

NINER NATION GUIDE

2026

a niner times publication





Mentorship

Social Integration

Academic Support

SAFE supports the transition of students to Charlotte by providing you a peer mentor your entire first year at Charlotte. Our program helps minimize academic, social, and emotional challenges by encouraging students to actively utilize and participate in Charlotte support services, peer to peer support, and raising awareness of various campus resources.

Two ways to get involved:

SAFE Voyage - A week-long program held the week before classes to get students acclimated to campus.

SAFE Academic Year Program - Students who do not participate in Voyage can still join for the year.



CLT_SAFE



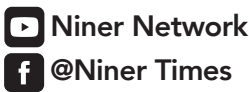
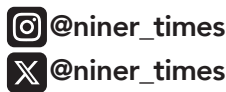
704.687.0363



SAFE.CHARLOTTE.EDU



SAFE_PROGRAM@CHARLOTTE.EDU



NEWS

PLACES TO EAT CLEANER ON CAMPUS	8
WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT RESOURCES ON CAMPUS	9
HOW TO NAVIGATE CAMPUS AND SURROUNDING AREAS WITHOUT A CAR	11

SPORTS

Q&A: A LOOK INTO THE UPCOMING CHARLOTTE FOOTBALL SEASON WITH TIM ALBIN	14
WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT CLUB SPORTS AT UNC CHARLOTTE	16
THREE THINGS TO WATCH FOR WITH CHARLOTTE ATHLETICS IN 2026-27	18

ARTS & CULTURE

FUN WAYS TO SPEND YOUR TIME IN CHARLOTTE	25
ESSENTIAL ITEMS TO HAVE IN YOUR DORM	32
MUST HAVE APPS	34

OPINION

OPINION: EMBRACE THE UNKNOWN	37
OPINION: IT IS OK TO ENTER COLLEGE WITHOUT A PLAN	41
OPINION: COLLEGE IS ABOUT MORE THAN GETTING A HIGH-PAYING JOB	42

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

MANAGERIAL BOARD
Wes Packham WRITING MANAGING
Megan Khor MULTIMEDIA MANAGING
Mareska Chettiar COPY

EDITORIAL
Kyle Boucher NEWS
Emsley Jackson OPINION
Anna Waskey ARTS & CULTURE
Ahmed Ahmed PHOTO
Ava Weaver DESIGN
Tre Holland SPORTS

ASSISTANT EDITORS

Emily Schenkel ASST. NEWS
Ava Harris ASST. OPINION
Rex Stauss ASST. COPY
Kaitlyn Fankboner ASST. PHOTO
Ali Thiam ASST. DESIGN
Shane Reese ASST. SPORTS

CONTRIBUTING STAFF

TJ Carter, Camila Surinach, Sunnya Hadavi, Ivy Nguyen, Megan Bentley, Caiden Herstein, Blaise Uy, Aisha Karim, Rachel Kaake, Emma Cathey, Crawford Anderson

LAYOUTS

Cover photo: Norm the Niner | Dan Rice
Cover design by Ava Weaver
Interior layouts by Ava Weaver, Megan Khor, Ali Thiam, Sunnya Hadavi

MARKETING DIRECTOR
Itziar Carrasco Gomez
mktdirector@charlotte.edu

NINER MEDIA STAFF
Kelly Merges MEDIA ADVISER
Laurie Cuddy BUSINESS MANAGER
Bianca Fruscello MARKETING COORDINATOR

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

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

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

Letter from the editor:



Welcome to UNC Charlotte, new Niners.

You are stepping into a special journey that will challenge and develop you in ways you cannot imagine. College is not just a destination. It is a horizon. And as you approach it, you will begin to see that every step reveals another view, another opportunity and another chance to become who you want to be.

When I chose UNC Charlotte, I did it for one simple reason: I wanted to feel part of something that mattered, the way I did in high school. I wanted to know I belonged to something greater than myself. What I did not know as a first-year student was how much this University would challenge me before it transformed me.

If I am honest, my first year was not easy. There were moments when I questioned whether I fit here, whether I was doing enough or whether I had made the right choice. I did not realize that just two years later, I would be entering my junior year as editor-in-chief of the Niner Times.

I could not imagine the doors that would open simply because I decided not to give up.

That is something I want you to carry with you: Do not give up, because you never know where your journey will take you.

Somewhere along your journey, you will find one thing that feels right. One thing that does not feel forced but gives you life. For me, that one thing has been the Niner Times. Working at the Niner Times is why I am still a student at UNC Charlotte today. It gave me purpose and confidence during uncertain times. It is the reason I chose to stay, even though quitting would have been easier.

Through this newspaper, I have been able to do things I once only imagined. But those opportunities led me to decide to pursue what I loved and stick with it.

As you explore campus, I encourage you to do the same.

You will hear plenty of advice during your first semester to join every club and attend every event. While involvement matters, your

college career is not defined by how many organizations you join. It is defined by the one special moment you can walk away with. The moment that reminds you why you chose UNC Charlotte in the first place.

Do not measure your experience by numbers. Measure it by meaning.

Pursue your original thought. If you have an idea, do as much as you can to bring it to life. College is one of the few spaces where you can explore freely. Use that freedom wisely, but do not confuse constant movement with purpose. You do not have to do everything you see. You just have to find the one thing that makes your journey worthwhile.

During difficult moments when you question yourself, have the mindset that today's worry will be tomorrow's lesson. Growth can be hard to see and uncomfortable, but when you reach your new horizon, you will look back and see that every challenge had a lesson attached to it.

I often think about what would have happened if I had ended my journey in the first year and convinced myself that one hard season

defined my entire story. I would have missed the opportunity to lead this newspaper.

Remind yourself that you are here for a reason. You do not have to have everything figured out. Just challenge yourself to stay committed and curious.

You will never know what's on the other side of your horizon if you give up when you encounter hard times. Stay open to the possibility that your journey will look different from what you expected.

UNC Charlotte is more than a campus. It is a place where you discover who you are through small steps. Choosing this University was one of them. What comes next is up to you.

As you reach the end of this letter, I encourage you to begin writing your own story, one not shaped by outward opinion or comparison, but by the small steps you take each day.

Your journey is just beginning. Keep walking toward your horizon.

Letter from Chancellor Gaber

“Welcome home... and Go Niners!”

Chancellor Sharon L. Gaber

Ava Weaver/Niner Times
& Courtesy of UNC Charlotte



Welcome to the 2026-27 academic year, Niner Nation!

It's a pleasure to welcome you to a new year at Charlotte. Whether you're continuing your journey or just getting started, you are part of a community that is excited to support you and help you succeed. To our new students, welcome to Charlotte!

There's something special about this place. At UNC Charlotte, you'll find a community that is both ambitious and deeply supportive — a place where you can explore your in-

terests, challenge yourself and grow in ways you may not yet expect.

Our university continues to build remarkable momentum. As a Top 75 public university and a Carnegie Research 1 (R1) institution, we are expanding opportunities for you to learn by doing — working alongside faculty on research, gaining real-world experience and preparing for a future full of possibility.

Just as important is where we are. Located in one of the nation's fastest-growing cities, Charlotte offers access to internships, careers, arts,

culture and athletics. The region serves as a living laboratory for learning and discovery — with the light rail connecting you to it all. It is what makes this university different.

What truly defines Charlotte, however, is our people. Faculty, advisors and staff are here for you and care deeply about your success and well-being. I encourage you to reach out, ask questions and take advantage of the many resources available to you.

Get involved, build friendships and create lasting memories. Attend

events, support our 49ers teams and find the organizations and communities that energize you. There's no shortage of ways to make your college experience meaningful.

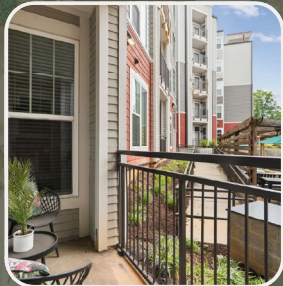
You made an outstanding choice in coming to Charlotte. I'm proud to be part of your journey.

**Welcome home ...
and Go Niners!**

Sharon L. Gaber, Chancellor

THE DRAKE
STUDENT LIVING

Where Niner life happens.
NINER NATION



**BUILT FOR YOUR
COLLEGE EXPERIENCE.**

**Steps from campus.
Miles from ordinary.**

- Resort-Style Pool
- Fitness Center
- Study Lounge + Computer Stations
- Free Printing
- Wi-Fi Included
- Outdoor Kitchen, Fire Pit & Games
- Controlled Access Community
- Package Lockers
- Fully Furnished Apartments
- Full-Size Washer & Dryer
- Private Campus Shuttle (Coming Soon)



View Our Full List of Amenities
TheDrakeCharlotte.com

 **(980) 431-6495**

How to navigate Niner Engage to find the right club or student organization for you

Emily Schenkel | Asst. News Editor
TJ Carter/Niner Times



The beginning of the school year is a key time for students to try out new clubs and organizations, and even join a few.

Niner Engage is UNC Charlotte's online platform and app that serves as the primary tool for students to interact with and connect to campus organizations easily.

Niner Engage's online platform and app lets students explore over 600 student organizations, campus events and organization-based news. It serves as the central hub for student involvement, helping students to discover opportunities and stay connected on campus.

How to navigate the website and app

On the Niner Engage website, students can browse all student organizations, see upcoming on-campus events, read organization-related news and join organizations.

Once a student joins an organization, it will appear on their Niner Engage profile.

Students can search for organizations in various ways. The site allows students to filter search results by category or branch, with categories including in-

terest-based groups, international organizations, media-based organizations, religious or spiritual groups, service organizations and sports clubs.

The website's filtering system was designed to help students quickly find student organizations that identify with their interests, personal goals or professional goals.

In addition to exploring organizations as a whole, students can use Niner Engage to stay up to date on upcoming campus events.

The events section on the site highlights upcoming campus events, or students can go to an individual organization's page to find events hosted by that group.

There is also a mobile app version of Niner Engage, called Niner Engage+. Students can access the Niner Engage+ app just like other UNC Charlotte applications using their UNC Charlotte credentials and Duo Mobile authorization.

The mobile app is a mirrored version of the website, with a more social media-style. Students can message others directly, message in group chats tailored to their interests and interact with feed posts. Students can also directly interact with events by liking, commenting or reposting any event listed on the app.

Once a student logs into the Niner Engage+ app, they see posts from the entire community, people in their personal network, available student organizations, group chats and more.

The discover tab on the app includes all of the available student organizations, group chats, upcoming events, campus bus routes, campus dining information, a campus map, parking availability, the athletic calendar, appointments with Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), incident reports, room reservations, the light rail route and other important resources.

Common challenges and resolutions

Students have shared on platforms like Reddit that all of the student organizations listed on Niner Engage can be intimidating, and that it can be difficult to find a student organization to join when there are so many to choose from.

Going through all of the organizations can be intimidating, especially for a student looking through the site for the first time. To avoid being overwhelmed by the vast number of options, it is best practice for a student to start with their interests.

Searching for a club that already aligns with a student's interests will make the search easier and help them find a club that fits their personality, giving them a home away from home at school.

It can also be helpful to check out the community posts made on the Niner Engage+ app, as club executive board members often post about upcoming events or share photos from recent events. These posts can give students a feel for what a club does and what its events look like.

About Niner Engage

The Niner Engage website has been used at UNC Charlotte for several years, but the mobile app is a newer addition.

During the summer of 2023, Student Involvement created Niner Engage+, a mobile app version of the Niner Engage website. The app was created to expand students' access to and engagement with Niner Engage.

Looking ahead to the fall 2026 semester, Niner Engage continues to remain a key resource for current and incoming students looking to get involved, make connections and engage in different facets of campus life.

Places to eat cleaner on campus

Kyle Boucher | News Editor

With limited access to grocery stores or fresh produce, it can be difficult to eat healthy when living on campus, especially when most dining halls contain fast food chains such as Panda Express, Wendy's or Bojangles.

Students living in on-campus housing often don't have access to a personal kitchen, and instead must use a public kitchen if they wish to cook.

Many first-year students also do not have cars on campus, which can make it difficult to get to a grocery store.

However, Charlotte has established several on-campus healthy alternatives for students who wish to avoid the unhealthy dining options.

Students can get these foods in person or online via the mobile app. All these on-campus restaurants accept Declining Balance (DB), and some also accept meal swipes.

Charlotte Greens

Opening in 2022, Charlotte Greens works as a quick-serve restaurant that sells a variety of healthy foods, from soups and salads to grilled chicken.

Once per day, students can use meal swipes to order food, or they can pay with DB at any time.

Charlotte Greens mainly sells custom-made salad or grain bowls that can include different meats and cooked vegetables. These bowls are designed to be high in nutrients, with vegan-friendly options available.

Some common types of bowls that students can get are the BYO Bowl and the Gold Rush Bowl, which can both offer an assortment of rice, beans, corn, cheese, chicken, shrimp and roasted vegetables.

Students can also choose to get the Pesto Green Noodles Bowl, which offers rice noodles cooked with pesto sauce, shrimp, tomatoes and chickpeas.

There are many other types of bowls students can choose, like the Southwestern Bowl or the Spicy Jerk & Rice Bowl. Any of these bowls can be customized with different toppings or sauces, and the food can be taken to-go if students are in a rush.

Shake Smart

On the first floor of the Popp-Martin Student Union, Shake Smart sells a variety of milkshakes and açai bowls. Their menu focuses on incorporating foods rich in protein, creatine and fiber.

Shake Smart also offers gluten-free, lactose-free and vegan-friendly menu

options. The restaurant also offers low-fat and non-fat options for all milk alternatives.

Students can order custom-blended milkshakes with toppings like peanut butter, fruits and cinnamon.

Coffee and green tea matcha are also available on the drinks menu, alongside foods such as toast, oatmeal and vegetable wraps.

Shake Smart also offers açai bowls that can be topped with granola, nuts and fruit.

Convenient, ready-made sandwiches and salads

If students are looking for convenient but healthy meals, the markets in Prospector and the Popp-Martin Student Union offer ready-made sandwiches and salads.

These ready-made products aren't as healthy as fresh produce, but they're still more nutritious than some of the options at fast-food restaurant chains on campus.

The convenience of these items, along with their healthier ingredients,

makes them a good snack for students between classes.

One example is the chicken salad bowls, made with vegetables like lettuce and cucumber, along with grilled chicken and croutons.

SoVi and Social 704

SoVi in the South Village Dining Hall and Social 704 in the Popp-Martin Student Union are buffet-style dining halls.

These traditional food halls have salad bars with an assortment of vegetables and fruits. These dining halls also serve a variety of meats to provide students with a well-rounded diet.

Students can also buy a reusable plastic container to take dining hall food home. There is only a one-time fee to buy a container, and the dining halls will clean the container for free.

These to-go containers can help students bring vegetables or other healthy foods back to their dorms, which can support meal planning and eating healthy more frequently.



What students need to know about resources on campus

Niner Times File

Tackling the newfound freedom of college life can be tricky; sometimes, students may need some help navigating that journey. Whether it is managing physical or mental health, preparing for your future career or just figuring out where your mail went, UNC Charlotte's campus offers a wide range of resources to make student life smoother and more successful.

While stepping out of your comfort zone and exploring campus beyond your routine might feel intimidating, taking advantage of these resources might relieve some of the unnecessary stress that comes with college and make the time more memorable.

Student Health Center

Officially known as the Waddell Center for Student Health and Wellbeing (SHC), the SHC is first on the list of resources you will want to take advantage of throughout the school year. For students who do not have a car or access to medical care with a doctor in the University area, the SHC, located across the greenhouse, is just a walk or campus bus ride away from affordable healthcare.

Open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., the SHC is open to students who can make appointments either online or by calling the SHC directly. Students have access to pharmacy services, sexual health resources and medical services, including immunization aid if needed.

Center for Counseling and Psychological Services

College life can bring excitement but also stress, anxiety and homesickness. Charlotte's Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers various services to help students throughout the semester. Some of their services include individual or group counseling, mental health screenings, workshops on stress management, mindfulness and resilience and crisis services.

All services through CAPS are confidential and included in student fees, meaning that there is no extra charge for the majority of support services.

Career Center

Whether you are a first-year student looking to explore career options or a fourth-year student preparing for post-graduate life, Charlotte's Career Center is a powerful ally to all students, as it can help mold you into the individual you would like to become in the future.

The Career Center is more than just a place for students to get a headshot for their LinkedIn profile. It provides valuable information and assistance for real-world scenarios. There are resume reviews, mock interview workshops, internship and job search assistance, multiple career fairs throughout the academic year, employer networking opportunities and graduate preparation resources.

Located next to the J. Murrey Atkins Library, the Career Center provides students with everything they need for success in the job market. It also helps them navigate Hire-a-Niner.

As much as you are supposed to have fun during college, you should also be taking advantage of these years to prepare yourself for your future career. Open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., students of all years can make an appointment or drop in at the center to gain some guidance.

Student Involvement Center

A great way to enjoy the college experience is by getting involved. Whether that be in a club sports team, Greek Life, a student cultural organization, dance club or the acapella group, there is a place for you to get involved and enjoy a unique experience.

UNC Charlotte aims to provide the most that it can for students in any student organization. The Student Involvement Center is in the Popp-Martin Student Union on the second floor and has everything you could possibly need for arts and crafts supplies, button making and printer access for flyers. If you do not know how to make a personalized button for your student organization, that is no problem; the involvement center provides each organization with 100 free buttons and instructions on how to make them. Using the involvement center as a resource is highly encouraged if

you are trying to get your club or organization on the map on campus.

Mail and package services

Currently located in the lower level of Prospector, mail and package services is a great resource to UNC Charlotte students. For out-of-state students, especially, if you want to send a birthday present, receive one or ship something important back home, the on-campus mail room is just the place to go.

The mailroom has a variety of resources and services, including express and priority mail (domestic and international), packaging supplies, postage stamps and postcards, signature/delivery confirmation, bulk mail, package services and money orders. This way, students do not have to worry about separately going out to buy stamps, envelopes or boxes if they need to send something out.

To purchase supplies, the mailroom also accepts all forms of payment, including cash, card, Apple Pay and through the 49er account.

College life is full of new challenges, but you do not have to face them alone. UNC Charlotte offers a strong network of resources designed to help you succeed inside and outside the classroom. By taking advantage of these services, you are easing college stress and building a stronger college experience.



Guide to surviving parking on campus

Miguel Peña | Staff Writer

Ava Weaver/Niner Times

The parking situation has been a controversial topic among UNC Charlotte students. Students say there are never enough parking spots, and with an ever-increasing first-year class, the situation seems only to be getting worse.

Since the fall of 2025, the University has had a First-Year Live-On requirement for first-time college students, which could encourage students to leave their cars at home. There are many different permits and parking lots available, which can make it overwhelming to find the best fit.

If a student still decides to bring their car to campus, they need to know their permit status, prices and where they are allowed to park.

A student's permit is based on their living status at the University. They could be commuters, on-campus residents or Greek Village residents. It is important to note that non-commuter permits require an active housing contract.

Outside of every lot, each type of permit is marked with a letter and color. Commuters can park in spaces with a sign with a "C" in a yellow square, residents with an "R" in a blue square, and Greek Village with a "G" in a grey circle.

Once students know where they will be living, they can decide which permit will fit them best.

Permit list and prices

First, it is important to note that parking permits are not included in the cost of attendance; students have to purchase them separately each year. Prices will vary depending on the type of permit and for how many semesters the student plans to use it. Determining which permit a student needs could save them a lot of money.

The Standard permit is, as its name suggests, the most basic one of them all. Students and staff can purchase this permit for \$480 per year or \$240 per semester. A \$144 summer option is available for students who have summer classes or move onto campus early.

The Non-Standard permit is for specific needs or situations. One example is the Night permit, valid from 3 p.m. to 8 a.m., which is \$290 per year or \$145 per semester, most convenient for students

with afternoon or night classes. Resident students are not allowed to purchase this permit.

Students who exclusively take classes at the Dubois Center at UNC Charlotte Center City will find the Center City Only Permit, \$420 per year or \$210 per semester, most convenient. This permit is not valid on the main campus.

Even students with motorcycles or mopeds have their own parking permits. For \$125 per year, \$62.50 for Spring, or \$52 for Summer, students can park in the motorcycle/moped parking area.

Convenience over availability

Once a student determines which permit fits them best, the next challenge is figuring out where to park.

A lot of students want to park in the most central parking lot, Union Deck, right next to the Popp-Martin Student Union, hence the name, but it is only available to commuters. Even though it is commuter-only, most of the day, it's full — so residents and commuters have the same problem.

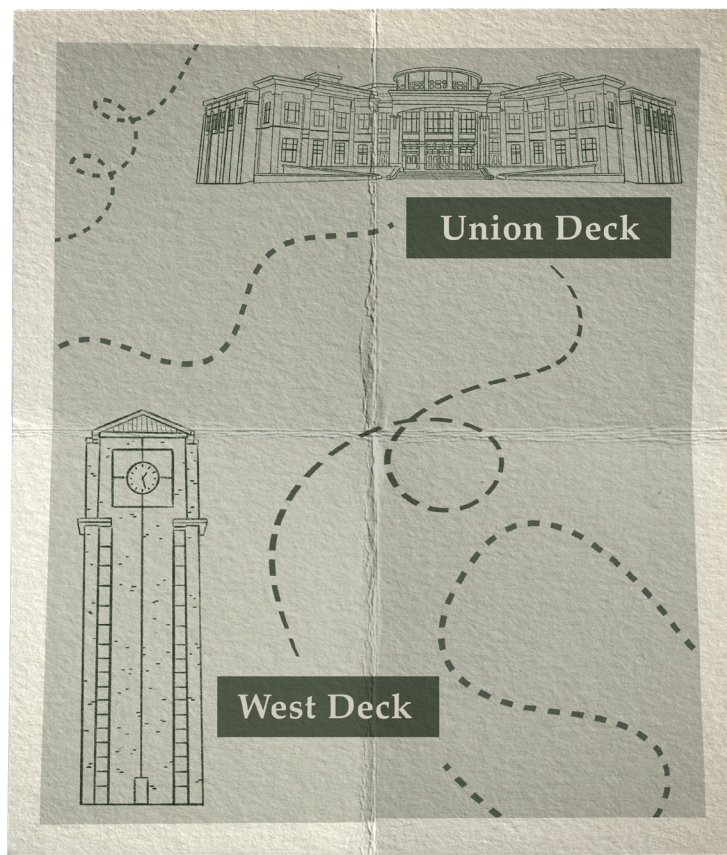
Residents have the most convenient parking for their situation. There are lots near all the living halls exclusively for residents. The two closest decks to the living halls, North and South, are another option for commuters and residents.

There are also West and East decks, with East having two interconnected decks. They are commuter-only, so they are usually full. When moments like that occur, there are always lots right next to the decks available.

As upperclassmen advance through their careers, their classes start focusing on specific campus areas, so the previously mentioned parking decks become more viable to them, leaving more central decks and lots to underclassmen.

On weekends, parking permits are not enforced, and students can park in any deck or lot, except during football home games or on the CRI Deck.

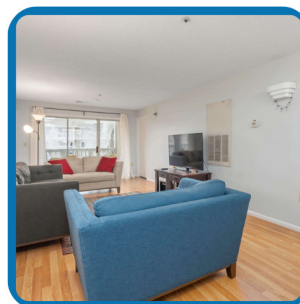
For additional information and questions, students can go to pats.charlotte.edu, which is the University's Parking and Transportation Services website. On the website, there is an online map with all the parking on campus, where students can park and check its availability.



UNCC Student Apartments from \$600



- ☆ 5 Minute Walk to Campus
- ☆ 2-4 Bedroom Units
- ☆ Individual Leases
- ☆ Wi-Fi & Utilities Included
- ☆ Roommate Matching



704-907-2717 | www.unccrentals.com

How to navigate campus and surrounding areas without a car

Montserrat Marcelo-Morales | Staff Writer

Navigating campus and the surrounding areas can be difficult, especially if students don't bring their own car.

But not all hope is lost; there are different ways for students to navigate campus without a car.

Shopping shuttle

UNC Charlotte offers a shopping shuttle that drives around campus, taking students to Target, Harris Teeter and Patel Brothers.

Shuttle stops on campus include Levine, Hunt, Wallis and Martin halls.

The shuttle operates in the fall and spring semesters on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 4:45 - 9 p.m.

To ride the shopping shuttle, students must present their 49er ID.

Niner Transit Bus Service

UNC Charlotte campus buses offer three routes: green, gold and silver. The green route takes students around the main campus, traveling from North to South Deck.

The gold route also covers the main campus, traveling from North to South Deck. This route goes in the opposite direction from the green route.

The silver route travels from east to west, starting at Lot 5 A on the east side of campus and heading towards the CRI Deck on the west side of campus.

Passio Go! app

With the Passio Go app, students can

track the routes of the shopping shuttle and campus buses.

Students download the app on their phones, go to My Agency, and type in UNC Charlotte into the search bar. This will give students full access to where the buses are in real time and the estimated arrival time for their stop.

The My Passio Go app helps students reduce the risk of missing the bus or getting on the wrong one.

Lynx Blue Light Rail

Charlotte Area Transit Service (CATS) Blue Lynx Light Rail has 26 stops. It starts at UNC Charlotte and heads down Tryon Street, ending at I-485/South End.

To track the light rail, students can download the Transit or Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) app.

Students get free access to the Charlotte Light Rail system by showing their 49er ID. The light rail is accessible in North Village by the North Deck.

J.W. Clay Blvd/UNC Charlotte stop is located on the west side of campus, near The Shoppes at University Place. Students are able to access restaurants, shops and the Duck Park lake.

Students can take an alternative route to Shoppes by taking the silver route and getting off at the CRI Deck. From there, students are able to walk to the Shoppes at University Place.

NoDa, known as the city's art and entertainment district, is located on 36th Street. Many galleries, music venues and restaurants are located in this area for

people interested in the arts or looking for local eats.

The Charlotte Transportation Center (CTC) / Arena stop is located in front of the Spectrum Center, where many concerts and events are held. CTC/ Arena provides students with access to the heart of the city, where many shops, cafes, restaurants and nightlife can be found.

CATS buses

Students can use the CATS-Pass App to get free access to the CATS bus system. Students use their UNC Charlotte email accounts to create accounts. When getting on the bus, students scan their pass.

Stops are located around campus, including stops for off-campus apartments at streets such as Mallard Creek Church Rd and John Kirk Dr, on the north side of campus and the University City and Broderick Blvd stops.

Students can access Atrium Health University City Hospital and Walmart University Pointe through the buses.

For students going to Charlotte Douglas International Airport, they can take the light rail to Uptown and get off at the CTC/Arena stop.

From there, the CATS' Sprinter bus is available. The CATS' Sprinter bus (Route 5 Airport) allows a way to travel from uptown Charlotte to the airport.

E-Scooters and Lime E-Bikes

Students interested in riding the e-scooters and Lime bikes can down-

load the Lime App.

Students create an account with their UNC Charlotte email for reduced-rate pricing. With this system, students will pay for however long they ride the bikes, with a \$1 unlock fee and \$0.29 per minute.

These vehicles can be taken to shopping areas near N. Tryon Street and University Blvd.

For students to secure their bikes in bike lockers, they must complete a UNC Charlotte Bicycle Locker Rental Agreement.

Designated hubs are located in North Deck, South Village Deck, Student Union Deck, CRI Deck and Lot 27.

Toby Creek Greenway

Toby Creek Greenway is located on the west side of the main campus, behind Hauser Alumni Pavilion and Halton-Wagner Tennis Complex.

The north side of the greenway leads to Terraces at University Place. Restaurants and shops can be located here, such as Aldi and Cuzzo's Cuisine II.

On the south side of campus, the greenway has an exit that leads to stores and restaurants. Harris Teeter, Zenshi Handcrafter Sushi and Crunch Fitness can be found in this area.

There are many ways for students to access on-campus and off-campus life without a car. Using public transportation and walking can lead students to fun activities.

What you need to know about going Greek at Charlotte

Niner Times File

Greek Life at UNC Charlotte is an integral part of campus culture, offering students opportunities for personal growth, academic achievement and community engagement. With over 40 active fraternities and sororities, Charlotte's Greek community is diverse, inclusive and committed to community service and leadership opportunities while providing a forever home to students of all walks.

UNC Charlotte's Greek Life has seen impressive growth. In 2008, there were only 28 chapters and 896 Greek students. Eighteen years later, there are now 41 chapters and over 2,000 students involved.

UNC Charlotte's Greek Life is organized into five different councils that have recruitment at various times at the beginning of the academic year.

Recruitment for the Interfraternity Council (IFC) and Panhellenic Association (PHA) is currently open for the fall 2026 semester. Formal Panhellenic recruitment is expected to start early September, and IFC

Recruitment takes place later on. Students interested in joining the National Panhellenic Council (NPHC), Diversified Greek Council (DGC) or Independent Greek Council (IGC) should follow the different chapters on Instagram to learn specific information about their recruitment for the fall.

Interfraternity Council (IFC): This council oversees 12 fraternities, representing approximately 800 members. It emphasizes scholarship, leadership and community service and aims to set a standard of excellence within the fraternity community.

The newest IFC fraternity on campus is Lambda Chi Alpha Inc., which was re-established in 2024. Since then, all 12 fraternities have remained and have brought in new chapter classes every semester.

Panhellenic Association (PHA): This organization consists of seven National Panhellenic Conference sororities, with over 700 women participating. PHA organizes formal recruitment events and promotes leadership, scholarship and philanthropy among its members.

One of the most awaited days within the PHA is known as Bid Day, which takes place at the beginning of the fall semester in September. Bid Day is where all the women who

made it through recruitment get their bid from their forever family and run 'home' to their fellow sorority sisters.

The PHA also plays a significant role in Airband, one of the most popular Greek Life events that takes place during the spring semester on campus. Airband is a dance competition within the PHA where each sorority spends months working on routines to perform in front of a crowd of hundreds.

National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC): Known as the "Divine Nine," this council includes historically Black fraternities and sororities that have been a part of UNC Charlotte's campus for over 50 years.

UNC Charlotte's first-ever fraternity to be on campus was Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., which was part of the NPHC in 1970.

These organizations have been celebrated for their everlasting legacy of service and unity with the Divine Nine plaques placed on campus in the Star Quad. There were 10 plaques placed during the fall 2024 semester, honoring each chapter within the Divine Nine and an additional informational plaque.

These plaques were placed in the Star Quad as the area on campus was given its name thanks to the members of the NPHC. Through various events hosted over the course of the years such as Yard Fest, and other NPHC activities, the

Star Quad grew in popularity and was made a well-known spot on campus.

Diversified Greek Council (DGC): This council represents culturally based fraternities and sororities affiliated with organizations such as the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NALFO) and the National Asian Pacific Islander American Panhellenic Association (NAPA).

The DGC not only aims to provide students of other cultures with a place of comfort in the Greek community, but also to teach others about their heritage. The DGC hosts a semiannual picnic, inviting all members from each chapter to attend, which also takes place in the Star Quad. Students within DGC are invited to attend to watch various performances and enjoy some comfort food.

Although established on campus in 2009, the DGC has grown immensely since. With a total of nine different chapters, the DGC has secured its powerful presence on campus.

Independent Greek Council (IGC): This council serves as a governing body for fraternities and sororities that do not fall under the other councils. Established on campus in 2010, the IGC has seen consistent participation as it continues to do philanthropic projects and host events for its chapter members.

Chapters are governed by the IGC as long as the University registers them and other panels do not already govern them. The IGC cooperates with member organizations, the sorority and fraternity community and the University. IGC organizations include Alpha Omega Epsilon Sorority, Sigma Alpha Omega Christian Sorority, Inc., Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia and Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity.



Emmanuel Perkins/Niner Times



The Dimensions of Wellness is our shared framework for Health and Wellbeing at UNC Charlotte.

Wellness is multi-dimensional and includes how we manage our emotions, build relationships, grow intellectually, care for our environment, navigate finances, explore purpose, prepare for careers, and take care of our bodies.

The Dimensions are: Emotional, Environmental, Financial, Intellectual, Occupational, Physical, Social, and Spiritual Wellness.



CAPS (Christine F. Price Center for Counseling & Psychological Services)

OUR FOCUS IS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

We are here to provide short-term individual and group counseling, crisis management, consultation, referral services (on and off campus), and educational and preventive initiatives related to promoting mental health for the campus community.



CWP (Center for Wellness Promotion)

OUR FOCUS IS WELLNESS EDUCATION

Our team is here to educate and empower students on topics including mental health, sexual health, interpersonal violence prevention, substance use prevention & recovery support, and holistic wellness.



STUDENT HEALTH (Located in the Joyce Davis Waddell Center for Student Health and Wellbeing)

OUR FOCUS IS HEALTH CARE

We are committed to providing comprehensive medical care, disease prevention, and health education services to all registered UNC Charlotte students, regardless of their health insurance status. In addition, Student Health offers a full-service, on-site pharmacy to support students' healthcare needs.



UREC (University Recreation)

OUR FOCUS IS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Our team provides access to facilities and programs such as intramural sports, sport clubs, and fitness programs, to help students move their bodies and achieve wellbeing.

Scan to learn more about the HWB Unit and all department services



WELLBEING IS THE
NORM
at Charlotte

@clt_wellbeing @clt_urec • wellbeing@charlotte.edu





A look into the upcoming Charlotte football season with Tim Albin

Shane Reese | Asst. Sports Editor

Last year was head coach Tim Albin's first year coaching the 49ers. Before the 2025-26 season, there was still so much to learn about him as a coach and person.

This year is different, as fans want to know what's changed since the 49ers finished 1-11.

Niner Times sat down with Albin to talk football (and life) ahead of his second season as the head coach of Charlotte Football.

NT: How do you feel about the transfer players Charlotte acquired so far?

Albin: We just finished spring ball last week, so we had a great eight-week evaluation of those guys we've brought in. They're solid, and they're going to help us. We had a need, and I think we've addressed that need. Time will tell, but for those 15 practices, I like the talent level that we brought in.

NT: How do you feel about the depth of the roster as of now?

Albin: I'm a little concerned about the depth. We've got some normal bumps and bruises that you get during spring ball, but nothing that won't heal in

four weeks. We're concerned about some of the positions with depth. It'll be key for us to stay as healthy as we can. We'll have to be smart with how we practice. We're going to have to pick and choose as this thing progresses through OTAs [organized team activities] this summer.

NT: What does the quarterback room look like right now?

Albin: I will say, we brought in two new faces. [Sixth-year] Cole Gonzales transferred in from Pitt, and [freshman] Jaylen White, who was a high school signing that we signed in December. I'm pleased with how they finished spring practice, so I'm looking forward to how those two continue to develop. [Redshirt junior] Grayson Loftis has the most game reps in the quarterback room. Then you got [redshirt senior] Conner Harrell. Conner earned the starting position last year but was injured in game four against Rice and has worked his tail off in rehab trying to get back. I think this is gonna be some competition in that quarterback room.

NT: What is the main thing that you like to instill in players during spring and over the summer, leading up to the season?

Albin: We set the expectations that we want from our guys, and we want those expectations to become standards that are held up by the team. So, if there's one word that we use a lot here in this building, it's accountability. We're accountable

to each other, to this University, to our brand, to our fan base. Our team hears those things from our staff every day.

NT: Now that it's been over a year, what has been your favorite part about being the head coach here at Charlotte?

Albin: There's a lot of them, really. I mean, my favorite thing to say is, "This is a beautiful campus." I mean, it's gorgeous. It's breathtaking. But what makes it a great, special place is not the buildings. It's the people inside the buildings, and I mean that with all sincerity.

NT: What's something that the team has shown improvement in during spring practice as compared to last season?

Albin: We started spring practice with 52 guys that were on last year's team that know this coaching staff and know what our expectations and standards are. A year ago, everybody looked at the coaching staff to hold them to that accountability piece. The advantage that we have this year going into the second year is that there's 52 guys who have been with this staff. And so now, there's more accountability in the locker room, and they're not looking around for coaches. The coaches are looking at the 52 other guys that were here last year. I call those guys deputies because they've gone through the expectations of our staff, so things are running smoother.

NT: How has your season preparation changed in year two, if it's changed at all?

Albin: The biggest adjustment or change is to work with is that college football has gone to one portal window. This year, we went through spring ball knowing this is our team. Last spring, we had 60 guys on the team. We practiced with about 60 guys. Fast forward to this spring, our team is here. We practice with 98, 99 guys, and we're gonna add some this summer. We have almost

30 more players this spring than we did a year ago, because there's one window. All those guys went through spring ball, and no one's leaving. So I think you're gonna see a better product on the field this fall from across the board because of the one portal window.

NT: How has your coaching staff helped prepare the team for the upcoming season?

Albin: They do a fabulous job. I let them coach. They know the most important aspect of this profession that we're in is the relationship piece. We've got a very challenging schedule. When it gets really hard, if that relationship piece is solid, when we ask for a little bit more, our guys can deliver a little bit more. I do delegate, but I let them coach. They do a great job pouring everything they got in the hearts of these guys.

NT: How have you been adjusting to the University outside of Charlotte football?

Albin: There's so many things to do. You've got Charlotte. We're an R1 institution now. It's packed. There is not an empty dorm bed on this campus, and you've got 15,000 students in apartment complexes across the street. You can get on the light rail that stops right here on campus and go downtown and have the best meal you've ever had in your life. You can go see the Hornets and Panthers play. Between here and the Charlotte Motor Speedway is the Truliant concert venue that's got shows that I've been to. There's not a more diverse University in our conference. We're ahead by a mile. Great education, beautiful campus, and there are so many things outside of football that you can do here to get your mind off of things.

NT: What would you say are the main differences between how Charlotte football does spring practice and fall camp?

Albin: Spring practice is probably a little bit more fundamentals. There's more time, because you're not preparing for a game. During game week (fall), you've got to make corrections. When Monday comes, you have to correct mistakes. We'll watch the film, so it's a short practice all about corrections. Tuesday, game plan's got to be done, so you've got about 15 minutes of fundamentals. In the spring, you get about 35 minutes of fundamentals each practice. In the fall, you get about 15, and then you get on to exchanging scout teams and preparing for what you're gonna see from your opponents.

NT: How excited are you for week one?

Albin: Very excited. It's great to open at home against The Citadel. I have watched a little bit of game film. I'm just excited for our fans. I can't wait for the stadium to be filled, and then to see the progress of our expansion going on. The erector set is gonna be in full bloom. I think it's going to bring more interest to our program. And then we're gonna get some wins in the win column, and we're gonna build off of that.



Emmanuel Perkins & Megan Bentley/Niner Times



Over the years, UNC Charlotte has expanded its sports offerings beyond Division I athletics. That growth includes dozens of club sports, giving students opportunities to compete in nearly any sport they want to play.

Club sports provide a welcoming environment for participants at all skill levels. Many clubs offer accessible entry points, allowing students to join regardless of prior experience.

For students looking to stay active or continue competing in a familiar sport, club programs offer a flexible and engaging alternative. They serve as a bridge between recreational play and high-level competition, creating space for both development and enjoyment.

Club sports also create a strong sense of community on campus. Whether through practices, games or team events, participants have consistent

opportunities to connect and build relationships outside of the classroom.

Sports club offerings

UNC Charlotte offers more than 30 club sports, each providing an opportunity for students to stay active and compete.

Some clubs feature separate men's and women's teams, including basketball, flag football, soccer and rugby. Other sports, such as softball, baseball and ultimate frisbee, offer competitive environments without the demands of Division I athletics.

Club sports have also found success at Charlotte. The men's and women's club beach volleyball teams won the BB division at the Spring College Club Nationals, hosted by the Sunshine State Outdoor Volleyball Association, back in February, and continue to grow their rosters.

The men's ice hockey team has also gained attention, hosting games in up-town Charlotte at Truist Field and Bojangles Coliseum, drawing strong fan support.

If a sport is not currently offered, students have the opportunity to start their own club. More information on how to begin the process can be found at urec.charlotte.edu/sport-clubs/about-sports-clubs.

Why you should join a sports club

Joining a sports club is a great way to meet people who share similar interests. Practices are typically held on or near campus, creating opportunities to build relationships and develop team chemistry.

Club sports also provide a competitive outlet. Teams often travel to face other universities, with some competi-

tions taking place out of state.

In addition, clubs offer fundraising opportunities to help offset costs. While some clubs require dues for expenses such as jerseys and travel, fundraising efforts allow teams to expand and improve their resources.

Future of sports clubs

Charlotte's club sports program is expected to continue growing, with existing teams expanding and new clubs forming.

Participation continues to increase each year, reflecting strong student interest and engagement across campus. Club sports have become an increasingly visible part of campus culture.

For more information on how to get involved, visit charlotte.dserec.com/online/clubsports or email imsports@charlotte.edu.

 UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE | THE DUBOIS CENTER
AT UNC CHARLOTTE CENTER CITY

When You're Ready, Meet Us In Center City.

MBA | Graduate Studies | Continuing Education | Corporate Training

duboiscenter.charlotte.edu

WELCOME HOME

WE ARE YOUR CAMPUS LIVING ROOMS!

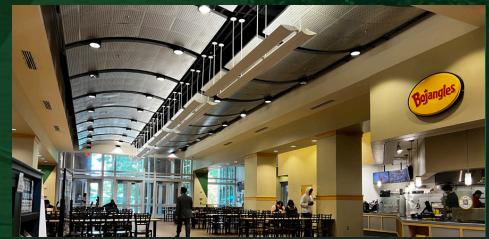


STUDENT CENTERS

Discover everything you need at the **Popp Martin Student Union** and **Cone University Center**. Enjoy delicious food from Social 704, Subway, Bojangles and more, get involved with Fraternity and Sorority Life, join student organizations, develop your leadership potential, and access essential services like NinerTech and Niner Central. Plus, find perfect meeting spots, lounges, and gathering spaces to relax and connect.

NOW INTRODUCING... ESPORTS & GAMING LOUNGE

Located in the Student Union Mezzanine



THE CENTERS OF CAMPUS LIFE ARE NOW HIRING!
USE YOUR FEDERAL WORK STUDY AWARD AND
COME WORK WITH US! SCAN THE QR CODE FOR
MORE INFORMATION

STUDENTCENTERS.CHARLOTTE.EDU



cltstudentcenters



Three things to watch for with Charlotte Athletics in 2026-27

Shane Reese | Asst. Sports Editor

With several new head coaches and players across Charlotte Athletics, the 49ers will look for growth from second-year leaders and a strong first impression from first-year coaches in the 2026-27 season.

Head coaches Benavia Jenkins and Tim Albin are entering their second year leading Charlotte volleyball and football, respectively, aiming to build on their first season. Meanwhile, head coach Wes Miller begins his first season leading Charlotte men's basketball, already making roster and staff changes that will be key storylines entering next season.

New beginnings for men's basketball

Charlotte men's basketball enters a new era under Miller, a Charlotte native tasked with elevating the program.

Following the 49ers' strong finish to the season, attention now turns to whether Miller can recreate that level of play from the conference tournament run.

After being named head coach, Miller acquired one of his former players from his time at the University of Cincinnati. Senior guard 'Jizzle' James joined the 49ers on April 13.

James was a consistent force in the three years he played under Miller at Cincinnati. He started 21 of 23 games in his junior season and averaged 10.9 points, 2.1 assists and 2.2 rebounds for the Bearcats.

With James transferring to Charlotte, the 49ers also return redshirt sophomore Arden Conyers and freshman guard Frank Oguche, providing continuity alongside new additions.

As of April 22, Miller announced the signing of four additional players from the transfer portal. Sophomore forward Dylan Grant transferred from Rutgers University, and junior forwards Tyler McKinley and Jordi Rodriguez, along with freshman guard Keyshuan Tillery, are part of the group that will follow Miller from Cincinnati.

Miller is not only building his roster, but also his coaching staff. Former University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill assistant Marcus Paige and Tulane University assistant coach Claude Pardue join Miller's staff.

As players from around the country continue to enter the transfer portal, the 49ers will look to Miller to bring talent to Halton Arena, where Charlotte won the majority of its games.

Given the 49ers' improvement from the 2024-25 season to last season, it is worth watching whether these changes, along with those Miller has yet to make, will translate into continued progress next year.

Winning time for Albin

It was a rough season for Charlotte football last year. The 49ers secured just one victory, but every coach deserves time to establish a foundation in year one.

Albin has already been active in the transfer portal, identifying players needed to fill remaining roster spots. The 49ers added 23 players from the transfer portal to the 2026 recruiting class on national signing day.

While both sides of the ball require improvement, the defense, particularly the front sev-

en, remains a key area of focus.

The 49ers' defense allowed more than 30 points per game last season and recorded just 14 sacks, which ranked among the lowest totals in the American Conference. Charlotte also finished near the bottom of the conference in defensive pressure rate.

While the offense may not be perfect, overall production should improve with defensive adjustments. If defensive coordinator Nate Faanes makes the necessary changes, Charlotte football will be worth monitoring.

Volleyball relighting the flame

Charlotte volleyball showed significant progress during the 2025 season, highlighted by a 10-match winning streak.

The success was not a fluke. The 49ers swept multiple teams and won most of their close matches. The University of South Florida was the only team Charlotte consistently struggled against as the season wound down.

Though the 49ers will lose graduate libero Annika Thompson and graduate outside hitter Kristen Birmingham, Jenkins has already added three transfers to the 2026 class.

Two of those transfers are from Power Four conference programs and could help fill the roles left by Birmingham and Thompson.

While they may be losing key pieces, Jenkins is no stranger to adversity. She inherited a team that won just five matches and led the 49ers to their first winning season since 2020.

With Jenkins at the helm, Charlotte volleyball will be a team to watch regardless of who takes the floor.



Courtesy of UNC Charlotte, Emmanuel Perkins & Caiden Herstein | Niner Times File



10 marquee 49ers athletes to watch

Tre Holland | Sports Editor

Courtesy of UNC Charlotte & Niner Times File

As the 2025-26 academic year comes to a close, Charlotte Athletics continues to see movement across its programs, with athletes arriving and emerging as key contributors. Looking ahead, several standout performers across multiple sports are set to be among the most compelling names to follow.

J'Ven Williams

Redshirt junior offensive lineman J'Ven Williams transferred from Pennsylvania State University. The former five-star recruit, according to On3.com, is from Reading, Pennsylvania, where he attended Wyomissing High School. Since 2023, Williams has appeared in 21 games for Penn State, primarily on special teams in 2024. His 6-foot-5, 319-pound frame adds a new element to Charlotte's offensive line.

Edgerrin 'Jizzle' James

Charlotte enters a new era of basketball under head coach Wes Miller, who arrived from the University of Cincinnati. Along with Miller, former Cincinnati senior guard Edgerrin 'Jizzle' James reunites with his coach in Charlotte.

James was the first transfer addition in the Miller era. He spent three years at Cincinnati under Miller, averaging 10.8 points, 2.6 assists and 2.4 rebounds while starting 58 of 95 games.

Pinky Chaisilprungruang

Sophomore women's golfer Pinky Chaisilprungruang, from Phitsanulok, Thailand, joined the program in 2024. In her short time at Charlotte, Chaisilprungruang has earned six individual titles, including four this season, and

finished the year ranked No. 50 nationally in the Scoreboard rankings.

She was named the American Conference Women's Golf Player of the Year in 2026, earned all-conference honors and claimed the American Conference Individual Championship. Across two seasons, she has recorded three first-place finishes, seven second-place finishes and 10 top-10 finishes in 30 rounds.

With the regular season complete, she awaits selection for the NCAA Regionals scheduled for May 11-13.

Isa Torres

Junior attacker Isa Torres made an immediate impact for Charlotte women's lacrosse, earning First Team All-Conference honors in 2025 in her debut season.

In 2026, she built on that performance, leading the American Conference in total goals (50) and goals per game (3.33), while finishing among the top five in points per game. Torres remains a strong candidate for continued postseason recognition due to her scoring ability.

Dylan Grant

Junior forward Dylan Grant is another transfer addition for Miller, arriving from Rutgers University. The 6-foot-8 forward started 46 of 55 games over two seasons at Rutgers, averaging 8.1 points and 3.9 rebounds in 22.0 minutes per game.

Grant showed scoring ability during his sophomore season, including a career-high 29-point performance against Lehigh University and a 22-point outing against American University. Ranked

No. 138 in the transfer portal by On3.com, he is expected to make an immediate impact.

Noel Evans

Sophomore track and field athlete Noel Evans is closing the 2026 outdoor season with one meet remaining before the American Conference Championship.

Evans has shown steady improvement across indoor and outdoor competition, participating in the 400m, 300m, 200m and 4x400 relay. During the 2025 indoor season, she competed in six meets and placed in the top five four times in individual events.

In relay competition, she contributed to three top-five finishes, including a second-place finish at the American Conference Championship.

Her 2026 outdoor season has continued that trend. In four meets, Evans recorded two top-three finishes in the 200m, finished first in the 400m at the Aggie Invite and helped the 4x100 relay team secure a first-place finish at the 49er Classic.

Ni Xi and Sara Suchankova

Sophomore women's tennis player Ni Xi continued her strong collegiate career after earning all-conference honors as a freshman. She captured the American Conference Individual Championship and secured the program's first individual NCAA Tournament berth. Xi finished the season 21-14 overall while competing against top-line opponents, posting a 9-6 record in those matchups.

Sophomore Sara Suchankova also delivered a strong season, finishing with a 23-8 overall record. She led the team

with 16 singles wins, including a 9-2 record against No. 2 opponents and a 7-0 mark against No. 3.

The duo also excelled in doubles play, finishing the season on a 10-match win streak with a 23-7 overall record. Xi and Suchankova ended the year ranked No. 37 nationally in doubles by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association.

Elias Arsvoll

Sophomore forward Elias Arsvoll played a key role in helping Charlotte men's soccer secure its first American Conference regular-season title.

Arsvoll showed improvement across nearly every statistical category from his freshman season, appearing in all 16 matches and making five starts while logging 699 minutes. Despite limited starts, he led the team with 16 points.

He earned American Conference Offensive Player of the Week honors following a seven-point performance (three goals, one assist) against Queens University of Charlotte.

Audrey Wilson

Sophomore catcher Audrey Wilson continues to impact Charlotte softball on both sides of the game. With three games remaining in the regular season, Wilson ranks tied for No. 3 in RBIs and is one of seven players with 10 or more home runs. She also sits inside the top 10 in both on-base plus slugging percentage and batting average in the American Conference.

Defensively, Wilson has been consistent, posting a .975 fielding percentage with 140 putouts and 15 assists on 159 chances.

Study hard Eat smart

Enjoy 15% off hot entrées at IKEA.
Fridays only for UNCC students.



Swedish Meatballs



Salmon Fillet



Chicken Tenders



Fish Balls



Falafel Balls



Garlic Lemon Cod



Chile Verde Chicken



Macaroni and Cheese



Pasta with Marinara



Plant Balls

*Valid only at IKEA Charlotte at the IKEA Swedish Restaurant during Friday hours for dine-in purchases only while supplies last. Hot entrées only. Must show proof of valid UNCC student ID. One discount entrée per UNCC student ID per transaction per day. Discount applied pre-tax at register. Other restrictions may apply. See store for details.



HAIR & CAREER GOALS


Couronnée

Work or get your hair done at a premium hair salon and beauty bar!



Send your CV to



+1 310-991-0707



infocouronnee@gmail.com

HIRING CREATIVES :

Open Positions:

- ☒ Content Creators
- ☒ Videographers
- ☒ Makeup Artists

Internship & personal portfolio building with competitive compensation



VENTURE OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP

VENTURE BOUND

FIRST-YEAR & TRANSFER STUDENT ADVENTURE TRIP

EASE THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE, BUILD CONFIDENCE AND MAKE FRIENDS

AUGUST 10-14

PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST



OR GO TO:
[BIT.LY/VENTUREBOUND](https://bit.ly/venturebound)

[VENTURE.CHARLOTTE.EDU](https://venture.charlotte.edu) | @CLTVENTUREOUTDOOR

Five must-see events for Charlotte Athletics in the upcoming year

Rolando Vera Hi-Fong | Staff Writer

Charlotte Athletics enters the 2026-27 season with several matchups that could define the year across football and men's basketball. From early tests to late-season rivalries, these games will shape the 49ers' identity and provide key measuring points as the program continues to build.

A critical opening two weeks for Charlotte football

The season opener always carries importance, even without the hype of later matchups. For Charlotte, this game against the Citadel Bulldogs sets the tone for establishing identity and building early momentum. A strong performance would do more than add a win to the record. It would establish confidence and provide a needed spark after a 1-11 finish last season. Starting fast gives both players

and fans something to build on from the opening snap. The challenge quickly intensifies. Traveling to Oxford, Mississippi, means facing the University of Mississippi, a College Football Playoff semifinalist ranked No. 6 in the nation in 2025 and known for producing NFL-level talent. The jump in competition from the opener into this matchup is significant, making this a test of the team's readiness. The environment and physicality will push Charlotte in ways few games can. This match is also a major opportunity. A competitive showing or timely big plays can build confidence and earn respect. Games like these often shape how a team handles the rest of its schedule.

Mid-November measuring stick
The matchup against East Carolina University (ECU) stands out as one of the most meaningful games on Charlotte football's

schedule. Late-season contests carry added weight, with both teams fully established and playing with defined identities. With bowl positioning and conference standing in play, the pressure will be high. The rivalry with East Carolina adds another layer. With the game at Jerry Richardson Stadium, the atmosphere is expected to reflect a passionate in-state matchup, similar to the 2024 meeting that drew 17,102 fans, the fifth-highest attendance in program history. **Miller's first home crack at ECU**
New head coach Wes Miller is familiar with rivalry environments. As a former University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill player, he experienced high-pressure matchups that carried significant emotion and attention. For Charlotte, this matchup against East Carolina stands out as one of the most important games of the season, especially in Miller's first year with signif-

icant roster turnover. Rivalry wins can energize the fan base and help define a program early. A win in this setting would carry weight beyond the standings. It would establish tone, reinforce identity and give fans a clear sense of direction under Miller.

Two of Charlotte's must-see stars

Any event featuring sophomores Ni Xi and Pinky Chaisilprungruang brings added attention to Charlotte Athletics. Both athletes represent a high level of performance and continue to elevate their respective programs. Late in 2025, Xi became the first player in Charlotte history to qualify for the NCAA Division I Individual Singles Championship, a milestone that raised the profile of the women's tennis program. Chaisilprungruang has remained a consistent force in women's golf, earning American Conference Women's Golfer of the Year honors in consecutive seasons and ranking No. 47 nationally as of April 28. Their success highlights the growth of Charlotte's athletic programs and brings national attention to the university. Any competition they are part of carries added significance. Charlotte will have no shortage of opportunities to define its season, both in key matchups and through standout individual performances. How the 49ers respond in those moments will go a long way in shaping what this year ultimately becomes.

CHARLOTTE 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
01	02 <i>event</i>	03	04	05	06	07
08	09	10	11	12	13 <i>event</i>	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	01	02	03	04



Camila Surinach/Niner Times

Biggest questions facing Charlotte in the upcoming year

Casey Troutman | Staff Writer

Camila Surinach/Niner Times & Courtesy of UNC Charlotte

With change continuing across Charlotte Athletics, the program enters the upcoming year facing several defining questions. From leadership to football, baseball and men's basketball, how those questions are answered will shape the direction of the 49ers moving forward.

Is Kevin White the right leader for Athletics?

Director of Athletics Kevin White said in his introductory press conference that "Charlotte's stock is rising," a phrase that has followed the program since his arrival. White replaces former Director of Athletics Mike Hill, who led Charlotte through its transition into the American Conference.

During that transition, Charlotte captured eight conference titles across all sports, the most in the American over that span. However, the revenue sports did not match that success.

If White is to elevate the program, progress in football and men's basketball will be essential. His ability to build Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) resources and support those programs will be a key factor in determining the program's trajectory.

White may also face another major decision if the football program does not show improvement. Navigating that possibility, if necessary, will be one of the defining moments of his tenure.



Can Tim Albin turn Charlotte football around?

Head coach Tim Albin's first season with Charlotte was a difficult one, as the 49ers finished with their lowest win total since their early years at the

FBS level. The program struggled to retain talent from the previous staff while working to establish a new identity.

There were flashes of progress, including a strong performance against Monmouth University, but consistency against comparable competition remains a concern. Recruiting has also been middle of the pack in the American Conference, placing additional pressure on internal development.

Albin has shown the ability to rebuild before. At Ohio University, he followed a 3-9 season with a 10-win campaign the following year. Replicating that turnaround at Charlotte will be more challenging given the level of competition in the American.

With a demanding schedule ahead, improvement will be measured by competitiveness as much as wins. Reaching bowl eligibility for the first time since 2019 would represent clear progress, while continued struggles could lead to further changes within the program.



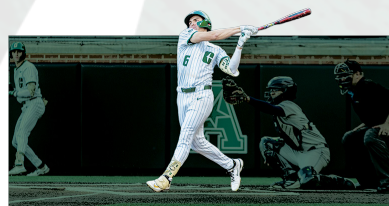
Will Charlotte baseball bounce back?

Charlotte baseball finds itself in an unfamiliar position after finishing near the top of the American Conference a year ago. Following a 36-win season and a No. 2 finish, the 49ers have dropped to the bottom of the American standings as the current season stands.

The roster still features enough offensive production to compete, but inconsistent pitching has been a key factor in the team's regression. That inconsistency stands out, given head coach Robert Woodard's background as a pitcher and pitching coach.

Despite the current results, Woodard's track record suggests this season may be an outlier. Since taking over the program, Charlotte has rarely fallen below 30 wins, maintaining a level of consistency that few programs in the conference can match.

With that history in mind, there is reason to expect improvement moving forward, particularly if the pitching staff returns to form.



Can Wes Miller deliver on early expectations?

Charlotte men's basketball head coach Wes Miller arrives in Charlotte after a successful run at the University of Cincinnati, where he consistently produced winning teams. Prior to that, he built the University of North Carolina at Greensboro into a perennial Southern Conference contender.

Miller has already reshaped the roster through the transfer portal, bringing several former Cincinnati players with him, along with additions such as sophomore forward Dylan Grant from Rutgers University.

Charlotte finished 17-17 and 9-9 in conference play last season, good for No. 5 in the American, but inconsistency against lower-tier opponents proved costly. For Miller, early success will be defined by winning those games and establishing a more reliable baseline.

Living up to expectations in year one is not solely about reaching the NCAA Tournament. It is about establishing identity. Charlotte finished in the middle of the conference in key statistical categories last season, including scoring offense and defensive efficiency.



Under Miller, the expectation is a more disciplined and connected team, particularly on the defensive end. A top-tier conference defense and improved execution in close games would signal clear progress.

Ultimately, success will be measured by whether Charlotte looks like a program moving in the right direction. The results should reflect a clear difference on the court.

What does the NIL landscape look like under White?

NIL has become a defining factor in college athletics, particularly in football and men's basketball. Programs that fail to keep pace financially risk falling behind.

White's reputation as a fund-raiser played a major role in his hiring, and early returns have shown progress. Charlotte has already raised more than \$2.2 million for athletics, while figures such as David and Nicole Tepper and Ric Elias have contributed to key initiatives.

Those efforts are a strong start, but sustained success will require continued growth. Competing at the top of the American Conference will depend on consistent financial support across programs.

White's ability to maintain and expand those resources will be central to Charlotte's long-term success.

Charlotte enters the upcoming year with clear questions across its most important programs. How those questions are answered will determine whether the 49ers can turn potential into sustained success.

INTERESTED IN LIVING OFF CAMPUS?

**NINER
CHOICE**

» Start your search with the
Niner Choice Program

The Niner Choice Program is a safety initiative designed to help students and families make informed decisions about off-campus living options.

ocssmailbox@charlotte.edu



OFF-CAMPUS
STUDENT SERVICES



CENTER FOR
STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

FIND YOUR **PAS***S***ION** WITH STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

- Join one of our **450+ student organizations** through Niner Engage, or even create your own!
- Check out events hosted by our signature Student Orgs: **CAB, GPSG, & SGA!**
- Schedule a consultation** with one of our Involvement Ambassadors!
- Pop Into Student Involvement** every Wednesday at 12pm for free popcorn!
- Enjoy the CSI perks! Free supplies from button-making to posters, access to printing & study rooms reservations, games, bean bags, **AND MORE!**

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE | STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

VISIT US

Center for Student Involvement ⇄ Popp Martin Student Union, 210 (Second Floor) ⇄ studentinvolvement.charlotte.edu

Fun ways to spend your time in Charlotte

Giselle Jimenez Del-Carmen | Staff Writer

As the spring semester comes to a close, the summer weather has begun to creep in alongside the bloom of nature.

Students will also be wrapping up finals week, so a combination of fun activities across Charlotte is a perfect way to celebrate the beginning of summer.

Below is a guide to activities and places in and around Charlotte to enjoy with family and friends.

Camp North End

Camp North End is a 76-acre historical industrial site that hosts a variety of companies supporting local community businesses in the North End district and serves as a community attraction.

These attractions feature around 30 small businesses, including food spots such as Hex Coffee, Kitchen & Natural Wines, Seemingly Overzealous Ice Cream and Gravity Sourdough Pizza Co.

Outside of food, retail stores and services also surround the camp, including That's Novel Books, Grow, eXplicit Salon and Fitteds.

After enjoying a meal or drink or buying a book, visitors can explore a variety of featured districts within the camp, such as The Mount, Crossroads, Boileryard and Keswick.

Inside these districts, additional activities can be found.

Outdoor movie nights

After a day of fun, whether at Camp North End or elsewhere, public locations across Charlotte offer summer-exclusive outdoor movie nights, including in the mentioned districts of Camp North End, Downtown Belmont and Birkdale Village.

The previously mentioned Crossroads district in Camp North End features Crossroads Cinema, which hosts free movie screenings on Thursday evenings.

Downtown Belmont hosts Aurora Star Lit Cinema, featuring a large outdoor screen and immersive sound in the park throughout the summer.

The Birkdale Village hosts the "Lights, Camera, Birkdale" project throughout the summer on select Saturdays.

They project movies in The Plaza with access to onsite restaurants.

No matter the location, visitors are encouraged to bring their own chairs and blankets to enjoy a movie under the stars.

Viva la fiesta: Carowinds

After activities and movies on the ground, fun can also be found in the air at Carowinds.

Throughout the summer, from April to May, Carowinds hosts Viva la Fiesta, a celebration of Latin culture.

This event will manifest in specialty live entertainment shows across the Carowinds parks, with activities meant to simulate cultural experiences and traditions, including authentic Latin food, fun beverages and festive photo opportunities.

Rides, food and entertainment from Viva la Fiesta are included with the purchase of a Carowinds admission ticket, available in a variety of options, such as the Bring-a-friend ticket, currently \$29, or the 2026 Gold Pass, \$110.

Carolina Harbor waterpark

Summer can be hot, and the air from fast roller coaster rides may not be enough to cool the body, but water can.

In the same location as Carowinds, the newest addition to the park is the Carolina Harbor Waterpark, which re-opens in the summer.

The waterpark is included with a Carowinds admission ticket, so no additional ticket purchase is required. It features a variety of giant water slides, wave pools, play structures and a three-acre kids area.

Additionally, food from the park is encouraged as visitors enjoy the waterpark.

Bands in Residence: Carowinds

Fun can also include music, and after a splash in the waterpark, visitors can attend the new Bands in Residence special summer event at Carowinds.

It is a summer music series that will take place from June 13 through Aug. 9, featuring live singers from North and South Carolina.

Information about the singer lineup and additional details will be made available on the special events Carowinds website.

Star-Spangled Nights presented by M&M's: Carowinds

A summer holiday known to paint the sky with colors and sparkles is July 4, and Carowinds is hosting the Star-Spangled Nights presented by M&M's to celebrate Independence Day.

This event will take place on both July 3 and 4, with a fireworks display above Carowinds Park.

Visitors are encouraged to ride roller coasters or other rides for the full experience as they soar through the wind, with sights and sounds of patriotic music and fireworks.

The display of fireworks will be scheduled at a specific time and duration. Visitors may check the website for available details or contact Carowinds customer service.

Blume Studios Monopoly Life-Sized

Fun can also take the form of clever puzzles and board games, but what if they were life-sized?

From May 6 through Sept. 21, Blume Studios transforms into a life-sized version of the board game Monopoly with Monopoly Lifesized: Travel Edition.

The travel edition will allow players to navigate through Charlotte city locations, including the University City Boardwalk, Park Place and the utilities and railroads.

At each location, players will solve

puzzles, collect properties and outsmart their opponents as they race against the clock. Teams are expected to work together to uncover hidden clues, crack codes and avoid the "Go to Jail" trap.

Pride month in Charlotte

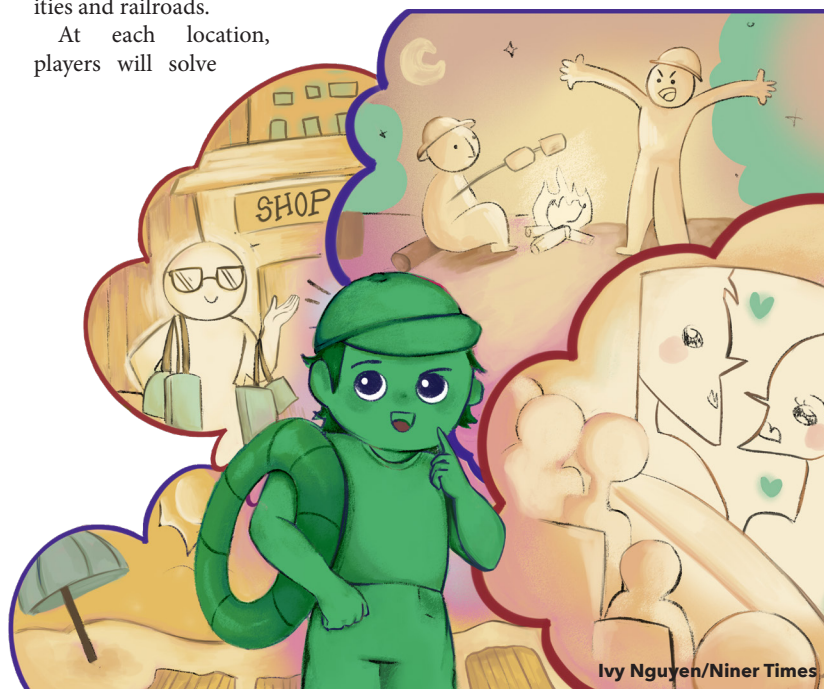
Pride month in Charlotte is during the peak of summer and is open to everybody, whether they identify with the LGBTQ+ community or are an ally; activities, events and fun are open to those who wish to celebrate.

Two of the main Pride events are the Charlotte Pride Festival and Parade in uptown Charlotte, with the Festival held at First Ward Park and the Parade along Tryon Street in August.

More information about the dates and times will be available through Charlotte's got a lot.

Outside of festivals and parades, celebrations are encouraged to be transformed into support for LGBTQ+ owned businesses, such as Artisan's Plate and Detour Coffeebar.

After a meal and coffee, support can be extended to local drag shows in Charlotte, such as Buff Faye's Drag Diner, Bar Argon, Chasers and Funny Bus. Bars, food and fun can be found at each location, especially with local drag queens.





NOVEL

MALLARD CREEK



Unwind

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

At NOVEL Mallard Creek, our homes put the serenity of nature right outside your door. So whether you choose a spacious studio or a one-or-two bedroom layout, you'll find a relaxing retreat inside and out.



COME VISIT US

9132 Senator Royall Drive,
Charlotte, NC 28262

FIND OUT MORE



FEATURES



Studio, 1
Bed, 2 Bed



7 Minutes to
UNCC



Indoor & outdoor
workout spaces



Pool

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION:



(980) 372-3327



novelmallardcreek.com



novel_mallardcreek



Lease Your Dream Apartment Today!

Call 704-946-5396
or scan the QR
code for more info:



NOVEL

UNIVERSITY PLACE

BY CRESCENT COMMUNITIES

**NOVEL University Place has
refined spaces to fit any
lifestyle.**

**Less than 5 minutes away
from UNC Charlotte, NOVEL
University Place offers a
diverse collection of cozy
studios, carriage homes,
and 1, 2 and 3-bedroom floor
plans with lake views and
luxury finishes.**



Hech Lake Days: Offering community and relaxation through lakeside activities

Tanisha Sharma | Staff Writer

Held once a semester, Hechenbleikner Lake Days are held weekly in April and September. Drawing more than 800 students each week and recently over 900, Hech Lake Days provide free games, free prizes and a bumping playlist. And at the center of it all is the lake itself.

Those interested in lakeside activities but struggle finding a worthy location don't have to look further than campus itself, where UNC Charlotte's Hechenbleiker Lake sits near the J. Murrey Atkins Library.

"We want people to know we have a lake out here," Director of the Student Involvement Office Adam Burden said. "It's about having fun, building community and meeting new people — a stress-relieving gathering."

What are Hech Lake Days?

Organized by the Student Involvement Office and Venture Outdoor Leadership (VOL), the event features a rotating lineup of student organizations.

A game of cornhole greets students at the entrance, offering the chance to win a picnic blanket, a tote bag and a stuffed goose, in honor of the University's co-habitants. Organizations like Earth Club, the Graduate Biology Club and the Sustainability Office set out activities such as painting, environment-themed trivia and many more while advocating for their purposes.

Many days often hold a theme. April 21 was in honor of sustainability.

"[Our goal is to] get students involved and aware that there is a club and space on campus to promote and get involved in environmental awareness," fourth-year student and president of Earth Club, Lydia Knier, said.

In addition to student organizations, Kona Ice made an appearance, offering free snow cones. With rising temperatures, these snow cones helped students relax from academic stress, especially with the event occurring near finals season.

"Right in front of the library is a great spot to catch people after they haven't

seen the sun all day. It's kind of a breath of fresh air, coming out to some snow cones and some music, free stuff and just community involvement," Knier said. "There are students around you who are doing the same thing and want to uplift you and get you connected to what you want to do."

The star of the show

Hech Lake Days offer canoes for students to float around the lake.

VOL provided boats, lifejackets and guides to help students float. The lake is roughly one or two meters deep, making it more approachable for students who may be fearful of deeper waters.

VOL serves up to 75 canoe groups per day, with two to three students per canoe.

"It's nice seeing the community out here together; we get lots of people out here talking. It's best if you can canoe with more than one person, so sometimes we'll have two single people, and they'll end up canoeing together, so it builds some of those friendships," fourth-year student and member of VOL Kara Savage said.

What makes the events possible

Hechenbleikner Lake was named after biology professor Herbert Hechenbleikner, also known as Dr. Hech, in 1975. He, along with the help of students and volunteers, began construction of the lake in 1964 and completed it later that year. Recruited by Bonnie Cone, Hechenbleikner is also credited with helping establish the Botanical Gardens.

This lake is man-made and, since 2017, has been designated as a Certified Wildlife Habitat by the

National Wildlife Federation, meaning it is perfectly fit for wildlife to thrive.

Apart from the countless geese that can be seen from the top of the lake, the bottom features a range of fish that students are welcome to catch and release.

Hech Lake Days lead students back to the lake when the temperature warms, as the preceding lake event, Light up the Lake, occurs each winter.

An opportunity to connect with others

The combination of the weather becoming more pleasant for outdoor activities and the needed stress relief from academic pressure has made Hech Lake Days a popular semi-annual event.

"How can you not feel joyful with the music, the sun and looking at other people's experiences? Their being joyful helps me think more positively about myself as well," first-year student Sophia Nguyen said.

She later asked another question:

"Who's the DJ? They ate."

Nguyen and her friend Caliyah Royster came to this event as a pair but ended up making a friend during their canoe float.

"I think it gives you more activities to do. You could easily do this by yourself, [and it helps] people who are scared to get out too," Royster, a first-year student, said.

The students' contagious happiness is the driving force behind this event. Even when one may not come with a connection, they can count on leaving with two or more.



Courtesy of UNC Charlotte

Guide: Summer 2026 Blockbusters

Mallory Evans | Staff Writer
Ava Weaver/Niner Times & courtesy of IMDb

This summer is shaping up to be a major one for Hollywood, complete with Star Wars, Pixar, superheroes and original adaptations. Here are some of the biggest titles you can look forward to hitting theaters.

'The Mandalorian and Grogu' - May 22

In the long-awaited cinematic conclusion to the first Disney+ original series, Din Djarin (Pedro Pascal) and Grogu are sent by the New Republic to rescue Rotta the Hutt (Jeremy Allen White), son of the infamous Jabba the Hutt, in exchange for information from the Hutt clan. It's the first theatrical Star Wars release since 2019, and promises to be a fun sci-fi adventure, complete with adorable Grogu scenes.

'Disclosure Day' - June 12

Steven Spielberg returns to the director's chair for his first sci-fi feature

since "Ready Player One" in 2018. It's set to be the most original blockbuster of the summer, based on a story Spielberg himself created that follows Daniel Kellner (Josh O'Connor), a cybersecurity expert, and Margaret Fairchild (Emily Blunt), a meteorologist, and their attempt to reveal the existence of extraterrestrial life to the world. Spielberg gained inspiration for the story after the real U.S. military UFO reports that came out in 2017.

'Toy Story 5' - June 19

Seven years after the previous installment, the Toy Story franchise is back with a new story that even college students will enjoy. While the toys have been working hard to help Bonnie make friends, their efforts are thwarted after Lilypad, a tablet, steals all of her attention. "iPad kids" has been a title used for years — research has shown the developmental consequences of children becoming overreliant on technology.

It's sure to be interesting, as well as amusing, to see how

Toy Story goes about handling this subject.

'Supergirl' - June 26

After her first appearance in last year's "Superman," Kara Zor-El (Milly Alcock) gets to star in her own story. It adapts the "Supergirl: Woman of Tomorrow" comics, following Supergirl and her dog Krypto on a "murderous quest for revenge" after they are recruited by Ruthye Marye Knoll (Eve Ridley), a young girl seeking to avenge her father's death. If the reception is anything similar to what "Superman" got, James Gunn's DC Universe will have built a strong foundation.

'The Odyssey' - July 17

Coming off the massive success of "Oppenheimer," Christopher Nolan returns to direct, write and produce a film adaptation of Homer's famous Greek epic. With a budget of \$250 million, it is Nolan's most expensive endeavor yet. It has the most star-studded cast of any movie this year, with Matt Damon as Odysseus, Tom Holland as Telemachus, Anne Hathaway as Penelope, along with Robert Pattinson, Lupita Nyong'o, Zendaya and Charlize Theron in supporting roles, to name a few.

'Spider-Man: Brand New Day' - July 31

Marvel's first theatrical release of the year is also one of the most anticipated worldwide. Set four years after the events of "Spider-Man: No Way Home," Peter Parker (Tom Holland) is still everyone's friendly neighborhood Spider-Man — even if nobody knows it — as he takes on a powerful new threat. Jon Bernthal reprises his role as the Punisher from the popular Marvel television series, and Sadie Sink is set to appear in an undisclosed role, with many theorizing she is playing Jean Grey, a member of the X-Men. "Spider-Man: Brand New Day" will be followed by "Avengers: Doomsday" on Dec. 18, the first Avengers movie since "Avengers: Endgame" in 2019, the second-highest-grossing movie of all time.



Guide: Dining and food options on campus

Lauren Simendinger | Staff Writer

UNC Charlotte offers many food options for students. Whether you're craving burgers, sandwiches, Mexican, Asian food or chain restaurants, Charlotte offers something for everybody. Students can pay for their meals with meal plans, declining balance or their 49er accounts.

SoVi

SoVi, or the South Village Dining Hall, is one of two traditional dining halls on campus. Located at the South Village Crossing, students have the option of hot soups, fresh salads, hot pizza, rich Asian food and more. They even offer gluten-free options for those who need them. South Village Crossing is also home to Charlotte Greens, where students can customize their salads to their liking, and the SoVi Market + Bakery, where sweet treats are available.

Popp-Martin Student Union

The Student Union is home to many dining options, including Social 704, Charlotte's other dining hall. It offers the same foods as SoVi, but with additional allergy-free options. There are plenty of other restaurants, including three popular chains: Bojangles, Wendy's and Starbucks. Bojangles offers Southern-style food like fried chicken, biscuits, rice, etc., while Wendy's is known for their burgers, salads, chili and fries. Starbucks sells coffee and baked goods. Other dining options are Shake Smart, the Bistro, Half Moon Empanadas and the Market Powered by Amazon "Just Walk Out." For this market, you scan your credit or debit card for entry.

Prospector

Construction of Upper Prospector was completed in August 2025, and now houses the Mexican restaurant Qdoba, Halal Shack for those who like Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern flavors and Panda Express. Oasis Cafe, created by UNC Charlotte, is also in Upper Prospector, serving everything students want, from sandwiches and ice cream to coffee and kombucha.

Prospector's lower level still has three great options for students. There is the chain Chick-fil-A, which sells chicken, salads and other goodies. Burger 704 offers beef and veggie burgers, with fries and tater tots made to order and a signature sauce. 49er Fresh is a small market located by the entrance that sells sandwiches, sushi, desserts and other snacks.

Cone Center Main Street Market

The Cone Center is home to Subway, which allows students to customize their sub sandwiches however they like, whether they order a six-inch or a foot-long. Students can also visit Wild Blue Sushi, which replaced Sushi by Gusto after their contract with UNC Charlotte ended.

Additional places around campus

There are still plenty of other places around campus where you can find good food to eat. The J. Murrey Atkins Library houses the other Starbucks, located on the ground floor. The Thoughtful Cup on Fretwell's first floor is yet another option for coffee, tea, lemonade and sweet treats. Klein Hall's Aurum Cafe features an Auntie Anne's, where students can get hot, freshly-made pretzels. It also has a Change Please Coffee, and Fresh2U which offers grab-and-go items. Finally, the Center City Building has the Market at Dubois, where more grab-and-go options are available.



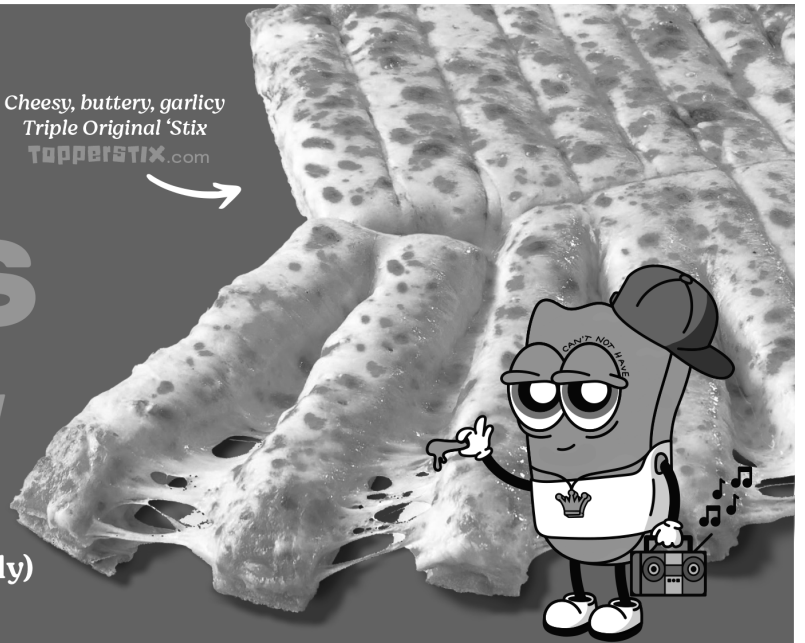
Sorry dining hall, it's not you. It's us.

Cheesy, buttery, garlicky
Triple Original 'Stix
topperstix.com

9.99 PIZZAS OR 'STIX

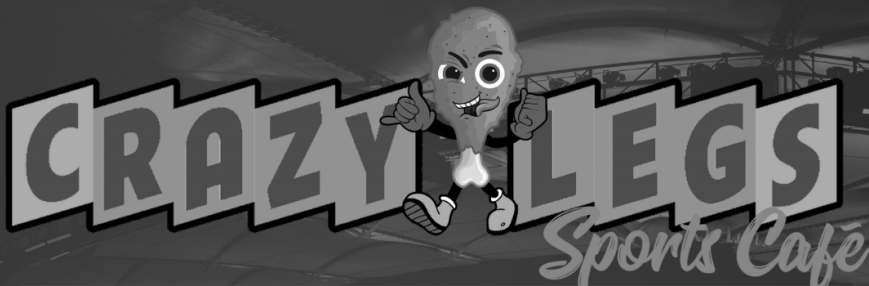


Large 1-Topping Pizzas or our world-famous
Triple Original Topperstix for just \$9.99 (carryout only)
order up at toppers.com



LOCALLY OWNED
Proudly serving UNCC since 2002

OPEN LATER THAN LATE
9510 University City Boulevard
Charlotte
704-548-8666



WE'RE YOUR NEW GAME DAY HEADQUARTERS

DAILY DEALS | GREAT FOOD | GAME DAY FUN

- Signature Burgers & Wings
- Pizza & Shareables
- Ice-Cold Beer Buckets
- IPA Beers Available
- Live Podcast on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays

9325 JW Clay Blvd, Charlotte, NC
(Light Rail Parking Garage Access)

10% OFF
For ALL UNCC Staff & Students
on food



@crazylegscit

<http://crazylegscit.com>

(980) 461-0722

Essential items to have in your dorm

Niner Times File

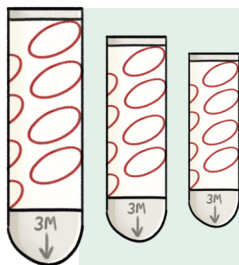
Megan Khor/Niner Times File



Moving out of your house and into a dorm can be a scary experience for new students. With the limited space, you must beware of overpacking, so here are some staple items for your new dorm.

Small fan

Dorms are prone to air conditioning and ventilation issues, so opening a window will not be enough. Pack a small fan to stay cool during hot Charlotte days and avoid sweating through the first semester.



Command strips

What is a dorm without some decoration? The dorm is your space, so make it your own. While you should be mindful of your roommate's preferences, the dorm walls are your canvas to hang up whatever you want. Command Strips are great for hanging things up without risking damaging the surfaces of your dorm.



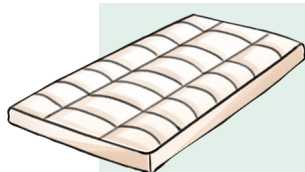
Desk lamp

The lighting in dorms is often bright and abrasive; softer light is your friend during late-night study sessions. Along with providing a more relaxed atmosphere, a lamp can offer an alternative to keeping the ceiling light on if you and your roommate have different sleeping schedules. Do not be that roommate who blinds the other when they try to sleep; pack a lamp to chill out in your dorm.



Mini fridge

Nothing is worse than a warm drink when trying to cool down after a hot day. Giving yourself the ability to store food with a mini fridge allows you to have cold beverages on demand. It also offers an alternative to the dining hall and other campus meal options. Whether you choose to share the fridge with your roommate or keep it to yourself, you cannot go wrong with a mini fridge.



Mattress topper

With the move to an unfamiliar territory, avoid spending the night tossing and turning in bed by packing a mattress topper. Standard dorm mattresses are cheap and uncomfortable; buy a mattress topper to negate this and get good rest.



Laundry bag and detergent

Unfortunately, your parents can no longer do your laundry, and the laundry machine is no longer nearby. Dorm laundry machines can be confusing and are often a trek from your dorm. Having a laundry bag makes your dirty clothes easy to transport and store, while laundry detergent is essential for doing laundry. Pack both these items to make dorm living a little easier.



Shower shoes

Shower shoes should be a no-brainer for dorm living. Dorm bathrooms will be nowhere near as clean as your bathroom at home. Avoid sharing foot space with everyone who lives on the floor of dorm bathrooms, and pack some shower shoes to ensure cleanliness and peace of mind.



Cleaning supplies

Keep your dorm neat. The dorm is often a shared space, and one that you should be mindful of in terms of cleanliness. You may not find the dorm messy, but your roommate might. A small vacuum will come in handy in cleaning up larger messes and general maintenance, while wet wipes and freshener sprays help maintain a fresh, clean environment. How you treat your dorm can set the standard for future living and relationships with your roommates; keeping a clean space is key.



Shower caddy

Leaving shower supplies in the bathroom or carrying everything over by hand are equally rough options. Dorm bathrooms are a shared space, so people may snatch or use your supplies, and carrying all supplies from your dorm to the bathroom can be challenging. A shower caddy conveniently solves both of those problems.

Before you make final decisions on your dorm room wish list, be mindful of the prohibited items list for your building. Space heaters, adhesive LED light strips and hot plates sound like good ideas, but are banned on most lists. Happy packing, and good luck!

THE GRACE AT TRYON



24 Hour Gym



Private Work
Stations



Resort Style
Pool



Pet Park



On LYNX Blue
Line



Coffee Bar

CONTACT US

@thegracetryon

thegracetryon.com

+1 980-374-4680

BOOK A TOUR



JOIN THE FUTURE ALUMNI NETWORK

Perks of ~~\$19~~ \$35 one-time membership fee:

- Premier swag pack when you sign-up, including a FAN member-only shirt, belt bag, goose stress ball, stickers, and more!
- Invitations to exclusive social and networking gatherings with Charlotte alumni and community leaders.
- Special admittance to select athletic and alumni events.
- Access to limited edition shirts and swag at campus-wide events.
- Join a group of students who love UNC Charlotte!



alumni.charlotte.edu/future-alumni-network

@CLT.FutureAlumni

futurealumni@charlotte.edu



Must have apps

Niner Times File

If there is anything that makes starting college in the twenty-first century, it is the reliance on technology. Phone apps have become a staple on UNC Charlotte's campus, but it is often hard to know which ones you actually need. So, here is a list of the most important apps to download to make your first year run a little smoother.

Canvas

You may be familiar with Canvas from high school, but be prepared to use it daily from this point on. All classes at Charlotte utilize Canvas to organize assignments and grades. While you can access Canvas through your computer, the app will be a lifesaver. With notifications, you will be reminded of upcoming deadlines and notified whenever grades are added. If you are ever stuck out when there is an assignment due, you can also use the Canvas app to easily submit your work.

Discord

It is no secret that Discord has been growing in popularity recently, and as a college student, you will see it used in many ways aside from gaming. Discord is an app that can be used to easily communicate through messages or voice chat in an organized manner. With the ability to make detailed servers, many classes and clubs have been using Discord to keep in touch with one another and give updates. Discord also has the Student Hub feature, which makes it easy to find any student-run servers relating to our University. The most popular servers that Charlotte students run in the UNC Charlotte Hub are: Niner Esports, Real Woodward Hours and UNC Charlotte Subreddit.

GroupMe

Similar to Discord, GroupMe is one of the more popular ways for students to connect. These group chats are frequently used for classes and clubs to make it easy for students to get information and ask each other questions. Like Discord, you can also link groups with UNC Charlotte, so they are discoverable by any Charlotte student. Almost every class will end up with some form of group chat, and GroupMe is an easy and popular choice. You will undoubtedly need to ask a classmate for help at some point, so it would be good to get a head start and download GroupMe now. You could even be the one to start class group chats to help you and your classmates.

Mobile Order

The Mobile Order app is one of the easiest ways to order food on campus. It includes every dining option on campus except the two dining halls, so you can

place your order on your way to a restaurant rather than wasting time waiting after you place your order. Like any mobile ordering app, you can customize your orders and monitor how long your order will take. You can pay on this app by linking a credit or debit card along with your 49er account or your declining balance.

Starship

Like Mobile Order, this app is a great way to order food on campus. Starship connects to the Starship dining robots, which can deliver anywhere on campus. Getting food deliveries from the robots has an extra \$3 delivery charge, but sometimes it can be worth it. You can order from any dining location included on the Mobile Order app and can use a credit or debit card, 49er account or declining balance to pay. In the app, you can even select a song to play when you receive your delivery from the robot.

Passio GO!

With the massive hills and many buildings on campus, using the Passio GO! app for the UNC Charlotte buses can be a great way to get around. With three main routes and many stops, it can be hard to know when the bus you need will arrive. To save yourself from waiting or having close encounters where you miss the bus, the Passio GO! app will show you where each bus is on campus. On busy days, you can count on this app to help you save your time.

Venmo or Cash App

Both Venmo and Cash App are used to send money to people. These apps will be lifesavers for late-night fast food cravings and gas money for last-minute road trips. Not many people use cash now, so Venmo and Cash App are easy ways to finally return that \$10 you owe your roommate. Many fundraisers also accept these as forms of payment, which can be much easier than messing with card readers. Club fundraisers or even puppy-petting charity events often accept digital payments and donations, so these apps are a great way to take advantage of these campus events without worrying about having your cash or card on you.

Yik Yak

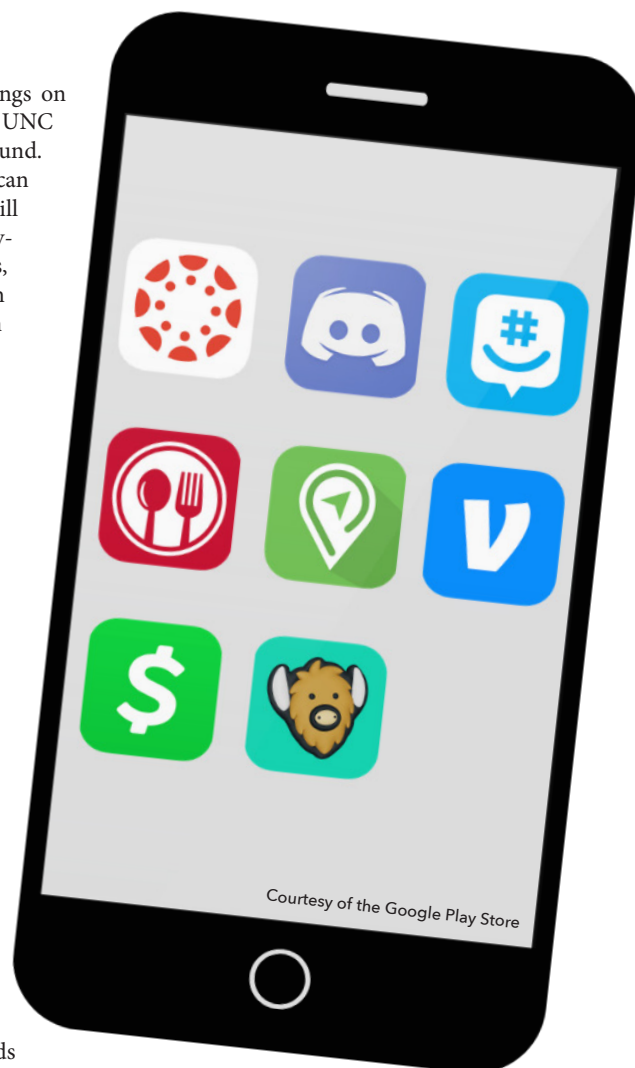
For those living on campus, Yik Yak is a way to see what other students are up to and have a good laugh. The app lets you anonymously send submissions and threads

Seven mobile apps that will make college easier

that those within a five-mile radius can see. While it is not like the other apps on this list, it is a way to feel connected with other students. Who knows, maybe your submissions will get featured on student-run UNC Charlotte Instagram pages.

Ex Libris Library Mobile

Atkins Library is a great resource for all kinds of things on campus, and this app brings all of that to your phone. With the app, you can access your library account and the Atkins catalog. You can also chat with librarians and receive alerts about when your rentals are due. The library's study rooms are a great place to get work done, and you can reserve those spaces on the app, too. It has a lot of the resources included on the Atkins website, but the app can be easier to use, especially on the go.



Get involved with Charlotte's student organizations

Emily Brown | Staff Writer

Blaise Uy/Niner Times Files

Academic/pre-professional

Charlotte's academic/pre-professional clubs provide opportunities to create a community inside your major and desired career field. These clubs offer many benefits such as resume building, learning career skills and networking. They also provide the space to explore other fields of interest. With clubs covering pre-law, marketing and game development, there is a club to fulfill everyone's interests.

Examples: Black Women in Medicine and The Association of Data Science



International

Charlotte's variety of international clubs is the perfect way to learn more about other cultures and languages. These clubs appreciate the diverse community that we have on campus and strive to educate others about cultures that they might not know a lot about. They also provide a space for people from similar cultures to connect.

Examples: Arab Student Organization, Ghanaian Student Association, Nihon Club and the Native American Student Association



Greek Life

Charlotte has 44 sororities and fraternities. Whether you would be a legacy in a sorority or fraternity or want to add to your college experience, Greek life may be for you.

There are five Greek councils. The Independent Greek Council governs the independent fraternities and sororities on campus and assists in communication between them and the University. The Interfraternity Council governs and regulates fraternities. The Diversified Greek Council encourages collaboration between organizations from different backgrounds. The National Panhellenic Council oversees and fosters collaboration between the Divine Nine sororities and fraternities, the historically Black Greek life organizations. The Panhellenic Council includes seven sororities that engage in philanthropy, community and social events.

Examples: Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc, Alpha Chi Omega and Delta Sigma Phi



Multicultural

Charlotte's multicultural clubs center on various nationalities, ethnicities and orientations that create our community. These clubs connect people from similar backgrounds and identities. They also provide a space for people from specific backgrounds to communicate.

Examples: Black Student Union, Disability Culture Club and Curl Conversations

Club sports

Club sports are the perfect place for students who wish to continue or get involved in a sport they are passionate about. No matter what sport you play, basketball, volleyball, swimming or any other sport, our club sports might be the place for you.

Examples: 49er Running Club and Charlotte Lifters



Media

Media organizations make an impact on their members and the campus community. The overarching organization, Student Niner Media, comprises of five departments: Niner Times, Nova Literary-Arts Magazine, Midas Magazine and marketing.

There are also media organizations out of Student Niner Media.

Examples: Axe & Quill Writing Society and the Charlotte Film Community



Honor societies

The honor societies on campus allow you to meet and connect with like-minded people. Our honor societies cover a variety of majors and work on developing leadership skills while providing other opportunities, such as networking and scholarships. Some honor societies are discipline-specific, while others are not tied to a major.

Examples: Beta Beta Beta (biology), Latinx Honor Society, Psi Chi (psychology) and Phi Beta Kappa (liberal arts and sciences)

Performance

If you like to sing, dance, act, give speeches or maybe all four, our performance clubs are the perfect place for you. Regardless of your performance experience, our various clubs will allow you to grow and develop your skills.

Examples: Free-style 101, Cheer, Improv Club and Speech Team



Service

Service clubs allow you to give back and assist your community on campus and beyond. These clubs provide various acts of service, including collecting and distributing hygiene necessities, coloring pictures for children fighting cancer and cleaning up public places.

Examples: 100 Black Women, Best Buddies and Reproductive Justice Collective



Interest

No matter your passions, interest clubs on campus are a great way to get involved and meet people. These clubs are ways to relax from the stress of classes. Check out these clubs if you want to have fun while discovering your passions.

Examples: Community Garden Club, Gold Rush Robotics and Japanese Reading Club



Religious/spiritual

The religious and spiritual clubs are a space for people whose faith is important to them. These clubs provide a community that is centered on religion or spirituality.

Examples: Impact Charlotte, Muslim Student Association and Young Life



Political

Charlotte's political clubs provide a space for students who are passionate about politics or are interested in learning more. If you want somewhere to discuss and debate the issues that impact our world daily, these clubs might be for you.

Examples: Government and Politics Debate Club, Mock Trial and NextGen UNC Charlotte





LEAD. SERVE. LIVE.

*Learn to lead and serve
on campus and
in the community!*

Popp Martin Student Union 252

LEADERSHIP.CHARLOTTE.EDU

 @clt_lead





Opinion: Embrace the unknown

Sean McGuffin | Staff Writer

Aisha Karim/Niner Times

As Generation Z matures into adulthood, many things have been said about our generation, both positive and negative. One label that has always stood out as a harsh reality is the nickname “risk-averse generation.” The term doesn’t describe every person in our generation, but it highlights a common fear I encounter among many people our age: a fear of the unknown.

It’s a valid feeling to be uneasy with uncertainty. New ventures often require us to leave our comfort zone, and as the 2020’s have progressed, society has chosen to embrace comfort over new ventures. We live in a time where you can get dinner, watch a movie and talk to friends all without leaving our couch. You can scroll on TikTok and order DoorDash without leaving the safety of your own home, but at what point do we sacrifice living our lives for comfort?

John A. Shedd famously said, “A ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what

ships are built for.” We can stay in our comfort zone, but doing so sacrifices personal development and the milestones of young adulthood. We come to university mainly for education, but it is also a time when we meet new people and get new opportunities every week.

With new things come mystery, but you should never let that uncertainty hold you back from something that can change your life. Whether it’s applying for a competitive internship, telling your crush how you feel, joining a new club or even just trying an exotic meal you’ve never had before — the only way to grow as a person is to jump into the unknown.

One reason so many people feel uncomfortable with new things is thinking about the worst that could happen. Yet very few think about what the best that could happen is. University life is meant for trying new things, and nowhere else will you have the safety nets that we have at University. We can only learn so

much in the lecture halls; many things in life we must learn on our own. New things sometimes lead to bad outcomes, but almost always, there is a valuable lesson to be learned — lessons that are better learned now in your 20s than later on in life.

Bad experiences shouldn’t scare you off from trying new things. Maybe that new food you tried was terrible, maybe you were rejected for your application or your crush didn’t feel the same way. You may be disappointed with the results, but you’ll never be disappointed that you tried. It’s better to have tried and failed than to always wonder what could have been.

When we think only of the risk of the unknown, we glance over the reward of the unknown. Not to mention the friends and memories made in the process. Embracing the unknown doesn’t have to be a big venture. Something as small as saying hello to a stranger in the dining hall or after class can lead to

new friendships and opportunities with them.

Last semester, a friend came to Charlotte with an extra ticket to a concert for a band I had never heard of at a venue I had never been to. I wasn’t sure if I would like it, but I decided to dive into the unknown and go for it. I left the concert with six new songs in my playlist and made multiple new friends.

College is supposed to be the best years of your young life. Now is the time we make the memories and stories that we will be telling 30 years from now. When it comes to the unknown, we have two options. We can continue to fear it, stay in our harbors and remember lying around, watching Love Island alone, night after night. Or we embrace the unknown, leave our comfort zone and have memories of adventure and living our youth to the fullest.

Opinion: I'm glad I got my 'useless' degree

Noah Hughey | Staff Writer

When I was in high school, I was convinced that one day I would become the president of the United States. Naively, I figured this meant I had to get a degree in political science, run for local office and work my way up the same as any other politician. I learned very quickly that nobody who actually has political power in America is actually educated in political science.

However, through my undergraduate degree, I have been exposed to an intellectually rich discipline, which has opened a world of possibilities, not because of any guaranteed job opportunities but because it literally opened the possibilities of the world to me. Many would (and have) called my pursuit of political science for its own sake, for the love of the thing, a waste.

I think the detractors underestimate the value of those who pursue fields like mine, primarily those who pursue the humanities and the arts, like I did, for the love of it. We are told these are inessential fields, to the point that they become the butt of a mean joke. But without these fields, the core of the human experience falls apart, and we lose the very foundations on which society is allowed to exist. Moreso, they kid themselves into believing in an "economic security" that recent history has thoroughly annihilated.

The role of the university

The value of higher education has shifted in the last hundred years or so. What was once an essential function of an enlightened society, a privilege of the economic elite of human civilization, has, with the popular revolutions of the 16th and 17th centuries and the Industrial Revolution, become a means by which the populace can climb the economic ladder.

This "climbing the ladder" in the American economy, in particular, is hallmarked as an example of the exceptional role education plays in our lives. It was marketed as an opportunity not only for the individual to contribute to the economic machine we are part of, but also, in this particular way, to gain more from our more highly educated place. Rather than working 40 years to make this jump, one only needed 15 to 20 years.

But this emphasis on economic

growth and security clearly reads to me not as the intention of a place of higher learning, but as the PR team of Bank of America, Deloitte or Raytheon wearing a university skin suit and talking through it. It seems quite obvious to me that, as the economy has shifted into the uncertain world we live in now, where attention generates hypothetical dollars that, vis-à-vis advertising revenue, become real dollars, the university's value as a place to gain skills that can contribute to the economic machine has become more tenuous than it was in the case when the economy had a more physical-actional relation.

For at least three generations, we have trained the populace to believe that the academy is the doorway into the corporate corner office, and nothing more. That safety and security, and then even excessive opulence and high taste, exist only for this mythical economic machine man (for a while, he was very clearly only a man, too).

The value of education gave way to the neoliberal world order upon the conference of the "end of history." It became a part of the economic-political machine constructed by 1990s culture warriors cosplaying as 1960s cold warriors. In their rose-tinted self-confidence, it was assured that things were always leading up to this, that history had reached its dialectical end. That the world, finally, was.

The end of the end of history, and the future

But, as time has damningly told us, the world kept being instead. Now, the security of this stupidly optimistic world has crumbled, and in most meaningful ways, we seem to live inside the corpses of the world of 40 to 50 years ago. The insistence of the economic machine, the corporate class, and thus the university, has been to cling to this corpse as long and as hard as you can until you might receive a modicum of the benefits it generated for itself.

Continually, we mock those who pursue what they love, particularly if they love the humanities or the arts, because we hope that if we continue to cling long and hard enough to a clearly dead way of doing things, we might be able to revive it. But the world is changing. The security of particular degrees has given way to an empty husk, similarly to those that we in the humanities faced decades ago. Try as you might, though, simply incorporating an AI curriculum will not magically make your so-called "practical" degrees safe again.

This does not mean that we should give up, or that we must now add more majors to the pile of mean jokes about useless degrees. Instead, we must reassess what it means to derive use from one's education. Our world has entombed critical thinking and specialization within a mountain of

practicality and persistence. It values the unique, outside-of-the-box ideas that created the world our systems benefit from, but only in the abstract, insofar as they allow our systems to persist.

The postmodern boss insists that what they seek in their employees are thinkers who can address the complex problems that challenge their businesses. What they fail to see, rather what they refuse to see, is the case in which their business is the problem. By holding degrees to a litmus test for generating economic value for existing industries, we will continue to watch departments lose funding, then lose staff, then lose themselves to their supposed irrelevance.

We must hold ourselves, not those who pursue niche specializations or degrees we get anything from, to a different standard. Higher education is an experience, not one meant to easily translate into some career or another. It should be economic opportunity and job placement that stems from the inherently virtuous quality of being educated in a field or topic, not the other way around.

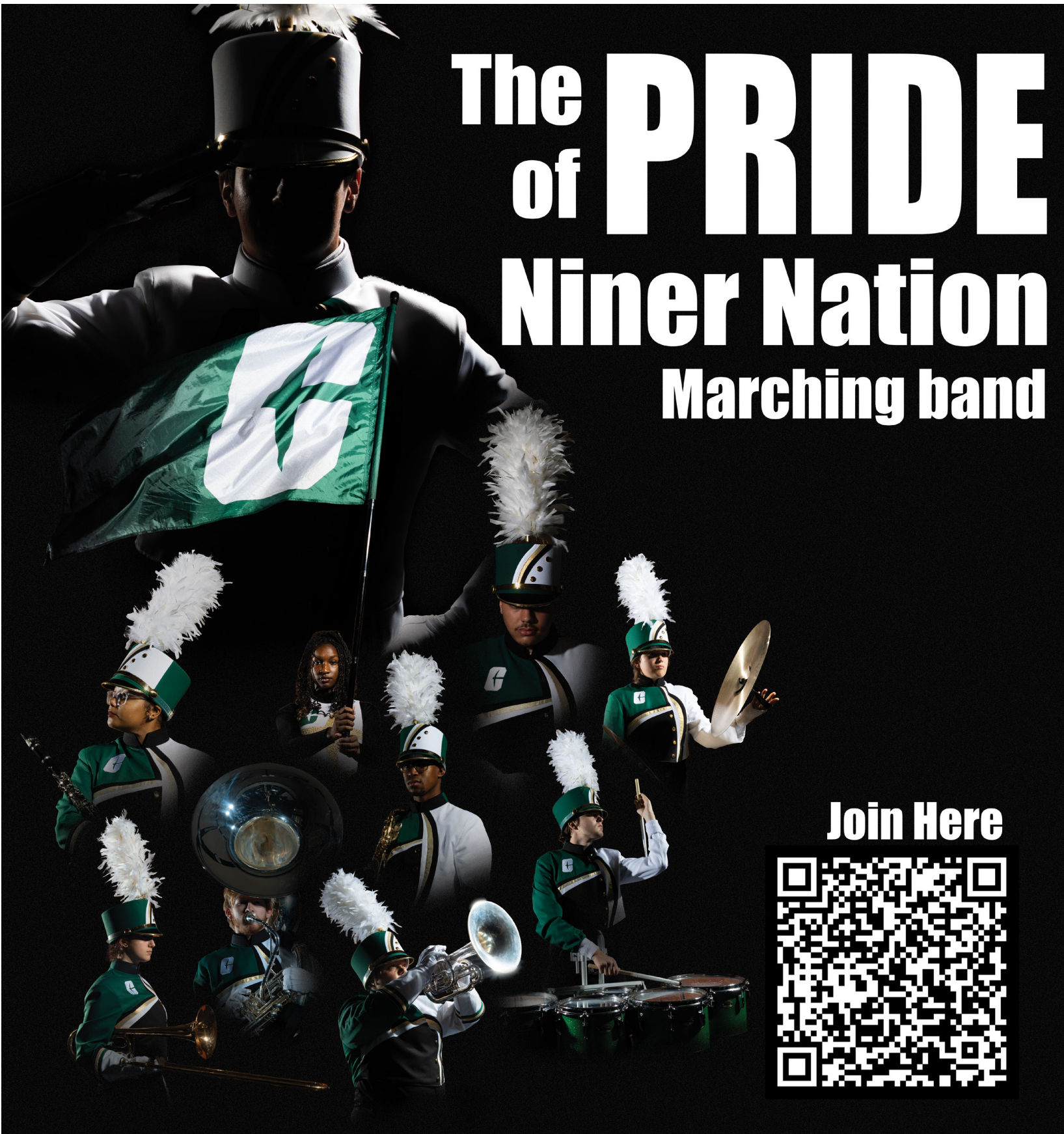
Moreover, there are those who genuinely and intensely love and pursue personal finance, computing systems and artificial intelligence. Without these normative entrepreneurs in the fields we call 'safe' today, we would not have a terrain upon which to measure their larger value to our society and the world across history.

By empowering students to pursue the degrees they love, to experiment with what they love, and to welcome the ways in which they challenge the world as we know it from the perspective of their field or interest, we make good on the promise of higher education in the first place. We allow bright young minds to understand the world as it is, and expand and redefine it so that the world can continue to be tomorrow, if not make it a better place.

Whatever it is you want to study, even if you're not sure yet, there is a place for you at a university. Stake a claim at that place, and demand the freedom to pursue it for its own sake, not so that you can become good at a subject as people who have no understanding of it deem you can be. The world is waiting for you. The only question should be, will you take the first step?



Rachel Kaake/Niner Times



The **PRIDE** of Niner Nation Marching band

Join Here



Column: Regrets of a college senior

Emsley Jackson | Opinion Editor

I'm a very proud person. As my dad would tell you, I'm not always right, but I'm never wrong. I like to tell people with confidence that I've been here before, either on this planet in another life, or in their shoes, depending on how crazy I think they will look at me afterward. But, when it comes to being a first-year college student, I have been there before, and I can confidently say there are things that I wholly regret having done or not done. As a college senior, this is my list of things I'm going to do differently in my next life's visit to college, or at least what you should do in yours.

Do not skip class

Skipping class is something we have all done. You had other work to do, because you didn't feel up to it or just because. Skipping more than likely leads to more skipping, especially in classes where attendance isn't mandatory. Why go?

From a logical standpoint, you are paying for the class, and it's a waste of resources not to go. From an opportunistic standpoint, you are missing out on a huge chunk of the college experience. Out of pure apathy, I have missed many classes during my time in college. Classes that, when I attended, reminded me why I sought higher education in the first place. Classes I thought of skipping but ended up going to left me feeling glad I showed up.

Be glad you showed up, not sorry you weren't there.

Use your meal plan, especially the declining balance

Food options on campus have improved greatly in the past couple of years. Dining hall food will never get a rave review from any college student,

but it's there. College is this weird bubble of time in your life where you can walk into a place with food and take what you want. Meal swipes and declining balance, essentially eating on the University's dime, do not exist elsewhere.

So many semesters I have let roll by without spending every last dime of the declining balance I knew would not roll over to the next. "It's not real money," I told myself. Exactly, it's not real money. The only declining balance elsewhere is your actual bank account. Use that fake money to get lunch, hit the vending machines for a snack or grab grocery items scattered across various markets on campus. Buy your friends a round of coffee during finals. Get extra food at Panda Express for lunch tomorrow. Whatever you do with your meal plan is your business; just make sure you use it to the fullest.

Join more orgs, seriously!

This is a major college cliché hammered into you by your parents and tour guides, but they have a point. College clubs range from professional societies and honors coalitions to groups of students with simple shared interests or backgrounds. Find your people, whether that's joining a professional pre-med fraternity for networking or meeting up with the underwater basket-weavers every Wednesday in the UREC pool.

I joined a couple of organizations my first year here, and I will always wish I had joined more. Joining the University Honors Program gave me an educational community and countless opportunities, while the Niner Times has given me a creative outlet and meaningful connections.

Student Government has widened my horizons and brought me closer to my future goals. I cherish my involvement in these large organizations, but I wish I had joined groups of people that I could connect with over my love of the small things. There's always time, and the first week back to school in August, I'll be at the student org showcase looking for my

niche. I hope to see you all there.

Take pictures, it'll last longer

One last corny note to end on: time really does fly. These four years melt together and end up behind you before you realize it. Take pictures of everything. Not just you partying or the homework you're turning in on Canvas, but the real stuff. Take pictures of the greenery in spring, of the way the light hits the bricks on campus at sunup and sundown, of the library being empty in the middle of the night, of your dorm while it's being lived in, not just before and after.

I understand wanting to live in the moment. I get that some things are more blissful as memories. But I also know that many times I ended up digging through my camera roll looking for a long-lost screenshot, I ended up strolling down memory lane as far as the path would take me. Mundane snapshots evoke and awaken all your senses, so that a Tuesday afternoon spent somewhere at UNC Charlotte two years ago is still technically in the past but becomes this Tuesday afternoon's surprise present.

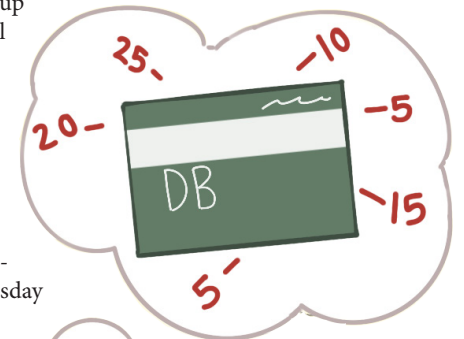
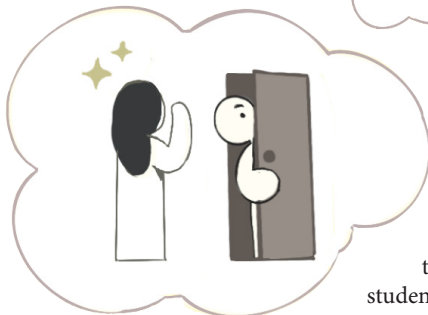
Final verdict

I will always be that proud person I mentioned at the start. I'll likely still walk across the stage at graduation next year, convinced that I did everything right and nothing

I'm not always right, then these regrets are the exceptions that prove the rule.

College is a temporary, beautiful and occasionally frustrating oasis from the real world. It's the only time in your life where success is measured by how much you grow, not just how much you produce. Do not let your pride or your fear of looking like a cliché keep you from the full experience.

Even for someone who is never wrong, the best parts of the last four years were the moments when I was brave enough to be a beginner.



Emma Cathey/Niner Times

Opinion: It is OK to enter college without a plan

Rachel Johnson | Staff Writer

Vividly drawn astronauts, doctors and professional athletes adorn the papers that are creatively scattered across the desks of a bevy of five and six-year-old students. It is the day that every new elementary school inductee enjoys the most: the day that they are asked to describe their dream job. This innocent activity, however, alludes to a greater problem in society: the necessity for a plan.

As we get older, our interests fade and falter. The dream jobs we yearned for as adolescents lose their luster as we get older, and as college nears, certain students begin to feel unsure about what specialty they should even consider pursuing. For the 50% of students who enter college unsure about their major, anxiety and pressure only heighten when choosing courses.

What many students fail to realize is that there is value in fluidity and patience. Having a general idea of potential degrees and career pathways is imperative, especially considering college requires time and money that many cannot afford beyond a certain threshold. Moreover, extra schooling is inevitable for students who prematurely decide on a major they are uncertain about solely for the sake of having a 'plan.'

Interests of young adults fluctuate greatly, especially as they enter college. From ages 18-21, the human brain undergoes significant changes that impact academic infatuations. The prefrontal cortex, which is the section of the brain that supports planning and abstract reasoning, experiences large maturations before and during the early 20s.

These changes in brain development and decision making greatly impact college planning, with 80% of college students opting to change their major at least once during their undergraduate tenure.

With the knowledge of how likely redirection could be in college, students must give themselves permission to slow down. Taking time is hard in a society where 23% of people feel like they are constantly in a rush, and 60% of students reportedly feel stressed every day. As coursework surmounts and adult obligations accumulate, overcoming the constant state of urgency that hustle culture invokes may seem impossible.

Tools exist to alleviate the cumbersome nature of constant planning and staunch commitment. Options to explore different career paths and majors

exist, and students who enter college undeclared can still finish school on time.

Many experts recommend declaring a major by the end of your second year, which gives students time to pursue shadowing opportunities and career seminars that can aid their decision-making process while they exercise freedom and self-discovery through the attendance of a variety of creative gen-eds.

Help from dedicated academic advisors can also assist students further in visualizing the pathways necessary to complete certain majors. This can provide students with insight into classes they can take that provide intrigue and academic rigor while fulfilling requirements for a multitude of specializations that the student may want to pursue.

Most colleges ensure that gen-ed credits apply to any major, giving students the leeway to explore different topics and disciplines while earning crucial credit hours.

Although society places individuals on timelines where certain frameworks are expected to be followed, defying comparison and neat planning is the best way to uncover what truly invokes passion

in one's life. Journeys are not linear, and change will occur in many ways throughout young adulthood, whether minimal or drastic.

Students who remain undecided should not feel discouraged. The best inspiration arises from moments of uncertainty. Learning how to navigate change equips students with the confidence they need to conquer adversity later on in their career endeavors.

Plans are helpful, but patience truly catalyzes growth. Change will occur for students physically, mentally and emotionally. Instead of hurriedly crafting solutions to maintain stability where stability is not possible, allowing change to flow into areas of life where it is least expected creates some of the most exquisite realizations and opportunities.

Do not be afraid to switch majors or remain undeclared for your first year of college. Instead, embrace the liberation that comes with uncertainty and fully cherish living in the present. When students work hard in the moment in whatever area they happen to be in, the rest will follow.



Blaise Uy/Niner Times



Opinion: College is about more than getting a high-paying job

Noah Hughey | Staff Writer

Why are you going to college? Some form of the same conventional wisdom undoubtedly rattled through your mind at that question: “Go to college, get a good job, live a better life.” This logic is the first in a 15-item list of reasons to attend college, according to the Metropolitan State University of Denver.

But the pursuit of greater heights on the economic and social ladder we climb is becoming less true for graduates. It has long failed to contain the existential sustenance it promises. In its wake, we might want to consider the possibility that higher education is about something more than a trade-off of our time for a guarantee of a high-paying job.

“To me, a college education is distinguished from other kinds of education because it embodies ideals distinct from the rest of students’ lives,” wrote Professor Johann N. Neem. “If we take college education seriously, we want students to emerge from college different than when they went in. The test of a good college education is not graduates’ salaries but whether colleges have cultivated students’ intellectual virtues.”

Enter: Capitalism

The rising prominence of capitalism as a philosophical and economic system gives way to clear gaps between its high-

ly materialistic valuation of goods and more abstract definitions of happiness. That said, there are grooves between the two beliefs that came together to create our current situation.

The prevailing logic would be that creating the conditions under which humans thrive is more materially attainable, thus leading to the individual happiness that the ancient thinkers and their educational institutions promoted. Problem solved, right?

If you buy into the idea that money can buy happiness, then yes. The assumption was that the payout would be worth the meticulous intellectual segregation. With an economy powered by America’s novel leadership in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), it was guaranteed that those safe bets meant safe livelihoods.

The safety of these guaranteed job opportunities meant that the more abstract fields—philosophy, the humanities as a whole — could take a back seat on account of their impracticality in securing work. Instead, workers should prioritize studying something safe, going to work, and then, when they have enough money to afford ample leisure time, use it to investigate the mysteries of life and the universe.

The reality

This promise has not been the case. Instead, we have consistently disregarded the humanities as being so unimportant that their study at all is a waste. Even if we gain leisure time post-graduating, why bother? With opportunities to earn even more money, who wants to sit around and read when they can ‘live’ life through the experiences and commodities they can afford to adorn it with.

The real kicker in all of this is that for many, society’s end of the promise that a college education guarantees lucrative employment cannot even be fulfilled. Unemployment for degree holders is higher than the overall unemployment rate in the U.S., the worst it has been in 12 years.

It is no surprise, then, that activists have begun calling college a scam and peddling ridiculous and expensive online courses about ‘preparing for the future.’ Our devaluing of a rich, intellectually virtuous education has created a vacuum that con artists have attempted to fill. Our love of money as the single tool through which human happiness can be achieved has created inequalities that not only cannot be resolved by more money, but must

never be resolved for the top earners to continue their gift.

Why are we here, then?

“Colleges must teach students to think, provide them the knowledge and skills to think with, and enable them to have thoughts worth thinking,” said Neem. “But most of all, they must graduate people who are not just morally and civically virtuous but intellectually virtuous.”

This is not necessarily about returning to some lost, virtuous age in higher education. It is not some kind of ‘gotcha’ or a promise to be fabulously rich when you graduate. It is a commitment to use the skills you learned to be a good person. “Learning as an end in itself,” Neem said.

Ultimately, all those golden promises society tells students are nonsense. And when they build their lives around them, that is not the school’s fault for failing to make them successful; it is society’s fault for believing such ridiculous promises were, or should be, true.

Before you, now are two primary choices: Study what is safe, and hope you are lucky enough to get by on a career you might sort of care about. Or, study what you love, and live a life full of the passion of your interests, in spite of the stuff you cannot control.



Camila Surinach/Niner Times



All-Student Communities

You've never lived like this.

Walk or bike to class

Private bedrooms and bathrooms

24-hour, state-of-the-art fitness center

24-hour, Academic Success Center
with iMacs and free printing

Professional, on-site management
and maintenance

24-hour, on-call staff

Roommate matching powered
by RoomSync



PROUD PARTNER OF THE
CHARLOTTE FORTY-NINERS™

Learn more at
AmericanCampus.com/Charlotte



 AMERICAN CAMPUS COMMUNITIES **Where students love living.®**

Rates/installments, caps, deadlines/dates, amenities and fees are subject to change. Limited time only. See office for details.





Caravaggio REVOLUTION

BAROQUE MASTERPIECES FROM THE ROBERTO LONGHI FOUNDATION

On view through October 25, 2026 | Mint Museum Uptown at Levine Center for the Arts

M.A. ROGERS

BANK OF AMERICA



Caravaggio | Revolution: Baroque Masterpieces from the Roberto Longhi Foundation is generously presented by M.A. Rogers and Bank of America with additional support from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. Organized by the Fondazione di Studi di Storia dell'Arte Roberto Longhi and Civita Mostre e Musei, in collaboration with The Mint Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg. IMAGE: Valentin de Boulogne, known as Le Valentin (French, 1591–1632). *Denial of St. Peter* (detail), 1615–17, oil on canvas. Florence, Fondazione di Studi di Storia dell'Arte Roberto Longhi.

Mint Museum Uptown at Levine Center for the Arts | 500 South Tryon Street | Charlotte, NC 28202 | 704.337.2000 | mintmuseum.org | [@themintmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/themintmuseum)