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# IN THIS EDITION

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**INSIDE:** 2020 - 2021 Basketball Preview



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editor@ninerimes.com

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## COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Niyathi Sulkunte

NEWSROOM 705.687.7150  
NINERTIMES.COM/STAFF  
TWITTER @NINER\_TIMES

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James Bourke  
production@unc.edu

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Ridge Grant and Luisana Gonzalez



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To our readership,

This is our final print issue for the semester due to the shift to online course delivery after Thanksgiving. We are going to continue to put out e-editions on NinerTimes.com every week, in addition to our daily online content. Thank you for your support and have a great end to the semester.

*Madison Dobrzenski*  
EDITOR IN CHIEF



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Photo by Niyathi Sulkunte



# CAPS keeps up with increasing demand



## NEWS

### CAPS uses group therapy to meet students' needs

by Drew Young  
Intern

In the past year and a half, the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at UNC Charlotte has been working to accommodate the increased demand of therapy sessions. After the April 30 shooting left two students dead, four others injured and this year's COVID-19 outbreak, students have faced a lot of adversity. As such, CAPS experienced a 20% increase in student demand during the fall semester of 2019 compared to the previous year, resulting in wait times of 3.78 days on average between scheduling requests and appointments. Based on data from the first two weeks of the 2020 fall semester, demand has stayed high this year, even with CAPS operating virtually and many students living far from campus.

Newly appointed director Dr. Paula Keeton described the ways in which CAPS has had to learn from these difficult situations and evolve to meet students' needs. One of the most significant changes was promoting group therapy sessions while limiting the amount of typical one-on-one meetings a student might have with a counselor.

According to Keeton, group therapy "helps students who are struggling realize that they are not alone...to sit in a group and hear other people's lived experiences and some of it's similar to yours, and some of it not similar." "It almost causes healing in and of itself just to know you're not alone."

Group sessions have received similar satisfaction ratings to the individual sessions. She added that group therapy creates more counseling availability and decreases wait times in between appointments. Keeton added that the group sessions can help individuals understand and relate to other people, improve socialization skills and find their own voices.



CAPS building in the fall. Photo by Christopher Grissett

In addition to keeping up with increasing demand, CAPS had to transition to an online platform. Keeton says that these changes are here to stay and are being used to meet students' needs in the future.

CAPS has a student advisory board that they use to seek insight from current students on how they can improve their current practices and methods to assist students. The center also meets with the Student Government Association (SGA) at UNC Charlotte to discuss ways in which they can acquire additional funding to assist in improving their pool of resources.

SGA Academic Affairs Committee Chairman Ross Landgraf explained how SGA is a large advocate for CAPS and how they are always searching for additional funding. This includes meeting with the

Tuition and Fees Board where they can potentially "have that talk to start that research and analytics of the budget with some admin to figure out, if that money exists, where we can reallocate from."

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Chairman Jeremiah Williams added, "In the immediate future, we want to propose a very specific ask that will shift some funding to CAPS." Williams reinforced Landgraf's statement and explained how meeting with the Tuition and Fees Board is a long-term goal to reallocate funding for CAPS.

Williams was quick to commend CAPS: "I really think that they are working the best with the situation that they're met with." While he understands that it is difficult to be prepared for the events that

have transpired in the past two years, Williams explained how important it was that Dr. Keeton and CAPS have been so willing to work with SGA to meet the increased demand.

"I commend Dr. Keeton especially," said Williams. "She's been a great help and so willing to talk to all of us. She was very happy to engage with our advocacy."

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# North Carolina 2020 election results are finally certified

The state remains politically divided with a Republican-controlled legislature and Democratic executive.

by Megan Bird, News Editor  
Vasiliki Gkoulgkoutina, Intern

After weeks of waiting and counting, North Carolina voters' ballots have all been received. The ballots submitted via absentee, provisional, early voting and Election Day voting were all certified by county board of elections on Friday. The results show that North Carolina is politically divided, primarily on urban-rural lines.

### Federal offices

Democrat Joe Biden won the presidential election with a projected 306 electoral votes after key wins in battleground states like Pennsylvania. North Carolina supported Republican Donald Trump, who received a projected 232 electoral votes, for the second time. Trump received 2,757,112 NC votes while Biden received 2,683,787. Mecklenburg County, however, overwhelmingly supported Biden, who won 66.68% of the vote.

Republican Thom Tillis will serve a second term in the U.S. Senate after receiving 48.68% of the votes compared to Democrat Cal Cunningham's 46.95%. Keeping in line with the presidential election, 62.34% of Mecklenburg County voters supported Cunningham. Tillis' victory gave Republicans at least 49 senators, though control of the Senate will be determined by two Jan. 5 runoff elections in Georgia.

NC will send five Democrats and eight Republicans to the U.S. House of Representatives, including Alma Adams (D) from Mecklenburg County's district. Nationally, Democrats maintained a majority in the U.S. House, though only 420 out of 435 races have been called. Democrats flipped three seats and Republicans flipped nine.



North Carolina flag,  
photo courtesy of wgappens5 via Needpix.com

### State offices

Governor Roy Cooper, D, will serve a second consecutive term after securing 51.52% of statewide votes compared to Republican challenger Dan Forest's 47%. Republican Mark Robinson beat out Democrat Yvonne Lewis Holley for the lieutenant governor position 51.63% to 48.37%. Mecklenburg County voters supported both Cooper and Holley.

The NC attorney general race is still too close to call and likely headed for a recount. Democrat Josh Stein currently leads Republican Jim O'Neill by 14,336 votes.

Democrats won the state auditor, and secretary of state positions while Republicans won the state treasurer, superintendent of public instruction, commissioner of labor, commissioner of insurance, and commissioner of agriculture offices.

Republicans secured their majority in the State Senate, winning 29 seats compared to Democrats' 21. In Mecklenburg County's district, incumbent Democrat Mujtaba Mohammed won with 78.14% of the votes.

The NC House of Representatives will also remain under Republican control, securing 65 seats compared to Democrats' 55. Democrat Carla Cunningham will represent District 106 where Charlotte is located.

### County offices

Democrats secured all of the Mecklenburg County Commissioner positions. Elaine Powell won Mecklenburg County Commissioner for District 1 with 55.97% of the vote. Vilma Leake received 100% of the vote for District 2. George Dunlap will represent District 3. Mark Jerrell secured his position for District 4 with 100% of the vote. Laura Meier won for District 5 and Susan Rodriguez McDowell won in District 6.

Democrat Fred Smith will be the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds after receiving 100% of the vote. Rich George secured the position as Mecklenburg Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor with 26.98% of the vote.

### Referenda

Charlotte voters approved all three referenda appropriating bonds for transportation, housing and neighborhood improvement. The transportation bond will cost \$102 million in hopes of widening streets and acquiring land for transit. The housing bond will cost \$50 million and focus on affordable housing. The neighborhood improvement bond will be \$44.5 million.

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# REMARKS, NOT MARKS



OPINION

## What if schools and universities abolished grading?

by Isaac Naylor  
Staff Writer

Photo by Andrea Piacquadio  
via Pexel

There's a special place in hell for grades. It doesn't matter if it's an A or an F. The entire system of grading seems as if it was devised to torment. Grades have always been a sore spot for me and lately, that statement could not be more true. After experiencing a minor breakdown, I asked myself something: Are grades really necessary?

Grading is a bizarre practice. On paper, grades are a standardized substitute for feedback, but this contradicts what they are in practice. Grades are objective values tacked onto subjective work. There are exceptions to this like mathematics, medicine, engineering, and computer science; however, for liberal arts, grades alone provide little room for improvement.

Grading takes an emotional toll on students. Students tend to internalize their letter grade, which translates into anxiety, depression, stress, social withdrawal, and burnout. A 2020 study in the journal, *Learning and Individual Differences* discovered a direct connection between self-esteem and grades, specifically examining math grades in K-12 students. Students who scored poorly tended to have lower self-esteem. On a college level, STEM grading makes sense because of career specialization; however, for young children, the emotional burden can be particularly

overwhelming.

Grades can have the potential to kill, too. Grades rank students in a hierarchy that instills feelings of superiority in some and inferiority in others. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 36% of high schoolers making a D or F seriously considered attempting suicide compared with 14% of high schoolers averaging an A.

These two studies are about K-12 students; however, I think this data still applies to college students because these kids grow up and take their problems with them.

When there's a correlation between grades and self-worth, some students resort to cheating to boost their GPAs. In a 2015 survey conducted by the International Center for Academic Integrity, of over 70,000 undergraduates, 39% of students admitted to cheating on a test, 62% admitted to plagiarism and 68% admitted to participating in cheating of some sort. Cheating is wrong regardless, however, nobody cheats because they want to know the material. It's only done to make that high score.

There are times when students must decide between good grades and good health. Sometimes, striving for grade

perfection is an invitation for sleeplessness. However, if students opt to take a mental health day instead of an all-nighter, then they are punished, not rewarded. This overemphasis on work fosters an uneven work-life balance that threatens not only the physical health of students but also their mental health.

Grades should be abolished. Schools and universities would be doing both students and professors a favor. Grading is not genuine feedback; it is a counterproductive shortcut that draws arbitrary lines in the sand. Grades discourage self-expression and academic risk-taking by forcing students to conform to their professor's rubric and not develop a deeper understanding of the content material.

A common counterargument to a world without grades is that students will become lazy or unmotivated, which is true under our current system. If students are given an optional assignment, they probably won't do it. Though, this has nothing to do with laziness but rather the system implicitly telling students that gradeless assignments are inherently worthless.

However, if grades were deemphasized, students might foster a love for learning. An example of this successfully taking place is at Brown University. Taking an

approach that is similar to Montessori schools, Brown decided in 1969 to scrap the traditional grading system and gave students two choices. The first was an option to be graded under the conventional grading system but only with A, B and C letter grades; D and F letter grades are not recorded and there are no plus and minus signs. The second choice gives students the option to show their grades as satisfactory/no credit. Students also can request a written evaluation that can be used for improvement. Brown's grading scheme prevents students from relying on their transcripts as the only proof of their academic achievement. Instead, students can customize their transcripts to cater to their specific needs, constructing a portfolio that provides a realistic reflection of their progress.

Written feedback as an alternative to grading would indeed be much more labor-intensive and time-consuming. And, I doubt one newspaper article will change academia overnight. However, I do think the academic positives and health benefits for students are worth considering.





# FILM REVIEW

## OVER THE MOON

by James Levison  
Intern

Based on Chinese mythology, “Over the Moon” follows a young girl named Fei Fei and her desire to prove the existence of the Chinese moon goddess Chang’e, to her father when he plans to remarry after her mother’s death. The beginning of the movie sets the premise well, with a lighthearted song about the tale of Chang’e and Hou Yi. It holds a special place in Fei Fei’s heart as a memento of her mother and as such, Fei Fei is an avid believer of Chang’e’s existence.

One of the best features in this movie was the bright colors that were used throughout the movie, particularly in the kingdom of Lunaria. As much as I loved the movie’s choice of colors, I believed that hues of blues and purples with some hues of silver and gold would have set a better atmosphere for Lunaria. When I first saw Lunaria, I didn’t get the “moon kingdom” vibe from it, but rather a “candy kingdom” or something along those lines. Another great feature is the presence of strong symbols, such as the crane, the moon, the lotus flower, and moon cakes, as they provide the viewer with an intriguing perspective on the deeper meaning of the film.

Three scenes, in particular, stood out to me when I watched this movie. The first was Fei Fei’s blast off when she sent her rocket to the moon in order to get a photo of Chang’e. Fireworks served as the background for an inspiring and heart-racing send off as Fei Fei and her pet rabbit Bungee. Another scene involved one of the best songs of the movie, “Ultraluminary” performed by Phillipa Soo, the voice actress



image courtesy of Netflix

of Chang’e. Here, we see an elegant and colorful display of style and pride, two qualities that make this performance one of the best in the movie. Gobi’s song was another personal favorite of mine, involving an inspirational song about endless possibilities, followed by Fei Fei crying as she remembers her mother. This was truly an emotion-evoking scene, as it drills into the viewer how much Fei Fei’s mother means to her.

The most frequent themes in this movie

are grief and how to cope with it. This movie portrays this message in a rather creative way, using Chinese myth and a realistic heroine to show that anyone can be affected by the loss of a loved one. These themes play into the character development of this film, specifically those of Fei Fei and Chang’e. Fei Fei does not like the idea that her father is planning to remarry after her mother passes away, and uses her adventure to prove Chang’e’s existence to convince her father that the love between him and

her mother is still alive; something that is mirrored in the romance between Chang’e and Hou Yi. Chang’e, at the beginning of the movie, is portrayed as a confident and sharp-tongued moon goddess, contrary to the way that Fei Fei’s mother portrays her in her tales as kind and gentle. However, as you progress through the movie, you are able to see the grief that is hidden beneath the surface of Chang’e’s personality. Desperate to get her lover back, Chang’e’s proposes a contest to see who can get “The Gift” so that she may revive Hou Yi.

This movie is one that I will never regret watching because of its strong themes and symbolism, beautiful visuals, and music, as well as a colorful and lovable cast of characters. It was emotional and personable, and I would recommend this movie to anyone with an interest in Chinese mythology or likes movies that can evoke strong emotions. “Over the Moon” was a masterpiece that shows that when you lose a loved one, the best thing that you can do is remember that they are always there with you and that your love for them will stay alive if you make it so.

Rating:  
**4.5/5**



Photo courtesy of Capitol Records

# ALBUM REVIEW

## “*LOVE GOES*” SAM SMITH

by Tyler Trudeau  
Community Editor

When it comes to everything from radio-ready dance bops, to powerful ballads of love and loss, one of the top artists of the industry is Sam Smith. With the singer’s heart inked permanently on their sleeve, Smith never strays from leaving it all to bare, especially when crafting countless bangers to fill the pop soundscape. An important note: Smith goes by the pronouns they/them/their. With their latest album “Love Goes,” we find Smith venturing further into the dark recesses of their experiences with heartbreak and longing. While their music has always had a palpable mix of sweeping, sentimental crooning and tinges of electronic aesthetic, “Love Goes” feels significant not only because of the intimacy of its tracks, but also because of the volatile state of the world to which the album was released.

Riding off the success of 2017’s “The Thrill Of It All” and entering a global pandemic in 2020, Sam Smith has had a lot on their mind going into their latest album. Add a bit of heartbreak to the mix and we’re left with an artist struggling to distinguish the good from the bad, all while grappling with their own emotional state. Naturally, Smith’s own experiences and the impact of the pandemic brought changes to the artist’s newest release, namely the album’s title which was formerly called “To Die For.” Out of respect to those facing tragedy and loss this year, Smith would subsequently change the title to “Love Goes,” painting the record in a new light of hope even as things appear very grim. Thankfully, Smith is particularly well-versed in composing tracks that ride the borderline between melancholy and joy, and able to imbue a fantastic sense of elation and energy even when his lyrics lean towards the somber. Even as love fades, compassion and optimism for the good remain.

Even with their reputation of dropping legible pop ballads designed to top the charts, from “Money On

My Mind” to “Too Good At Goodbyes,” Smith still isn’t afraid to ride that boundary of sadness and jubilation in far more intimate tracks. Opening their latest album with the spare and ghostly “Young,” Smith sets the tone of the record as not only a nostalgic contemplation of past lives (a motif they return to later on in “Kids Again”) but a journey towards acceptance and escaping the all-too-serious notions of a relationship as well. Before you get fully attached to someone or begin to dwell too much on the negative, as Smith professes in the track “So Serious,” you have to find joy in the small things. While Smith bears the scars of regret and longing on tracks like “Breaking Hearts” and “For The Lover That I Lost,” the artist also captures feelings of self-reflection and forgiveness in both somber (“Forgive Myself”) and upbeat (“Diamonds”) fashions. Some tracks inevitably tread similar waters of Smith’s previous discography, applying melancholic piano with Smith’s vocals coming off more reserved than hopeful, but the nostalgic narrative of the first 10 tracks off the album harbors a few notable picks, like that of “My Oasis” featuring Burna Boy.

Ultimately, while “Love Goes” does find Smith exerting

their emotional reflexes to prodigious avail once more, the reach of the album’s message wanes slightly as the last handful of tracks close out the record. Despite the easy listening of singles like “Dancing With A Stranger” and “I’m Ready,” the only notable contribution of the album’s established narrative might be “To Die For.” Even as it bathes Smith’s pearly vocals in Auto-Tune, it remains a personal favorite of mine from the record for its contemplative lyricism and phenomenal production.

As the album closes out, my thoughts linger on how Smith’s latest stacks up against their previous work. “Love Goes” succeeds in taking a few gracious dives into its artist’s recent brushes with heartbreak, but perhaps doesn’t surpass the sensational weight and palpable intensity of Smith’s sophomore record “The Thrill Of It All.” As the latter presented a cohesive and transformative journey for Smith as they grappled with the identity and blistering emotions they’d been keeping at bay for so long, “Love Goes” feels like a contemplative yet minimal account that is ultimately more comfortable sending up replayable, risk-free pop stylings over the more tempered musings that wtruly get us inside the head, and heart, of Sam Smith.



**Rating: 3/5**



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## Album Review:



### 'CONFETTI' BY LITTLE MIX

by Emily Kottak  
Asst. Features Editor

Photo courtesy  
of RCA Records

"Confetti" is the sixth album by British girl group Little Mix. The band was formed in 2011 during the eighth series of the "X-Factor" with Simon Cowell. The members of Little Mix include Perrie Edwards, Jade Thirwall, Jesy Nelson, and Leigh-Anne Pinnock. The group's debut album "DNA," was released in 2012 and made Little Mix the first girl group since the Pussycat Dolls to reach the U.S. top five with their debut album. Throughout the years, Little Mix has had several hit singles including "Wings," "Black Magic," "Shoutout to My Ex," and "Woman Like Me."

Through their pop style, Little Mix focuses heavily on female empowerment and evoking confidence. Little Mix puts out uplifting music that is usually age-appropriate. However, the group has received some criticism in regard to "racy" lyrics for their young fans in their new "Confetti" album. The band has defended themselves though, explaining that they are mature and not young anymore. It seems as if Little Mix may be facing a struggle that many other artists have faced throughout their careers as well. That struggle is growing up and also maturing their music with them when fans don't realize that their beloved band members are not young anymore.

This album may be a turning point for Little Mix. A common theme in this album is that the songs seem to tell a story. Released by RCA Records, the album was

preceded by three singles: "Break Up Song," "Holiday" and "Sweet Melody." While the "Confetti" album still captures their famous dance pop-style, the album also seems to showcase more creative freedom and power. Their song "Happiness" seems to be one of the more lyrically mature songs in the album and sounds like a mature adult coming to terms with their chaotic past and youth. These lyrics from "Happiness" indicate this: "I was searching for happiness / I was using you to fill up my loneliness / Realized from the moment I set you free / I found the love, I found the love in me / You can't rain on my happiness."

"Sweet Melody" is another song in this album that showcases Little Mix's newfound maturity in their music. "Sweet Melody" was the third song released from the album.

Though it has not received a lot of attention, "Gloves Up" is one of the more catchy songs on the album. "Gloves Up" is an empowering song and focuses on finding strength within yourself and knowing your worth, "I, I got my eyes on the prize / Fight 'til the day that I die / Can't knock me down and that's why (You can't knock me down)."

Read the full article on  
[NinerTimes.com](http://NinerTimes.com).



# 49ER FLASHBACK:

## AUSTIN DUKE'S LEGENDARY CAREER



# SPORTS

by Cameron Williams  
Staff Writer

### *The Niner Times sports staff looks at the historic career of Austin Duke*

Austin P. Duke runs the ball in a game against James Madison in 2014. Photo by Ben Coon

Austin Duke needs no introduction to the Charlotte athletics community. He holds several 49er receiving records including the receptions record, yardage record and receiving touchdowns record. In his senior campaign, Duke had four 100-yard receiving performances and caught two 60+ yard touchdowns as well.

#### **The glory days**

Duke attended Independence High School in Charlotte, NC. In his time at Independence, Duke received the Southwestern 4A Player of the Year award.

"I always looked for ways to improve, and get quicker and faster," said Duke.

Duke also ran track in high school which he believes led to his success in football. He was a part of the junior olympics team in the summer leading up to his senior year, competing in several events.

"Running track and training during the offseason really led to a lot of success my senior year," said Duke.

In his senior season, he led his team to a 10-2 record and a quarterfinals appearance in the 4A state playoffs. Duke said this proves that hard work and dedication pays off.

#### **Illustrious collegiate career**

With only two offers coming out of high school, Duke wanted to play tough opponents and get the Division I experience. His offers included only NC Central and Charlotte. He wanted to be a part of the new program that Charlotte was forming at the time in 2012. He redshirted his first year to be able to play with the 49ers in their inaugural 2013 season.

"The thought of being able to create something special that hasn't been done before. This is my city and if anyone is going to be able to write their name on the city, it's going to be me," said Duke.

Duke started in 41 of the 46 games he played in his career with the 49ers. He had 3,437 receiving yards and 25 total touchdowns during his time at Charlotte. To say that Duke is one of the best to ever play at Charlotte is an understatement.

"Being a part of Charlotte Football's first class means everything to me, and I am at a point now where I am trying to build on that legacy," said Duke.

Leaving this legacy for future 49ers is something that Duke will cherish forever and is a Charlotte household name.

#### **Professional career**

After college, Duke went undrafted, but later signed with the Carolina Panthers in 2017. He played on the practice squad for two seasons and saw action in the preseason in 2018 accumulating 69 yards on nine receptions. Duke was later released from the team at the end of training camp.

In May 2019, Duke signed with the Toronto Argonauts which is a part of the Canadian Football League. He was later released in June of the same year.

He went on to participate in a AAF training camp with the Atlanta Legends but sustained an injury that prevented him from playing.

"I tore my hamstring, so I wasn't able to play in the AAF," said Duke.

Duke got his shot with the XFL in January 2020, when he signed with the New York Guardians. In five games with

the Guardians, Duke had five receptions for 46 yards and one touchdown. The XFL season was abruptly ended in March due to COVID-19.

After his playing career, Duke wanted to help out his local community by creating the Austin P. Duke Foundation in 2019. The goal for the foundation is to establish good character in local young men in the community of Charlotte and the local area through 7v7 competitions and tackling camps. Their vision is that young men will strive and give their best effort in their pursuit to be the best person they can be.

Giving kids the resources and knowledge they need is very important to Duke and what his goal is with the APD foundation.

"All the answers that I didn't have growing up, I can give that to the kids growing up here in Charlotte," said Duke.

"I felt it was a responsibility of mine, the sense of paying it forward to my community," said Duke.

Diversity is at the center of the APD foundation. Focusing on different things to teach young kids that live in a very diverse community is something that the foundation strives toward. Giving the youth of Charlotte better answers than the founders had as young kids is the ultimate goal.

"How we work together as a community to uplift Charlotte as a whole is key," said Duke.

There is much more to Duke than football. He leaves a legacy that is unmatched. Through his career with the 49ers he is now able to impact the lives of children within the Charlotte community. This is what it is all about for Duke; giving back to the community to give kids a better opportunity than he had growing up.



# CHARLOTTE TEAMS RELOAD WITH TALENT ON SIGNING DAY

## See who the 49ers signed on early signing day

by Bradley Cole  
Sports Editor

Even though a worldwide pandemic has changed the world of recruiting, Charlotte teams had a busy early signing day on Nov. 11.

Teams are mostly unable to visit with players in person due to COVID-19 restrictions and have to conduct recruiting visits in a virtual format.

For most sports, the deadline for high school athletes to sign with a college team during the early signing period was on Nov. 11 and Charlotte teams reloaded with talent. Here's a recap of who signed with 49er teams.

### Women's Basketball

Coach Cara Consuerga and the 49ers signed three players starting with the 2021-22 season. The team signed two players from the Carolinas in Nia Young (Raleigh, NC) and Aylesha Wade (York, SC). Both players are guards and will bring more skill to the 49er backcourt.

The third signing for the team was Mya McGraw, who is from Gainesville, Florida. Standing at 6'2", McGraw will be an important piece in the post one day for Charlotte.

"I'm thrilled to bring in these three young ladies to our Charlotte family," said Consuegra on the three players. "Our momentum in recruiting has been tremendous over the last couple of years and I think this class just continues to build on it."

### Men's Basketball

The men's basketball team signed two guards in Isaiah Folkes and Daylen Berry. Berry is coming from Cary, NC and currently plays basketball at Panther Creek High School. Berry is also ranked as one of the top-20 players in the state of NC. Folkes is an out-of-state recruit from Gainesville, Virginia who is coming off a season where he averaged 20.7 points per game.

"Daylen is a long, complete guard who can play and defend multiple spots on the floor," said head coach Ron Sanchez of Berry.

Sanchez is also high on the new guard Charlotte will bring in.

"He has a high basketball IQ, a good skill set, a tremendous work ethic, and a strong will and athleticism that will ease his transition to college," Sanchez said of Folkes.

The 49ers have had instant success with freshman as of late, as current guard Jahmir Young is a prime example. The guard won the Conference USA Freshman of the Year award in 2020.

### Women's Soccer

The 49er women's soccer team reloaded with plenty of in-state talent on signing day. The team signed eight total players with six coming from the state of North Carolina. Kate Rodelli, Kiara Pralle, Camden Poole, Hanna Kimmelman, Ella Joaquin, Hayden Hord, Braelyn Francher, Macey Bader were all signed to this year's class. The overall recruiting class is a good one for head coach John Cullen and company.

"We are exceptionally excited about the incoming class; we're very proud of the work we do here with the recruitment of the players," said Cullen. "We always look for high-character individuals, great families, wonderful soccer players, extremely coachable young ladies and players who will be great student-athletes who will represent us well on the field, in the community and in the classroom."

### Softball

The Charlotte softball team was another team signing plenty of new talent for the 2022 season. The team signed seven players overall including in-state pitcher Brooke Bowling and Duke transfer Amelia Wiercioch. The other

five players the team signed include Ciara Hanson, Zoe Russell, Ella Chancey, MacKenzie Marell and Ashleigh Washington.

The Charlotte softball team will look to get back on the field in the spring with second-year head coach Ashley Chastain after last season was cut short due to COVID-19.

### Women's Tennis

The women's tennis team had just one signee last week as Lucie Petruželová signed to the program and is from Czech Republic.

Petruželová has had a very successful tennis career thus far in the Women's Tennis Association and has ranked as high as No. 1167. This is the fourth international signee for head coach Anthony Davidson since he joined the 49ers in 2018.

Davidson has high hopes for the new member of the 49ers.

"We're really excited to bring Lucie to our program," said Davidson. "Lucie is a very good player, playing in the WTA events right now and having some success. We're expecting her to have some more success in the next nine months before she comes to Charlotte."

Charlotte 49er athletic teams had an overall successful signing day and some teams will still have the opportunity to sign new talent. The football early signing deadline will be on Dec. 16 and the final signing deadline date will be Dec. 18. Other teams will also be able to sign new players throughout the winter and spring.



Charlotte's softball field. Photo courtesy of Charlotte athletics



# HOW YOU CAN HONOR THE ORIGINAL THANKSGIVING



*A few ways to honor those who came before us and those who will follow*

by Julianna Peres  
Lifestyle editor

Depiction of first Thanksgiving,  
photo courtesy of iStockphoto

Start your family gathering with a land acknowledgement. A land acknowledgement is basically working backwards from the present to find out just how, when, and where you came to be in the place that you live. The indigenous people of the United States have made public announcements that colonialism is not a past crime, but rather an ongoing act from which people still benefit. No matter where you are from, you're probably very proud of where you're from. There's nothing wrong with cheering for your favorite football team or stuffing yourself with cranberry sauce. Just take a moment to remember that there are people whose entire lives and history are tied into the very land on which we've made our homes.

Now onto the dreaded history lesson that will make the more conservative family members roll their eyes. You may know that Pocahontas wasn't the grown, self-possessing, self-sacrificing woman that the 1995 Disney film wanted us to believe. Did you know that Pocahontas was a nickname for "playful one" and that her real name was Matoaka? She was about 13 years old when colonists settled in Jamestown. And, for those who have heard the "romantic" tale of John Smith and Pocahontas, I'm sorry to burst your bubble, but it wasn't true. Smith wrote about Pocahontas rushing to his side at the very moment of what was to be his execution and saving his life. Uhhh, I don't think so.

What we do know about the real Matoaka is that she was kidnapped by the English as leverage. They thought that her father, Chief Powhatan, would return the English prisoners as payment for his daughter's life. That didn't work out how



they had planned either. The chief left her with the English where Matoaka met and married English widower John Rolfe. Then, she experienced another name change as she was christened Rebecca; the ultimate proof of Native American westernization.

Honestly, there are so many more facts about the origins of the Americas that we haven't been taught in schools. For example, Christopher Columbus was far from the first person to think about reaching Asia by sailing from Europe. This idea was first discussed in Ancient Rome. But, whether you want to discuss the atrocities that were perpetuated by the movies, miniseries, and films that "accurately" portray Thanksgiving, some of these are about the original Thanksgiving feast while others are about the experience of Thanksgiving in the 21st century.

Here are some books by Native Americans about Native Americans for everyone, so that they may educate themselves:

- The Road Back to Sweetgrass by Linda LeGarde Grover
  - #NotYourPrincess: Voices of Native American Women by Lisa Charleyboy and Mary Beth Leatherdale
  - Two Old Women: An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage and Survival by Velma Wallis
  - I Am Not a Number by Jenny Kay Dupuis, Kathy Kacer, and Gillian Newland
  - Monkey Beach by Eden Robinson
- See full list online.**

Donate to Indigenous Causes Organizations

- American Indian College Fund
  - National Indian Child Care Association
  - National Indian Council on Aging
  - Women Empowering Women Indigenous Nations
  - Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women
- See full list online.**

No matter what you do to honor the original citizens of the Americas, be respectful. Indigenous people are still very much alive and present. They aren't something to be sensationalized, joked about, or otherwise made fun of during these festivities. So enjoy time spent with family, good food, and honoring those whose lives were lost all that time ago.

- The Oath (2018)
- Addams Family Values (1993)
- What's Cooking (2000)
- Saints and Strangers (2015)
- Krishna (2016)

If you're looking for works made by actual Native Americans, with actual Native American actors and producers, here are some that I myself enjoyed:

- Images of Indians: How Hollywood Stereotyped the Native American (2011)
- Smoke Signals (1998)
- Cedar Box Stories (2017)
- Mayors of Shiprock (2017)
- Honey Moccasin (1998)

**See full list online.**





# FIVE REASONS TO VISIT THE UNC CHARLOTTE BOTANICAL GARDENS

*A lovely place you don't want to miss*

by James Levison  
Intern

Photo by  
James Levison

## **Nature is Your Muse**

If you're an artist, writer, or even a photographer, you're bound to get some inspiration from the Botanical Gardens. The scenery is breathtaking and there are multiple spots to get inspiration from. Some of these spots include: the Camellia Walk, the Asian Gate and the Butterfly Garden. Fall is my favorite season and the pond creates a nice autumn scene with warm-colored leaves on and surrounding the water.

## **You're a Fan of Plants**

I would recommend the Botanical Gardens for anyone who has a passion for plants. There are signs near each of the plants that help you to identify them. In the Asian Garden, the signs tell you which part of Asia the plant is usually

found in. The Botanical Gardens even have sales in the Fall and Spring, if you are interested in taking any plants home with you. Some of my personal favorite plants were the Japanese Maple trees, the Hydrangeas and the Camellias. I would also recommend looking at classes that are offered at the Botanical Gardens.

## **You're Looking for a Favorite Place to Take Walks**

Tired of your usual nature trails? Need to de-stress after the last test? Look no further than the Botanical Gardens. One of the best parts of my walk in the Van Landingham Glen Garden was finding the memorial of UNC Charlotte's founder, Bonnie E. Cone. There are some walkways lined with flowers, such as the Camellias in Camellia Walk. Not to mention, there

are various benches in both gardens for you to rest if you're feeling tired.

## **You Like Places with Character and Atmosphere**

This is where the Asian Garden really shines. The crashing water on the rocks, the leaves falling off the many trees that surround the pond, and features such as the Gazebo and the Moon Gate make this spot one of my personal favorites in the Botanical Gardens. The Van Landingham Glen Garden has a comforting atmosphere with its many species of trees and the humble cabin near the front entrance.

## **You're Looking for Adventure**

The Botanical Gardens are huge, and have multiple areas to explore. In the Van Landingham Glen Garden, you

have your typical nature trail with a wide array of trees. In the Susie Harwood Garden, you can see lots of beautiful flowers. And, in the Asian Garden, you will find a variety of trees, flowers and the like from different parts of Asia.

There are many aspects of the Botanical Gardens that appeal to all different kinds of people. If these reasons resonate with you, I would recommend planning a trip to the Botanical Gardens; you'll definitely enjoy yourself there. If you wish to learn more about the UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens, or if you're interested in supporting the gardens, check out the Botanical Gardens website.

