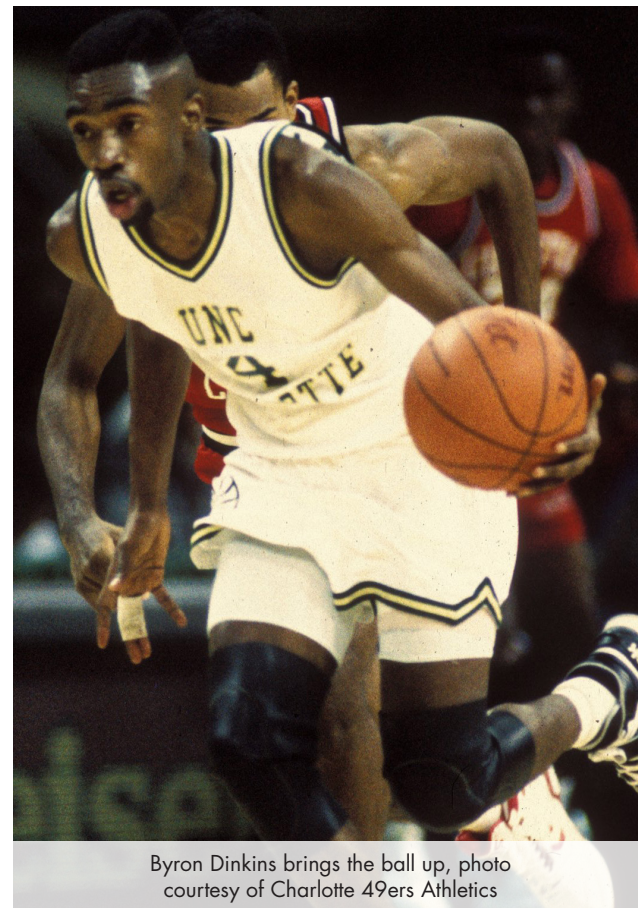
Off the top of his head, Dinkins can remember the program’s records from the season before he arrived and each of the years that he played. When the 6’2” guard came into the program, the team was coming off of a 5-23 record in the 1984-85 season. By the time he finished his career as a 49er, he had helped the Niners to achieve three winning seasons, a conference championship, an NIT appearance and to return to the NCAA Tournament for the first time in 11 years.

“You know, I ask him all the time, I say, ‘Dink, does this [season] resemble that?’ You know, because he did live through it...and it is hard. And that’s the experience that I’m talking about: that he’s been able to share with some of the guys like, ‘Hey, it’s okay, this is part of the journey. I traveled it, you know,’” Sanchez said. “So when you get that type of validation from someone who went through it when it was hard, somebody who helped to build it and had personal success and his teams had success, it’s just a little more encouraging.”

Dinkins expressed that the current state of Charlotte Men’s Basketball and the way the program was revitalized when he was playing are “eerily similar.” No one wants to speak too soon but it’s hard not to draw the comparison nonetheless.

“You know, we really do look at it and the situations are very similar,” Sanchez said. “I wish that, you know, I could say the results are going to be the same. But him going through it definitely is encouraging for me as a coach and definitely encouraging for the players who at times may hit some type of an obstacle, you know?”

Dinkins wasn’t heavily recruited coming out of high school and didn’t quite see the same potential everyone else saw in him at first. Of course, he just wanted to play and get an education close to home, but as his time playing at the collegiate level was



Byron Dinkins brings the ball up, photo courtesy of Charlotte 49ers Athletics

nearing its end, the idea of playing professionally was becoming real.

Dinkins was improving in his sophomore season along with the program as a whole, and by his junior season he’d hear people talking about how he might leave to go to the NBA and forego his senior season. Reluctant to postpone his education, Dinkins stayed at Charlotte for his final season.

At the conclusion of his collegiate career, Dinkins went on to spend two seasons in the NBA, starting with the Houston Rockets as an undrafted free agent in the 1989-90 season. He also played for both the San Antonio Spurs and the Indiana Pacers amidst the 1990-91 season. Following his two-year stint with the NBA, he played three seasons in the CBA which is now the G League.



Byron Dinkins talks to Luka Vasic on the bench, photo by Chris Crews

Dinkins also spent one year playing in Germany, one year in Cyprus and one year playing in the ABA as well as eight years in Greece. The guard led the Greek League in assists in 1996 and in 2000 and had a big hand in Panathinaikos winning the FIBA Intercontinental Cup in 1997. Amidst his professional career, Dinkins returned to Charlotte to complete two more classes to obtain his degree in Human Services in 1995. Before trying his hand at professional basketball, Dinkins made a promise to his mother and to Coach Mullins that he would come back and finish his education.

But Dinkins' career as basketball player, both collegiately and professionally, was far from the only thing that sold Sanchez on bringing the 49er back to his alma mater.

"Put it like this: First of all...our goals as a staff were not solely performance based as far as winning and losing. You know, we as a staff wanted to make sure that our alumni felt welcome back home. You know, from my discussions with some former players, I had heard that they had not been on campus in a long time, that for some reason they had just kind of moved on with their lives a bit," Sanchez said. "And we felt that Dink was going to bridge that gap tremendously, almost...seamlessly without any interruption. Like it was just going to happen. And to be honest, it's been 10 times better than I ever thought it would be."

Connecting people who have been a part of the program in the past and who are a part of it now has been something Dinkins has accomplished simply by being here. Aside from Dinkins' strong connection to other Charlotte 49ers, his character

is what's more compelling about him.

"The way that people just praised him, you know, for the kind of man that he was. A mentor to young men, a person who...was of tremendous character," Sanchez said. "I said it in my press conference, you need people that you can struggle with before you can have success. And I knew that he was one of those people...so that made it really, really easy for me to say, 'Okay, this is the first person that I want to...reach out to for his position.'"

Prior to taking the job at Charlotte, Dinkins spent 2010-2016 as the head coach for Northside Christian Academy and 2016-2018 as head coach at Carmel Christian School and had tremendous success in his coaching career overall. A winning record of 210-30 and four state championships came from just those eight seasons. In his time at Northside, the program earned a chance at the state title each of the six seasons he was at the helm.

"I wanted to grow them into young men that could then go out and hopefully function in today's society and today's world and have the tools to do that because they're going to become fathers and husbands and I've had some that have called back, 'Coach, I'm getting married' or 'Coach, I just had my first child.' And those are the rewarding things for me, to see them grow as young men," Dinkins said. "It wasn't the basketball part. I had their ear because I had been where they wanted to go and I had done what they wanted to do, so I had their ear then because of basketball. Basketball is just a tool to then implement and instill values and character and work ethic and all those things. Basketball is a

tool to do that."

While his skill and love for the game benefited Dinkins professionally, it also led to meeting his wife in college, opportunities to mentor young men and the ability to travel places he never would've experienced. It even landed him back with his hometown Charlotte 49ers.

"The love of the game is always in me and I still love it just as much today because of, I guess what it's done for me, and I just try to let people know, or let the young people know that this game can take you places," Dinkins said. "Everybody's outcome is going to be different. There's different levels and you might not make it to the NBA, but it might take you to college, so wherever the ball takes you, just put that same amount of effort in and be thankful for that. I just love this game so much."

"The love of the game is always in me and I still love it just as much today because of, I guess what it's done for me, and I just try to let people know, or let the young people know that this game can take you places."

- Byron Dinkins



THE BEST FILMS OF THE 2010S

Picking out the best films of the past decade genre-by-genre

by William Ingersoll
Staff Writer

Best Action - "Baby Driver" (2017)

While the "John Wick" series may have an edge in the pure action aspect, Edgar Wright's latest classic manages to combine excellent choreography, with an engaging story and excellent performances, all set to a carefully curated soundtrack that elevates the movie above any other action piece of the decade. While this is not Wright's first film, it is his first to break over 100 million in the box office, which hopefully means we will only see bigger and better movies from him in the future.

Best Drama - "Manchester by the Sea" (2016)

There are no shortage of "sad" films, but few films truly manage to capture the actual feeling of sadness better than Manchester. Following the life of a lonely janitor, as he cares for his newly orphaned nephew in a small town in Maine, this movie pulls absolutely no punches with its tale of depression, loss and the hardships of moving on. With an ending that leaves the viewer feeling empty inside for days to come, this movie is perfect for anybody who feels as though the world is not depressing enough as it is.

Best Comedy - "What we do in the Shadows" (2014)

Co-directed and co-written by the ever genius Taika Waititi (best known now for "Thor Ragnarok") this mockumentary about a group of vampires living in twenty-first century New Zealand is a masterpiece in dry humor. I imagine that similar to other skit based mockumentaries (I.E "Spinal Tap") this will be fairly divisive among viewers, but for me it is the perfect balance of subtle and absurd comedy, and I know I will still be throwing out lines from this movie far into my old age.

Best Horror - "Cabin in the Woods" (2011)

This category caused much contention on my end, and while the 2015 western "Bone Tomahawk," and even the very recent 2019 film "Midsommar" gave me much hesitation, I don't think they can beat the sheer fanservice that is offered by "Cabin in the Woods." The directorial debut of Drew Goddard (known for writing in "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," and "World War Z") this borderline horror-parody manages to take the classic cliché of a small group of teens hunted down in the woods, and turn it on its head in a way that is both humorous, and genuinely terrifying. The real magic of the movie is the numerous easter eggs, cameos and references found in nearly every shot of the movie. If you're a long time horror fan, and have yet to see this movie, you owe it to yourself to go watch it.

Best Animated - "Spider-Man into the Spider-Verse" (2018)

When I walked out of theaters after my seventh viewing of this masterpiece, my immediate thought was "When can I go again?" Not only do I consider "Spideverse" the best animated movie of all time, I would also rate it as my favorite superhero movie of all time. My first time seeing this brought back a wave of emotions as I was reminded of the first time I had seen the original "Iron Man" all the way back in 2008. While the film's story is typical superhero fare, it's how that story is told that makes "Spideverse" truly stand out. Every element of the film's style sticks out in a way that defies industry standards and takes advantage of the film's animated nature. The art style is an incredible technical achievement that took years to master. The score is a mix of hip-hop and classic superhero melodies overlayed in such a way as to give our hero his own sound in a genre defined by Brass and pop tunes. The humour is as subtle as it is brilliant, and far more visual than most modern film's dare to attempt. This movie is an absolute must see for anybody even remotely interested in animation, and I simply cannot recommend it enough.

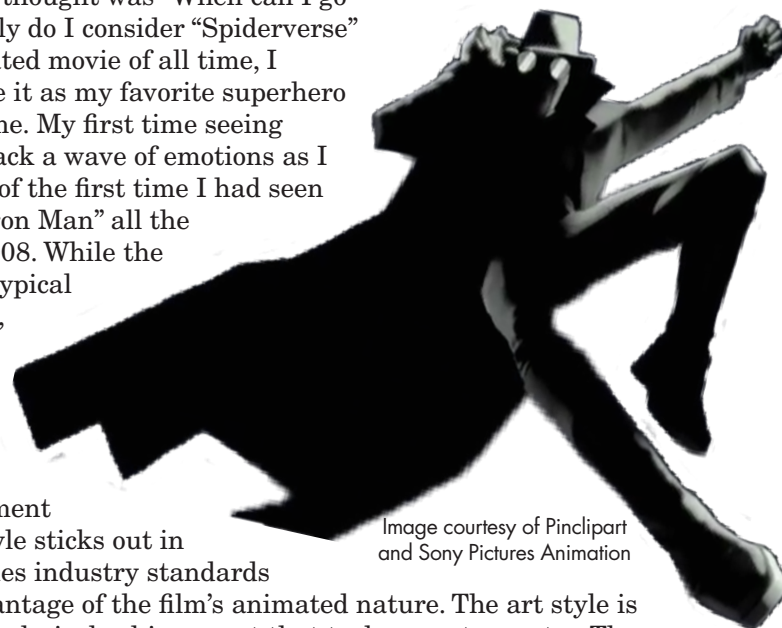
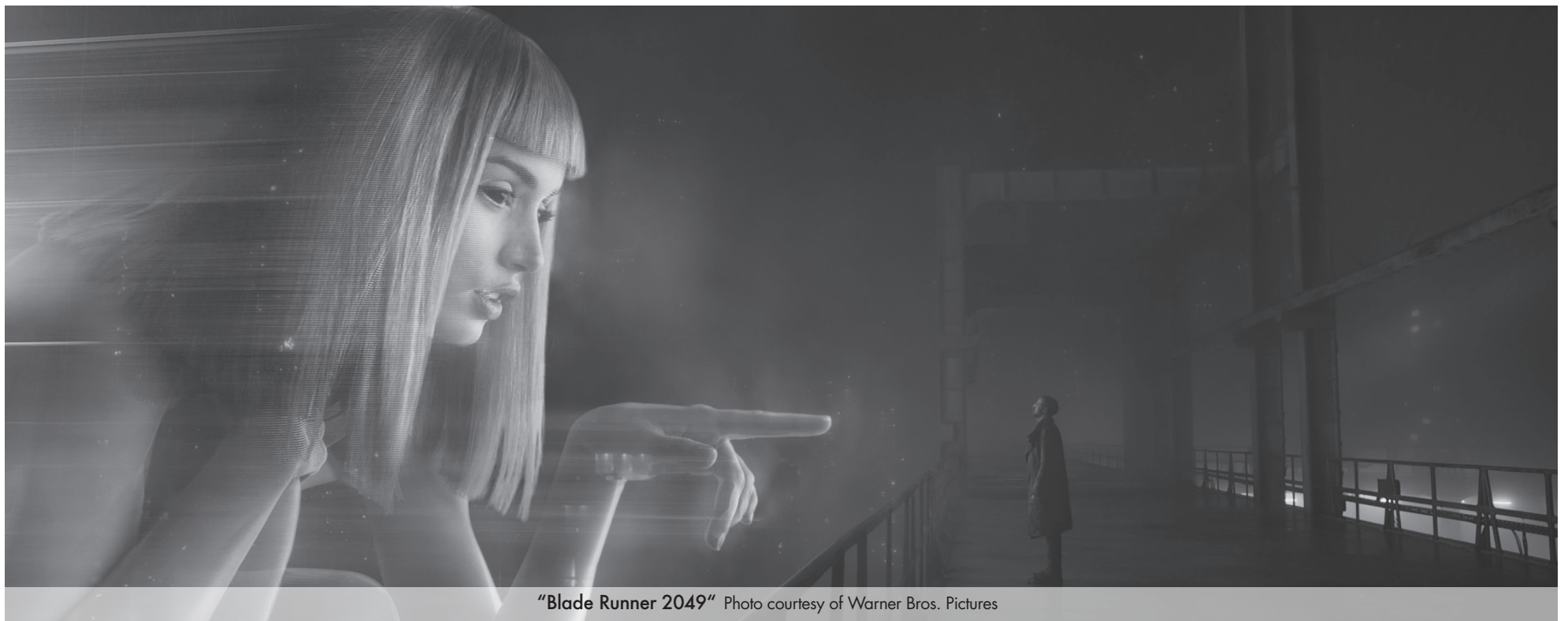


Image courtesy of Pinclipart and Sony Pictures Animation

Best Family - "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle" (2017)

I really had the lowest of expectations walking into the theater to see Hollywood's latest reboot of a classic property, and would never expect it to be anywhere near as good as the original. But, with all respects to Mr. Williams and the original crew, this film absolutely blows the original out of the water. While the campiness of the original film will always hold a place in my heart, there is no denying that the 2017 reboot is just about the perfect family comedy. The action is stupid and over exaggerated even by modern standards, but that just plays into the video-gamey nature of the whole thing. The comedy is dead on, and unlike many of their other films, The Rock and Kevin



“Blade Runner 2049” Photo courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures

Hart manage to be hilarious without stealing the spotlight from the rest of the cast. The story is simple and sweet, the message obvious but genuine, this movie is a delightful adventure for all ages.

Best Science-Fiction - “Blade Runner 2049” (2017)

Is it as good as the original? No. Is any movie as good as the original? Also no. While other science fiction movies this decade, like “Interstellar” or “Gravity,” took full advantage of modern visual effects to tell stories of massive proportions, “Blade Runner” used the latests in computer graphics to tell a very personal story, set in a massive, cold, modern world. 2049 does it’s absolute best to uphold the legacy left by the first movie, and for the most part it succeeds. The visuals are breathtaking, huge cityscapes washed in a sea of neon lights is contrasted with cold brutalist interiors, and dirty, busy city streets are quickly swapped with desolate, sand covered highways. The score, while not reaching the amazing heights of Vangelis’ masterpiece, are still beautifully haunting synthetic melodies composed by the all-time film great Hans Zimmer. Ryan Gosling (unsurprisingly) steals the show with his portrayal of Officer K, a new Blade Runner, sent to find Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford), and along the way struggles to find his own purpose in life. The performance is brilliant, and almost entirely wordless. The sheer amount of information one can glean from his face at any given moment is astounding, and certainly the highlight of this movie. If you prefer your science fiction to be less action and more commentary, then this is the movie for you.

Best Overall - “Inception” (2011)

Inception is the perfect marriage of art and entertainment. This is a movie with very specific goals, and every element of the film is created with the intent of fulfilling those goals. Directed by legendary director Christopher Nolan, starring the ever incredible Leonardo Dicaprio, “Inception” is an absolute thrill from beginning to end. The cinematography is beautiful, but never distracting. The score by Hans Zimmer remains one of the most well regarded and most widely listened to in modern film history. The acting ranges from good to incredible. The visual effects were unmatched at the time, and even today remain breathtaking. The action is constantly engaging, and

the set pieces are some of the most iconic in all of film. The characters are all well fleshed out, with deep motivations and histories. The film is a crash course in metaphysics and psychology. And of course it’s infamous ending still leaves viewers in questioning to this day. If there was one movie that defined the 2010’s, it was Inception. You can see it’s influence in almost every film since, and that’s why it’s my number one pick for the last decade.

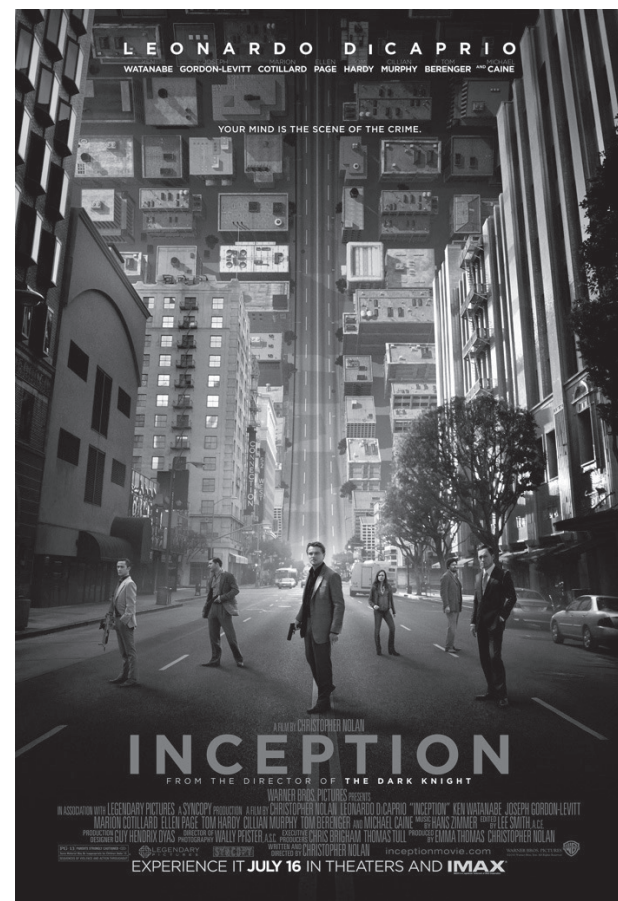


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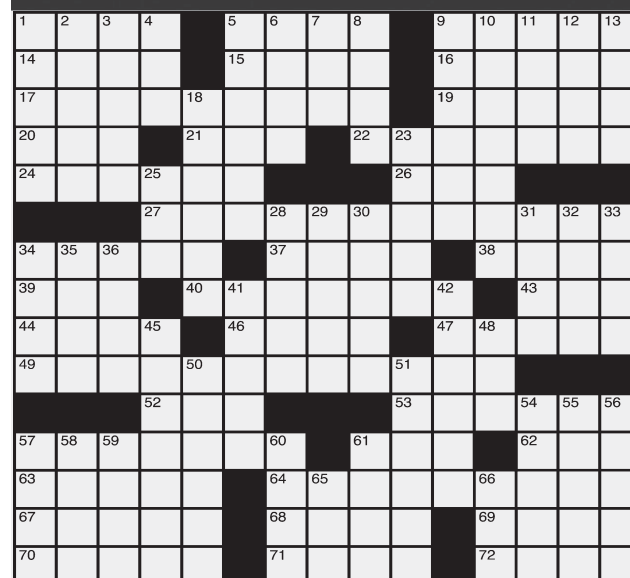
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atons
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Miranda
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- 29 Pet peeves?
- 30 Saks __ Avenue
- 31 Mental flash
- 32 "I'm __ human"
- 33 Negative votes
- 34 Act the fink
- 35 First Nations tribe
- 36 "__ of Eden"
- 41 Paid for a hand
- 42 Use, as energy
- 45 In name only
- 48 DVR button
- 50 Like a generic brand
- 51 Designer Giorgio
- 54 Ring-shaped reef
- 55 Director Brian De __
- 56 Like dishwater
- 57 Boring routines
- 58 Baking appliance
- 59 Fish in cat food
- 60 Preschool basics
- 61 Paper quantity
- 65 Grammy winner Corinne
Bailey __
- 66 PC alternative

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- 1 Depletes, with "up"
- 5 Pod in Creole cuisine
- 9 Theme park that retired its
IllumiNations show in 2019
- 14 Tall and skinny
- 15 Umpire's call
- 16 Greek played by Anthony
Quinn
- 17 Bit of insurance paperwork
- 19 Earlier offense
- 20 Series-ending abbr.
- 21 Set as a price
- 22 Accumulates
- 24 Letters shown in the
"Wheel of Fortune" bonus
round
- 26 PC panic key
- 27 No longer in style
- 34 Public tantrum
- 37 Hydroplaned
- 38 Writer Ferber
- 39 Novelist Levin
- 40 Charge card charge
- 43 Tarzan player Ron
- 44 Owllet's home
- 46 With everything in place
- 47 ER images
- 49 Work out regularly at the
gym
- 52 __ ring: foot jewelry
- 53 Postgame rundowns
- 57 Domed hall
- 61 Watergate pres.
- 62 Sigma follower
- 63 Soft palate part
- 64 Fungus on an old loaf
- 67 Latish wake-up hr.
- 68 James of "Elf"
- 69 Charitable offerings
- 70 Catch by trickery
- 71 Prefix with formal or final
- 72 Potter's material associ-
ated with the end of 17-, 27-,
49- and 64-Across

UPDATED EVERY DAY!

Keep up the communication

And other tips on managing a relationship when you're busy



by Abigail Shumar
Intern

In order to have a strong relationship, you need trust, communication, understanding and patience. It's important that you make time for each other, but it's also important that you spend time doing what you need to do in order to be successful. This can include jobs, internships, studying for exams, joining clubs and taking up new leadership positions. The point of college is to take advantage of all of the opportunities that you come across, but you need to find time with your significant other in order to make the relationship work. When you find yourself becoming overwhelmed by all of these new responsibilities, it's important you find a way to keep your relationship from adding to that stress. Here are a few tips to ensure a stress free and uplifting relationship that encourages growth.

Communication is key. It's the one tip you hear constantly, but it's true. No matter what else is going on in your life, you must find time to communicate. Even if it's only during the short breaks you get from work or classes, a simple text goes a long way. It reminds your significant other that you're thinking of them, and that small interaction cultivates happiness and can even briefly relieve stress.

Trust is also very important. Without trust, you're practically asking for trouble. If you don't trust your significant other, and they suddenly become busy, it could become difficult for you to remain afloat. Rather than immediately feeling insecure, talk to your significant other about how you feel. Your feelings are valid, and your significant other should be able to put your mind at ease when discussing change. Change can be a good thing. It allows us to grow and adapt to new scenarios. The more trust you have, the less you will worry about your relationship. This will be like a weight off your shoulders, and it will free up extra mental capacity that can be used for other things.

Set aside a certain amount of time every day when you can be together. This may seem like a no-brainer, but there may be some extra busy days where you don't see each other until the evening—or at all. Agreeing to have dinner certain nights after classes or watching movies together after working on homework is a great way to ensure you're getting plenty of couple time. You should get to know your significant other's schedule in order to be able to coordinate and find quality time that works best for both of you. If you want to, you can even combine your schedules so you can get a better look at the times in the day when you're both free.

You must be understanding towards your partner's personal time. No matter how much they love spending time with you, they need to do things for themselves. This applies to both people involved in the relationship and is important in any healthy relationship. You need to be understanding of their goals and what they want to accomplish. You are a very important part of their lives; they wouldn't still be around if you weren't, but college is ultimately about gaining experience and growing your resume in order to ensure success in the future.

Lastly, you need a lot of patience. There may be times where your significant other is doing homework while you're together, and you need to find something to do, or vice versa. I believe that doing homework and other productive things together is important because it keeps both of you accountable. This, in turn, can lead to motivation. If you're motivating each other to go after all the important opportunities that you come across, then you're more likely to take advantage of those opportunities. Patience is a major factor in this because while you're both striving to do your best and take on new responsibilities, your free time begins to lessen. You might even go weeks without going on a date, but you need to communicate about it and be patient. Relationships need a balance. Whether you're going on dates once a month or once every few weeks, it's important to schedule that time. You can even make a pact to stay off of your phones for certain times when you're together, which helps to make sure you have each other's full attention.

Even though you have less free time, it is possible to find time to relax and focus on growing your relationship. All you need is to find a balance that works best for both of you. Communication, trust, understanding and patience are all very important. At the end of the day, if you and your significant other both care about the relationship and put in the effort, you will find a way to make it work.



Couple relaxing in a hammock, photo courtesy of Priscilla Du Preez via Unsplash

Five reasons why you should compost

Cheap and easy ways to be eco-friendly

by Mayra Trujillo-Camacho
Intern

Composting. For the majority of my life, I had no idea what that was or that it was even a thing. My family and I recycled for the most part, separating our plastic from our paper and cardboard, but that was about it. But, now I am living in my first apartment. Since moving in with my roommate, who happens to be an Eco-Rep for UNC Charlotte, she has begun to teach me all about the wonders of living an eco-friendly lifestyle. From all of her lessons on saving our planet, I have learned that composting is one of the best things one can do for the environment. So here are five reasons why you should start composting:

1. Composting limits landfill waste and reduces emissions.

You would think since that since all of the waste lands on a similar place, such as the soil, it does not matter. Wrong! Once the waste lands in a landfill the oxygen that is needed for the decaying process will not reach it. So throughout this process methane will need release, which contributes to greenhouse gases.

2. Composting helps create better soil and healthier plants.

Composting allows for a more diverse life in the soil which in turn helps plants grow! Healthy plants are also less vulnerable to pests and weather.

3. Composting avoids the need for using chemicals.

When you compost, not only does it help the soil and plants through nutrients but it also avoids the need of using fertilizer, which is harmful to our environment and our health.



Compost bin filled to capacity, photo courtesy of Alan Levine via flickr

4. It's Cheap.

It's basically free to start composting. You may want to use a small container to start, but hey! Reuse, Reduce, Recycle. If you pay for your trash to get removed, it might also end up saving you money since composting reduces greatly what you throw away.

5. It's Simple!

There is nothing stopping you from starting to compost. You can help reduce our carbon footprint in this way if you don't think straws will do the trick. This practice is very beneficial to our environment. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that about 25% of our food garbage is made up of food scraps and yard trimmings, which produces over 60 million tons each year. This simple act can certainly help reduce our landfill space.

If you may need some extra motivation to start composting, you can even decorate your composting bin with some personalized art. So let's compost!



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