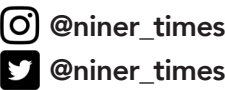


RESTAURANT REVIEW: DAVE'S HOT CHICKEN

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Dave's Hot Chicken combos and art from
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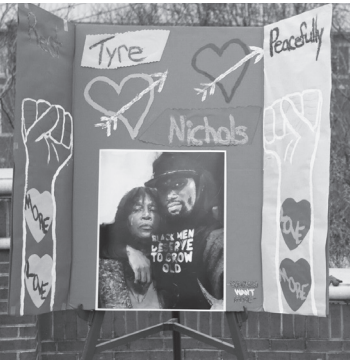


Photo by Cairo Smith



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New Starbucks opens in Atkins Library Cafe

by James Kmosko
Staff Writer

A new Starbucks location on campus opened in the Atkins Library Cafe on Feb. 20.

The location is on the library's ground floor and was previously occupied by Peet's Coffee.

"It was decided based on student feedback that they would like to see a change in the library," said Ben Kolnos, senior retail director at Chartwells. "Starbucks was chosen by a lot of the student feedback."

The grand opening spans several days. In addition, the new Starbucks location is partnering with the University to give out prizes to students.

"The Student Government will be involved," said Kolnos. "We'll do a ribbon cutting and run a promo with Niner Diners Instagram. Nine students found various keys across campus with different prizes. The main prize was free Starbucks for a year."

The Atkins Starbucks is much larger than the existing Starbucks in the Student Union. It offers a different atmosphere and a more centralized location on campus.

"The menu offerings will be the same, but it's more of an experience," said Kolnos. "The library atmosphere is a little different than the Student Union. We geared this location toward a regular Starbucks experience, including music

and seating. The seating area is accessible during library hours, even if the cafe is closed. It'll be similar to the Thoughtful Cup, where students can hang out, work and get a great cup of coffee."

Atkins began renovating the cafe in the summer of 2022 but faced several problems.

"The original plan was to open in the fall of 2022," said Kolnos. "But the threat of COVID-19, shipping delays and all kinds of market pressures delayed it. We're excited to finish this project and open up the space in the library."



Atkins Library Starbucks | Photo by Jacob Scannell

The new Starbucks location has prompted changes in the ordering systems used at all Starbucks locations on campus.

"Speed of service is something we always focus on. With this new system, lines at both locations will be less than the students are used to," said Kolnos. "All your rewards points can be redeemed. In addition, gift cards can be taken for mobile orders and payments. This and the Student Union location act like a regular Starbucks off campus."

Thoughtful Cup, located in Fretwell, and Change Please, located in the New Science Building, will both compete with the new Starbucks for customers. However, the smaller coffee shops are not expected to be negatively impacted by the new location's opening.

"They have different offerings," said Kolnos. "Thoughtful Cup provides a great addition to the coffee program. We feature a local roaster there, whereas Starbucks is a national brand. We also have a small coffee shop in Auntie Anne's called Change Please. We're going to relaunch that in a couple of weeks as well. There is room for all three locations. We try to provide different coffee solutions. Starbucks is the most popular. That's why we have two."

UNC Charlotte's Organization of African Students works to educate students on African culture

by Jenny Kase
Staff Writer

The Organization of African Students (OAS) is a multicultural organization at UNC Charlotte that promotes inclusion and educates students of all backgrounds on African culture.

According to the OAS Niner Engage website, the organization was established in fall 2005. Their mission has consistently been to provide their members a home away from home, institute a welcoming environment for all Charlotte students and encourage them to connect with individuals from diverse backgrounds and learn about African lifestyles and current affairs.

"We always try to emphasize that you don't have to identify as African or African-American to be a part of our organization," said Esther Koroma, second-year vice president of OAS.

"As long as you're open and accepting to our cultures and beliefs, then you are welcomed."

The organization is focused on educating individuals of different backgrounds on current topics in Africa and around the community.

"Global health-wise, I would say the issue with women and women's health, bringing awareness to the safety of our children, being more aware of what's going on in our communities, allocation of resources, food insecurity, and just bringing awareness to those issues," Koroma said.

The OAS hosts several events and socials throughout the year, with the main event being their annual African Night. The 2023 African Night will be Sunday, March 11, in McKnight Hall at 5:30 p.m.

"African Night is the same thing every year.

We usually create a theme, and alongside that, we have amazing dancers, our dance team Afrikawi. We also have performances from different talents around Charlotte and North Carolina," Koroma said. "We love serving food. We're trying to bring some nice African cuisine for our audience."

The organization hosts many events the week of African Night, such as social gatherings, scavenger hunts, giveaways, karaoke and poetry nights and more that will be posted on the OAS Instagram.

They also engage in community service, such as Adopt a Spot, volunteer at the University Soup Kitchen, and are starting to get involved with other organizations and nonprofits.

"It's like one big happy family, and we all just

come together to celebrate African culture," said Koroma.

The OAS emphasizes inclusion and unity. They aim to impact every member involved and the Charlotte community.

"Coming to Charlotte, I aimed to find my niche and my people. Growing up, I didn't know how to identify myself. Coming here, I found people with a similar background and upbringing and revealed who I truly can be without any judgment," Koroma said.

The OAS is open to welcoming new members of all backgrounds.

"We recommend staying active, showing up to community service, coming as you are and having fun," said Koroma.

UNC Charlotte students hold vigil in honor of Tyre Nichols

by Kathleen Cochrane
News Editor

UNC Charlotte's department chairs of Urban Youth and Communities Studies, Susan Harden and Shamaie Haynes, partnered with four of their students to hold the Women Want More march in honor of Tyre Nichols on Feb. 15.

The march started in the College of Education and College of Health and Human Services plaza at 6 p.m. with welcoming remarks from Haynes, fourth-years Tashanya Parks, Gabby Kurczek, Elena Palmietto and third-year Ja'Bria Farmer.

"We all came together to organize this event in representation of Tyre Nichols' mother," said Parks. "To show respect and spread more solidarity among women who have lost their sons and daughters. To release brutality, and as a Black woman myself, I felt the need to stand up and show that we can release this stigma of Black women having to be strong and cover up our feelings. I feel like everybody should speak positively to get positive change."

The participating students then marched to the Star Quad at Atkins Library, where any participant could speak. A healing circle then followed the speeches.

"I think it went well. We had many people come up and say a lot of really powerful things. I was telling Ja'Bria [Farmer] I feel like a lot was accomplished with what little resources we had to set this up," Palmietto said. "It warmed my heart to see people walking by and come in and kind of join and just be curious about what's going on, just keep educating people on violence and what we can do to be better."

The four students that planned the march wanted to raise awareness not only for Nichols' death but also for every victim of police brutality.

"Working in solidarity with these women

allowed me to see a different perspective," Kurczek said. "Everyone's background is so different, and it made it much more meaningful to put this together because we are trying to achieve solidarity amongst diverse backgrounds."

Students talked about wanting change after years of people getting attacked by police officers.

"I think what's most important now is what happens after this march," said Farmer. "How do we stay in solidarity after this march instead of having to plan events for solidarity? How can we do that?"

Farmer said that the march reinforced her sense of solidarity among the Women Want More participants.

I also think that after seeing all this come together, the situation hit me hard just saying how everybody stood together and kind of felt the same feeling," Farmer said. "It allowed me to step up my feelings and show those and be honest and authentic about how I feel about this situation just because I know that everybody is going the same way. But I think it's important to stand in solidarity now and after."

During the speeches and vigils, students walking by joined the group.

"I came here by accident. I want to put that up first. I was walking by on my way to Friday and heard the commotion. I saw what was happening and felt like I had to stop and see what this was all about, said first-year Jacob Dunford. "So, coming with no expectations, I feel different. I don't even know how to put it into words. I'm going to be honest, I feel frustrated. I feel that the healing circle helped after all of that. But it felt special, really special."

The healing circle took place at the end for

people to stand together and hold candles, creating a positive energy for everyone to leave with.

"It went well. I'm very proud of our students for coordinating this event," Haynes said. "It's important to say that Dr. Harden and I helped them facilitate discussion around their ideas, but the students coordinated everything. So anytime I can walk into something I didn't have to plan, it's a success. Beyond that, they did a great job organizing; it is just the topic itself. It provided our community with some healing. I think."



Vigil held in honor of Tyre Nichols | Photo by Cairo Smith

Author Connie Williams hosts civil rights discussion at UNC Charlotte

by James Kmosko
Staff Writer

A discussion of Connie Williams' civil rights biography, "Audacity: Story of a Legendary Hero," was held on Feb. 1 in Atkins Library.

Formerly a rhetoric and composition lecturer at UNC Charlotte, Williams is known in the Charlotte area for her poetry and novels. Her newest book details the life of her cousin, Robert F. Williams, a civil rights leader from Monroe,

N.C., who advocated for Black power a decade before the movement of the 1960s.

After a brief introduction led by Ariana Bennet and UNC Charlotte Center for Holocaust, Genocide & Human Rights Director John Cox, Williams described the story outlined in her book.

At age 11, Robert Williams witnessed a

racially motivated attack on a Black woman perpetrated by a police officer. This sparked Williams' career as an activist.

"Mr. Williams could have followed the course of his life as a railroad worker, or he could have become a school teacher," Williams said. "But as fate would have it, the course of his life was chosen for him when he vowed as a youth

to be different: to take the path paved with civil disobedience and the dangerous road to overcome systemic racism."

After serving time in the military, Robert Williams became the president of the Monroe NAACP. While there, he witnessed white criminals being acquitted of crimes against

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Continued from p. 4

Black people and began to believe that the American legal system was corrupt.

"Seeing no recourse, he began to advocate armed self-reliance, taking a military stance against racism to oppose what could have been another 100 years of beatings, bombings, aggression, regular brutalization at the hands of man's inhumanity to man," Williams said. "Robert Williams told Black men, 'If the Klan rides and tries to do wrong against you, stop them. Protect your family and your home. The weapons are not for killing. Killing is wrong.'"

His ideology made him a controversial figure, even among civil rights activists. During one protest, Williams protected two white people from a mob by allowing them into his home. In response, the FBI issued a most wanted warrant against him, alleging that the people were kidnapped.

"He and his family mysteriously escaped from Monroe into New York, Canada and then Cuba," said Williams. "They later lived in China under Mao Zedong."

Williams eventually returned to the United States and lived the rest of his life in Grand

Rapids, Mich. His 1996 funeral was attended by hundreds of people, including Rosa Parks, who delivered a eulogy.

"The legendary unsung hero is now beginning to be recognized," said Williams.

After she described her book, Williams hosted a question-and-answer segment in which several students participated.

FBI records on Robert Williams from Atkins Library Special Collections were on display at the event, and signed copies of Connie Williams' books were available for purchase.

"This event was quite transformative to my

mindset," said Jayden Shaw, a first-year student who attended the discussion. "It's not often that you get to meet people who are connected to or are themselves historical figures. To hear the story of Robert Williams from someone who was directly related to him and to hear her own story and how it affected her, something about it just drew me in to listen to her a lot more closely than if it was historical fiction."

"Audacity: Story of a Legendary Hero" is available for purchase in the Amazon bookstore.

Dr. Lorenzo Hopper researches first-generation students' mental health with photovoice

by Jessica Ceballos
Staff Writer

Dr. Lorenzo Hopper and his research assistants are conducting photovoice research on first-generation student mental health through the end of the spring 2023 semester.

Photovoice research is the study of human subjects through participant photography and personal interviews.

According to Hopper, the research study aims to support first-generation college students by implementing better resources.

According to Hopper, the participants will take and submit photos of places on the UNC Charlotte campus that they believe influence their mental health and share their experiences. The students will present their pictures for approximately three weeks.

Hopper, project manager Farida YADA and research assistant Omer Abdulkareem will interview the students to ask why they took the photos.

The researchers will collate the information to extract data about the resources first-generation college students utilize. The research results will help Hopper determine the next steps regarding how to help first-generation students at UNC Charlotte.

"My goal would be to disseminate the results of this widely through a research paper and conference presentations because we have a lot of peers that are doing great things to support students at different institutions that we learn from," said Hopper. "Hopefully, we can be that front for other places that also work with under-resourced students."

Hopper, YADA and Abdulkareem hope to exhibit the photos in an art gallery either at the end of spring 2023 or the beginning of fall 2023.

Hopper will determine the date in late March.

The research study is still in its early stages. However, Hopper aims to acquire approximately 12-20 students for the research study. Currently, the research study is accepting interested students.

YADA was hired as the project manager because of her background knowledge and practice in photovoice as a research collection tool.

"My goal, outside of the grand scheme of things, is I am excited to talk to the students and learn from them about the struggles they are facing," said Yada.

As a research assistant, Abdulkareem provides his perspective as a first-generation college student to the research processes and data collection.

"I would love to see other people's perspectives and indulge in that," said Abdulkareem. "[I want to] inspire people to [know] that it is okay to communicate and that no one is alone when it comes to going through college, even for first-generation students. [They] might think they are alone or do not have a support group, but there are plenty of first-generation Niners on campus. I hope this project inspires them through photography and non-verbal communication."

Hopper received funding for the research study through the research office. The faculty research grant is \$8,000. This funding will go towards incentivizing the participants, compensating Hopper's project manager and research assistant, and hosting an exhibit of the photography.

Hopper sought Institutional Review (IRB) approval from the UNC Charlotte IRB office to conduct this research utilizing human subjects,

according to Cat Runden, the IRB manager. Human subjects research requires prior IRB approval before any analysis can begin so the human subjects are safe and treated ethically, according to the human subjects website.

"I hope that this research study will somehow or somehow help, not just bring light to the experiences of first-generation college students, but help to get rid of the stigma attached to mental health," said YADA. "I hope we can bring light to that and reduce the stigma attached to seeking help."

In addition to the research study, UNC Charlotte has a student organization called "First Gen Niners." This student organization is used to help students find resources and support. Hopper has sought potential participants from this organization for the research study.

For first-generation students seeking mental health assistance, the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services website has a list of student resources available for all students at no additional cost to

their student fees.

"These students should be supported and celebrated," said Hopper. "This is just a way in which I can use research to learn and help to support some of our efforts to do so."



Dr. Lorenzo Hopper | Courtesy of Hopper

The Annual Juried Student Exhibition is back for 2023

by Annie Turk
Staff Writer

The Annual Juried Student Exhibition hosted by the College of Arts + Architecture is back in Rowe Galleries until March 31, with the reception on Friday, Feb. 24, from 11:15 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

The juried selection of pieces in the exhibit showcases the impressive creative talents of the UNC Charlotte art community. Art majors from the Department of Art & Art History submit their pieces from the past year to be considered for the exhibition. This year, 95 students submitted works ranging from ceramics and paintings to photography and animation displays.

This year's jurors are Jonell Logan, vice president and creative director of the McColl Center for Art + Innovation, and Juan Logan, nationally known artist working in the Charlotte region. They selected around 50 pieces for the exhibition. Having a juried panel from outside the University allows students to get a feel of how their work will be received in the art world.

"It's amazing for us to see," said Adam Justice, director of galleries. "Every year is a surprise because we see the works that are submitted, but we don't know what's going to be in the show until we get the results back from the jurors."

Some highlights from this year's exhibition

include installation work, concept sketches and ceramic hangings. A unique aspect of this exhibit is that all the work on display is the product of course assignments or projects. Students select their best pieces and go through an application process, which is a critical part of being an artist after their academic career at UNC Charlotte. Not only is the Annual Juried Student Exhibition a chance for students to display their work for the Charlotte community, but it is also a practical learning experience.

On Friday, Feb. 24, from 11:15 a.m.-1 p.m., Rowe Galleries will host a jurors' talk and reception where various awards will be announced for students whose work is displayed.

Rowe Galleries, where the Annual Juried Student Exhibition is on view, is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and is available for UNC Charlotte students, faculty and staff as well as the general public for free.

Students within the Department of Art & Art History can apply for next year's Annual Juried Student Exhibition by submitting their application and pieces later this year.



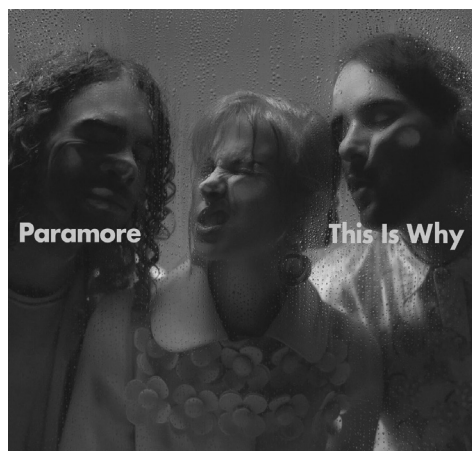
Student piece in the Juried Exhibition | Photo by Cairo Smith

Album review: 'This is Why' by Paramore

by Lola Oliverio
Asst. Opinion Editor

After nearly a six-year hiatus, Paramore is back with "This Is Why," an album filled to the brim with angst but happier than ever.

The release of "This Is Why" is the first time the band has produced two albums with the



'This Is Why' album | Courtesy of Atlantic Records

same members, as the group has been subject to frequent lineup changes. Following the 2017 release of "After Laughter," a solemn synth-pop collection of songs surrounding heartbreak, divorce and hopelessness—frontwoman Hayley Williams has returned to her characteristically spunky attitude. She is once more equal parts bark and bite.

The album opens with the title track, "This Is Why," a pop ballad recounting the distress one feels as they watch the world around them seemingly burn. All three singles released before the album, "This Is Why," "C'est comme ça" and "The News," reflect this same frustration. Likely written during the pandemic's peak and the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine war, these three tracks feel like the inner monologue of a millennial with an unimaginable sense of weight upon their shoulders.

"Figure 8," "Running Out of Time" and "You First" are standouts, all with powerful choruses and guitar riffs that sound like a culmination of past and present Paramore. "Figure 8"

appears sonically and lyrically as a sequel to "After Laughter's" "Pool," a painful yet upbeat recount of Williams' divorce. The track feels like a conclusion to the arc of her tumultuous marriage, moving through the stages of grief, from sadness to anger.

"Liar" details Williams' romantic relationship with guitarist Taylor York, who has been the only other constant member of the band since its formation. It feels sincere—like a sigh of relief after keeping their relationship away from the public for so long. "Liar" is a beautifully-written song with a unique melody that captures the feeling of new love.

"Big Man, Little Dignity" is a painfully relatable earworm, especially if you have encountered the person Williams describes. "Bet it feels good to leave the past behind," she sings. "Your subscription to redemption has been renewed." She describes this person as a car crash one cannot look away from, singing that he is like "a movie that [you] love to hate."

Though York and drummer Zac Farro have

expressed growth sonically, the lyrics of "This Is Why" feel juvenile, with lines such as, "only I know where all the bodies are buried/thought by now I'd find 'em just a little less scary" on track 'Thick Skull,' and the buzzword-ridden lyrics of 'The News.' The latter details Williams' exhaustion with the 24-hour news cycle and its associated stress—it begins to feel like the band has set lyrical quality on the back burner in favor of fleshing out melodies.

Despite its patches of weak lyrical value, "This Is Why" is an excellent album that feels like the natural progression of Paramore's career. Despite the state of the world and the existential dread felt by Williams, the band is finally at a point where they can exist without the pressures of confining themselves to one specific genre or lyrical style. They are not just another ex-emo band; they are Paramore.

Rating: 7/10

‘Desensitized’ gallery comes to Charlotte’s Rowe Side Gallery

by E. Alexander Zimmerman
Staff Writer

The “Desensitized” Gallery show will take place at Rowe side gallery on Feb. 24 and remain until March 24. Curated by third-year UNC Charlotte student Sydney Carmer, the exhibition presents commentary and challenges to how exposure to violence has increased in scale.

Tackling issues such as campus violence, police violence and increased access to the news of a turbulent world, Carmer and five other artists want to use their work to disrupt and defy the normality of this new media ecosystem.

The gallery was inspired by work done by Carmer in Anna Kenar’s figure drawing

class. Working on their final projects, Carmer noticed that many of her classmates had touched on similar themes and aesthetics in their work.

Sydney spoke with the Niner Times and emphasized presenting a unified effort across the gallery’s artistic works, even as they span multiple mediums. “All the work is mostly monochromatic black and white with a pop of red,” said Carmer. “I thought it would be interesting to have everything in similar colors. They all deal with figurative elements as well, like parts of the body.”

Carmer also wanted to bring the experience of being on social media and seeing constant

violence as it is occurring. “It’s basically about confronting the contemporary reality of overexposure to horror and tragedy. With social media, we’re sort of exposed to tragedy on a global scale instantaneously. It’s crazy to think about because we see these things on a daily basis. It just becomes normal.”

While the approach to curation was focused, the gallery still focuses on the wide variety of topics we encounter on social media. For example, a third-year illustration major and classmate of Carmer’s, Grace Bishop, whose work is included on the poster, chose to portray the role of the observer. “Mine is about viewership and the power dynamic in looking

at something. I think it’s important to think about your role in media consumption,” said Bishop. “It’s important to remember that what you see about people is a narrative shaped by someone else; at first, I was specifically thinking about women’s portrayal in the media, but everyone can become an object in someone else’s narrative.”

All Rowe galleries are open Monday-Friday from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. In addition, there will be a reception on March 10 at 5 p.m. The gallery will also feature the works of artists Caroline Wells, Makayla Wells, Skyler Vink and Kelly Crockett.



Desensitized gallery show pieces | Courtesy of Sydney Carmer

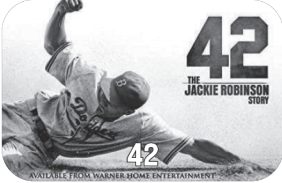
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Restaurant review: Dave's Hot Chicken

by E. Alexander Zimmerman
Staff Writer

Dave's Hot Chicken opened on J M Keynes Dr. on Feb. 10 and has been hopping with business. With a smooth ordering experience and a unique flavor, Dave's Hot Chicken proves it is worth the price. Anyone interested in which fast-food chains has the best chicken sandwich should try it.

Upon entering the restaurant, customers are greeted by a snug dining area separated by a tightly controlled ordering counter. Most of the space is filled with ample seating. However, customers either sat in tightly packed spaces, placed a pickup order or waited outside.

The menu is focused; the only entrees are chicken tenders and slider combinations. There are a few side options—mac and cheese, fries and coleslaw—all of which are tasty additions to your main meal. The variety comes from different sauces, on a scale of “No Spice” to “Reaper.”

In an attempt at the authentic Dave's experience, I opted for a No. 3 on their menu, tenders and a sandwich in “Hot,” the fourth spiciest option.

With the drink and cheese add-ons, the

restaurant can get a little pricey, but the overall deliciousness backs it up.

Despite the restaurant being quite busy, my food came out quickly, even in a to-go box. The presentation was excellent, and the sandwich was served open-faced with the top bun and pickles set off to the side. In addition, the single tender was quite large and hearty, making the price point more reasonable than if it were the size of an average tender.

It was love at first bite. Although competing spicy chicken sandwiches such as Popeyes and Chick-fil-A may have a better quality of meat and bread as separate ingredients, Dave's Hot Chicken shines brighter than the sum of its parts.

The hot sauce was an excellent balance of spice and flavor with a full, rich tang and a sharp spice that was not overwhelming. The breading on the chicken was thick and crunchy but did not leave the meat itself dry or stringy. The house-made Dave's Sauce was similar to thousand island dressing, skewed slightly to best match the flavor pallet of the chicken. All of this is sealed together by the perfectly melted cheese and the pickles, which

balances out the harsher flavors of their sauce.

The weak points of the meal were the sides: the crinkle-cut fries were serviceable but could have been more memorable and well-seasoned. The unremarkable fries would not have been as bothersome, but they did detract from the overall quality of the meal. The mac and cheese was substantially better and free to substitute, but it is simply pasta in cheese sauce.

Although the price tag is heftier than I would have liked, especially considering the up-charge for cheese, my experience was pleasant with fast food, a well-organized dining area and friendly staff. The food was excellent, even where certain elements could see improvement.

I left the restaurant full and pleased. If Dave's Hot Chicken can maintain their current level of excellence, I will be returning.

Rating: 7/10

Dave's Hot Chicken opens University City location

by Sunnya Hadavi
Editor-in-Chief

Dave's Hot Chicken's new Charlotte location opened on Friday, Feb. 10, in University City, the franchise's second location in Charlotte.

The new location is across the street from UNC Charlotte's engineering campus, within walking distance of campus. It is located at 8932 J.M. Keynes Dr. and is open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Sundays to Thursdays and from 11 a.m. to 12 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

Dave's Hot Chicken (DHC) is a Nashville-style hot chicken franchise that started in 2017 and has grown to include over 100 locations across the United States and other countries. Canadian rapper Drake is also a significant investor in the franchise.

The DHC menu includes chicken tenders and sliders with options for slides and comes with Dave's Sauce. Seven spice levels are available for their chicken, starting with “No Spice” and ending with “Reaper.” DHC's first combo option, “2 Tenders w/ Fries,” costs \$11.99.

DHC's first location in Charlotte opened in September 2022 in Plaza Midtown. The franchise plans to expand into Charlotte with 12 locations throughout the city in the next couple of years.

Dave's Hot Chicken menu

Dave's No. 1: Two tenders with fries

All tenders served with sliced bread, pickles and a side of Dave's sauce

Dave's No. 2: Two sliders with fries

Sliders served on a hamburger bun with kale slaw, pickles and Dave's sauce

Cheese can also be added to each slider

Dave's No. 3: One tender and one slider with fries

The slider is served on a hamburger bun with kale slaw, pickles and Dave's sauce.

Cheese can be added to the slider

The tender is served with sliced bread, pickles and a side of Dave's sauce

Heat level

No Spice | Lite Mild | Mild | Medium | Hot | Extra Hot | Reaper

Sides

- Mac & Cheese
- Kale Slaw
- Fries
- Cheese Fries
- Single Slider
- Single Tender



Dave's Hot Chicken University City location | Photos by Jade Suszek

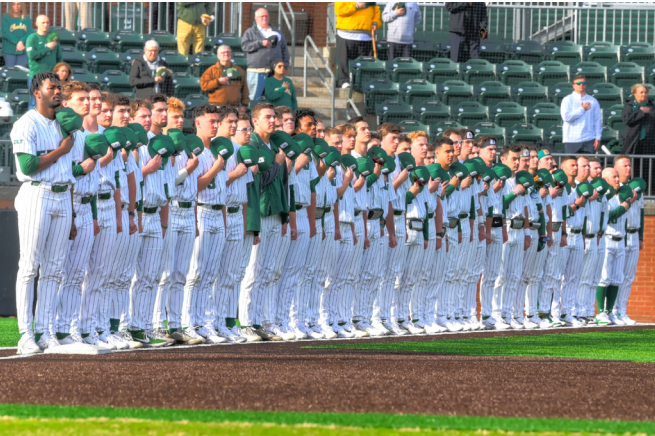
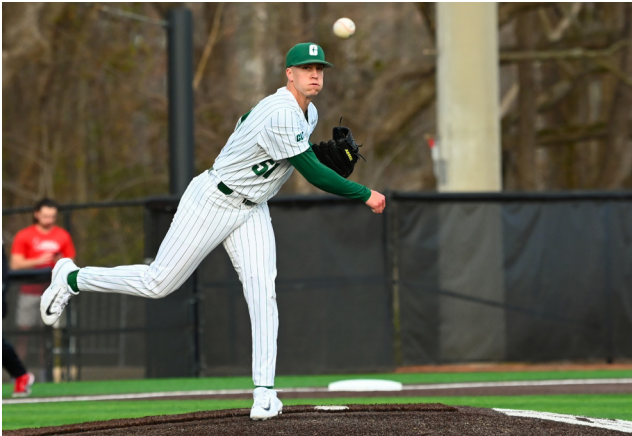
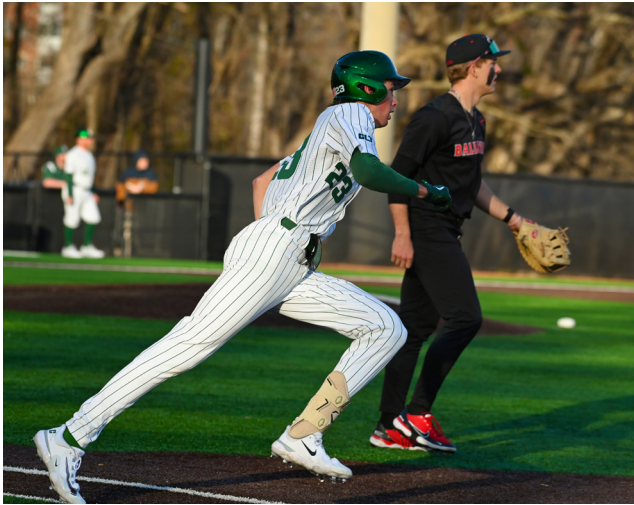


Charlotte baseball vs. Ball State University

Photos by Chris Crews

On Feb. 17, Charlotte baseball played their season opener against Ball State University. Ball State scored early on in the second inning and again in the fourth making score 2-0. Charlotte went on to score once in the next inning of the game but could not manage

to catch up, making the final score 2-1 Ball State. Charlotte went on to win the series with back-to-back wins on Saturday, Feb. 18, and Sunday, Feb. 19.



Column: All sporting leagues should implement a salary cap

by Juwan Watson
Staff Writer

A salary cap is how much a professional team can spend on a player's salary. Financial fair play rules in the Union of European Football Association (UEFA) and the English Premier League (EPL) are a regulatory tool to prevent clubs from spending more than their stipulated budget, which could inadvertently plunge them into debt.

Many criticize leagues like Major League Baseball (MLB) for not having a salary cap because this enables the development of super teams full of high-level, talented players.

The MLB is the only American sports league with no salary cap. Still, leagues

with a salary cap, such as the National Football League (NFL), National Basketball Association (NBA) and the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), have problems when dealing with trades and contract negotiations.

The WNBA champions Las Vegas Aces are under investigation by the League for reportedly "under-the-table" compensation when dealing with free agent Candace Parker, who received a contract from the Aces after the team traded Dearica Hamby to the Los Angeles Sparks.

Just from that activity, the Aces have already built a super team after winning the WNBA finals in 2022. They are creating an unfair advantage still with a salary cap involved.

Professional sports teams navigate ways to form a super team with a league salary cap in place or not.

The EPL does not have a salary cap compared to other top European soccer leagues like the Spanish LaLiga, which has imposed a salary cap since 2013. This rule prevents the top-tier clubs from spending more than 70% of their total income on wages.

The English Football Association does have financial fair play rules, like UEFA, but they are not as strict.

English football club Manchester City has been under investigation for breaching the financial fair play rules. Not for transfers or the wages they have spent on players in the past few years but for not providing accurate financial information that gives an accurate view of the club's financial position.

Still, there should be implications and investigations for the number of star players in their squad. Manchester City has won six Premier League titles since their turnaround in 2008 and adds more yearly.

What can leagues do to make it a level

playing field for all? The leagues' hands are tied unless they investigate and hold teams and organizations accountable.

For soccer, breaches of financial fair play rules should result in a point deduction, any trophy title vacated and a ban or expulsion from major competitions.

If Manchester City does not provide an accurate financial statement, they should be convicted and relocate any misspent money to transfers' and players' wages. This creates an equal playing field for lower-tier teams. If they get promoted to the Premier League, they have a chance to fight with others.

The same can be said for the MLB. No team should have a financial advantage in signing players and giving them a wage spending bill that exceeds other teams.

Take the example of other leagues like the NFL, who have introduced salary caps.

This not only creates a fair playing field for the teams involved but also from a fan's standpoint. No fan wants to see the same team winning year after year with no real competition for them to play.

Teams like the Golden State Warriors winning back-to-back finals and the New England Patriots winning multiple titles in a few years have become redundant.

The MLB has had consecutive World Series winners, but fans should not look forward to that to save the integrity of the sport by implementing a salary cap.

A salary cap in all sports can save fans from witnessing super teams.

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CHARLOTTE 49ERS SCOREBOARD

RECENT GAMES FEB. 5 - FEB. 19

MEN'S BASKETBALL Jan. 9: Charlotte 62, UTEP 53

Feb. 11: North Texas 67, Charlotte 43

Feb. 16: Charlotte 68, Western Kentucky 64

Feb. 18: Charlotte 74, Louisiana Tech 67

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL Jan. 9: UTEP 70, Charlotte 64

Feb. 11: Charlotte 69, North Texas 61

Feb. 16: Western Kentucky 75, Charlotte 73

Feb. 18: Louisiana Tech 83, Charlotte 79

BASEBALL

Feb. 17: Ball State 2, Charlotte 1

Feb. 18: Charlotte 9, Ball State 4

Feb. 18: Charlotte 9, Ball State 5

Feb. 19: Charlotte 19, Ball State 5

UPCOMING GAMES

Men's Basketball:
Vs. North Texas on Thursday, Feb. 23 at 7 p.m.

Women's Basketball:
@ North Texas on Thursday,
Feb. 23 at 7:30 p.m.

Baseball:
@ Clemson on Tuesday, Feb. 21 at 4 p.m.

Softball:
Queen City Classic on Feb. 24-26



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The developing roles of Charlotte women's basketball guards Aylesha Wade and Tamia Davis

by Sania McCoy
Contributor

Charlotte women's basketball guards Tamia Davis and Aylesha Wade have made strides this season putting up stellar numbers in the last couple of weeks.

Recent performances

Wade recorded 13 points on 5-7 shooting in Charlotte's 70-64 loss against the University of Texas at El Paso and followed that performance up with six points against the University North Texas on Feb. 11.

Davis has recorded five double-digit performance this season with the most recent coming against North Texas where she had 14 points and five rebounds.

Davis said the players bond has led to their recent successes.

"By working together as a team, I feel our chemistry is definitely getting better," said Davis. "In practice, we are getting better on defense and offense. I feel like that's translated to the game."

Wade had a similar view on how they reached their success.

"We come into practice and are intentional about what it is we need to do and how we need to get it done," said Wade. "All of this has translated to the game because how you practice is how you play."

The team-oriented mindset and viewing teamwork as critical has led to individual and team successes.

Looking to improve

Davis, a veteran in her senior season, said one thing she continues to work hard on is improving her shot.

"I've been in the gym working before practice, after practice getting extra shots. I feel like it's really correlating and translating into the game," said Davis.

Wade, a sophomore, said she has adjusted her game since graduating high school.

"My biggest adjustment probably has

been on the defensive end as well as the pace of the game," said Wade. "Also, my basketball IQ, knowing when and how to do things in certain situations."

Coming off the bench

Both guards come off the bench and get to see how the game develops. Once they are in, they are crucial to the team.

Davis said their roles is to bring a spark off the bench.

"I feel like it's pretty much energy," said Davis. "I know when I make shots, it really gets the bench and the team on the court going. Overall it just helps the game go a little better, a little smoother."

Wade said she has a different view on how she plays an essential part in the squad.

"It comes from the defensive hand, getting a steal or taking a charge and then contributing to the team on the defensive end," said Wade.

If one has an off-game, they know how to keep each other in it.

"We usually just talk to each other," said Davis. "We all have bad games; you just have to keep your head up and have a next-play mentality."

Leaving a mark

With her senior season ending, Davis said she wants to leave a name for herself after graduating.

"I just want to leave my presence here; I want people to know who I am and what my name is," said Davis.

And even once she has graduated,



Charlotte women's basketball's Tamia Davis | Photo by Jacob Scannell

she hopes the team continues to hold a hardworking mindset.

"I hope that everyone continues to play for each other and work hard for each other every day in practice and the offseason. Keep pushing each other on, and I know it gets hard, and it gets tough, but I feel once we all come together to cheer each other on, it makes things a lot easier," said Davis.

Rounding out the year

Wade, Davis and the rest of the squad have four matches remaining in the 2022-23 season before Conference USA Championships.

Next up for the 49ers is a two-game round trip to Texas for their second match against North Texas University on Feb. 23, a team they took down 69-61 earlier in the month, and Rice University on Feb. 25, who they beat 66-61 back in January. Both games will be available to watch on ESPN+.



Charlotte women's basketball's Aylesha Wade | Photo by Jacob Scannell

Charlotte men's basketball guard Isaiah Folkes' journey to Charlotte and impacts on court

by Emily Brown
Contributor

Charlotte men's basketball sophomore guard Isaiah Folkes recorded his first career start on Thursday, Feb. 16, against the Western Kentucky University Hilltoppers. He helped lead the 49ers to a 68-64 win with 10 points and four rebounds in 28 minutes of play.

The 49ers are currently 14-10 and 5-9 in Conference USA (C-USA) play and are preparing for the final stretch of C-USA with a positive mindset.

Before Thursday's game, Head Coach Ron Sanchez said Folkes continues to take steps in his game.

"I think his role will continue to grow; he has been earning more time and responsibility. If he can continue to be the best he can defensively, I think he will play a big role for us," said Sanchez.

Folkes said he continues to find his stride on the court.

"I'm getting more comfortable on all aspects of the floor, like with my shooting,

dribbling and making the right reads," Folkes said. "I feel myself getting more comfortable and learning more and getting smarter."

Upstart guard

Folkes attended Middleburg Academy in Virginia and helped the school reach the state semifinals in 2020. Folkes said he learned much about himself on and off the court throughout high school.

"High school turned me into what I am today. It gave me a lot of confidence off and on the court," Folkes said. "With people knowing my name and little kids wanting to take pictures. I feel like once I got here, it was a culture shock because you aren't the man no more. You notice that you have to get better. My confidence dropped slightly, but I feel that I picked it back up once I learned college basketball."

When Folkes was in his senior year of high school, there were three universities

where he could have continued his basketball career. He committed to the 49ers in November 2020, jumping to the program after academy play halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Impact on and off the court

Folkes said his philosophy in practice and his value of teamwork helped his improvements. He does not view his role on the team individually; instead, he focuses on being the best teammate possible.

"Get better, practice hard, push my teammates and make them uncomfortable on the offensive end so they can do the same to me when I'm dribbling the ball on offense," Folkes said. "To come off the bench, bring energy. Guard the best player, get in the paint and create shots for my teammates," Folkes said.

Folkes' playing time has increased throughout the 2022-23 season, appearing in every game.

Sanchez said Folkes brings energy to the team on the court while his role develops.

"Isaiah is like an Energizer Bunny when he decides that he wants to dig into the ball and create his own offense via his defense, he really does inject the team with a lot of energy," said Sanchez.

Folkes said the goal is to bring a championship back home to Charlotte.

"To win the conference championship and make it to the NCAA tournament and be the best teammate I can be for my teammates and be the best I can in my role," Folkes said.

Next up

Folkes and the 49ers will be back in action on Thursday, Feb. 23, when they take on the University of North Texas Mean Green. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m. inside Halton Arena and will be available to stream on ESPN+.



Charlotte sophomore guard Isaiah Folkes (5) | Photo by Chris Crews

Charlotte softball transfer trio making instant impact while leading team to fast start

by Joey Ellsworth
Asst. Sports Editor

The first two series of the season are in the books for Charlotte softball, and the biggest takeaway is how the new transfers for the 49ers have made an instant impact.

Transfers Kassidy Krupit, Georgeanna “GG” Barefoot and Sam Gress have had impressive starts to the season. Krupit was named the Conference USA (C-USA) Player of the Week on Tuesday, Feb. 13.

“They’ve been really impactful,” said Head Coach Ashley Chastain. “It was a really cool moment for us as a staff; all three of our transfers from the summer for this team had a large impact on all of our games so far.”

Kassidy Krupit

Krupit is a transfer from the University of South Carolina, who the 49ers added in July. It did not take long for Krupit to earn the first-base role and become an impact player for the team, putting up what Chastain called a “stellar weekend.”

“We as a staff have talked months about the impact Kass could have on our offense,” said Chastain. “I recruited Kass when she

was a kid, like in high school. Kass has always been able to hit, and now I think she’s mature enough to get in the box and to have the right mindset and the right plan and approach to match her skill set. So you’re seeing a lot of success from her right away.”

Krupit’s success at bat in the first series showed her potential instantly, earning her C-USA Player of the Week in the first week of the season. This conference-leading performance was highlighted by 16 at-bats, resulting in eight hits, two home runs, four runs and eight RBIs, which are all team highs.

“It felt great to show the work we’ve put in as a team,” said Krupit. “Credit goes to the team because the team and coaches have gotten everyone prepared for our opening weekend, and I wouldn’t be where I am without this coaching and this team and the support around me.”

Chastain said that Krupit’s performance not only shows in the stats but also impacts her teammates significantly.

“We’re really excited to have her and Bailey [Vannoy] stacked on top of each

other in the lineup,” said Chastain. “Kass’ performance this weekend takes a lot of pressure off of her [Vannoy], takes a lot of pressure off of the offense, that we have other people that can get the job done at a really high level.”

Georgeanna Barefoot

Barefoot started on the mound twice in the opening series, facing South Carolina and East Tennessee State University and taking the win in both.

Barefoot handled the pressure well, pitching 13 innings with seven strikeouts in two games while allowing just 11 hits and two runs.

“It’s great; I couldn’t have done it without my defense out there,” said Barefoot. “They had my back the whole time. They made all the plays they needed to, so it made it very easy.”

With both players finding their place on the new squad, Barefoot and Krupit grew close to each other as they developed relationships with the rest of the team.

“Me and her have become pretty close, transferring in together,” said Barefoot. “We got to know each other just being new kids out there, but Kass [Krupit] is a very good ball player, one of the best I’ve ever been around. Her love for the game is just so exciting to be around.”

Chastain said Barefoot came up big in the opening series.

“We expect GG [Barefoot] to be our ace right out of the gate,” said Chastain. “I think her confidence is the biggest difference for her at this point in their career. We’ve developed other pitches she didn’t have previous to coming to Charlotte. Now she’s got other tools in her toolbox. I wasn’t surprised she had two great games; I really expect more of that from her.”

Sam Gress

Through three games pitched and two starts, Gress has a batting average allowed of .200 and an ERA of 1.26; both are second-best on the team. In 16.2 innings

pitched, she has allowed 12 hits and five runs, but her 11 strikeouts tie for best on the squad.

Chastain said Gress brings a competitive spirit to the squad.

“Sam Gress really pitched with a lot of fire and handled that role really well,” said Chastain.”

The duo of Gress and Barefoot are a significant portion of the team’s game plan from the mound.

“Sam and GG being pitchers, I think I have expectations for them to be a big part of what we’re doing,” said Chastain. “I think they’re good enough to help us win a lot. I believe that they’re going to have a large impact.”



Sam Gress (9) | Courtesy of Charlotte Athletics

Next up

The softball squad will host another series with the Queen City Classic, where they will face Penn State University, Boston University Kent State, Kent State University and Georgia Tech University.

In last season’s Queen City Classic, the 49ers swept the weekend, taking down all four teams with a combined score of 22-8.

This weekend series will stretch Feb. 24-26 at Sue M. Daughtridge Stadium.



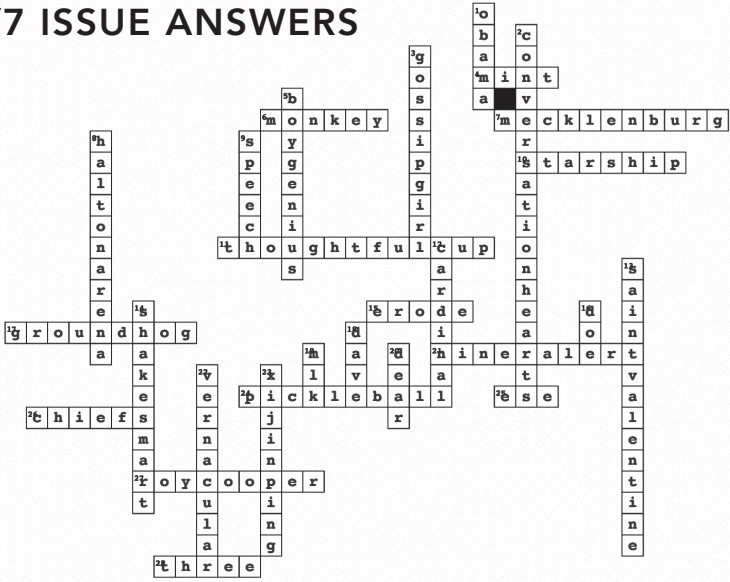
Kassidy Krupit (77) | Courtesy of Charlotte Athletics

CHECK THE NEXT ISSUE (3/7) FOR THE ANSWERS TO THIS WEEK’S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU!

NINER TIMES SUDOKU

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2/7 ISSUE ANSWERS



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8	2	1	3	9	5	6	7	4
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DID YOU KNOW?

WHEN TROUT HATCH THEY ARE CALLED “ALEVINS” UNTIL THEY LOOSE THEIR YOLKS.

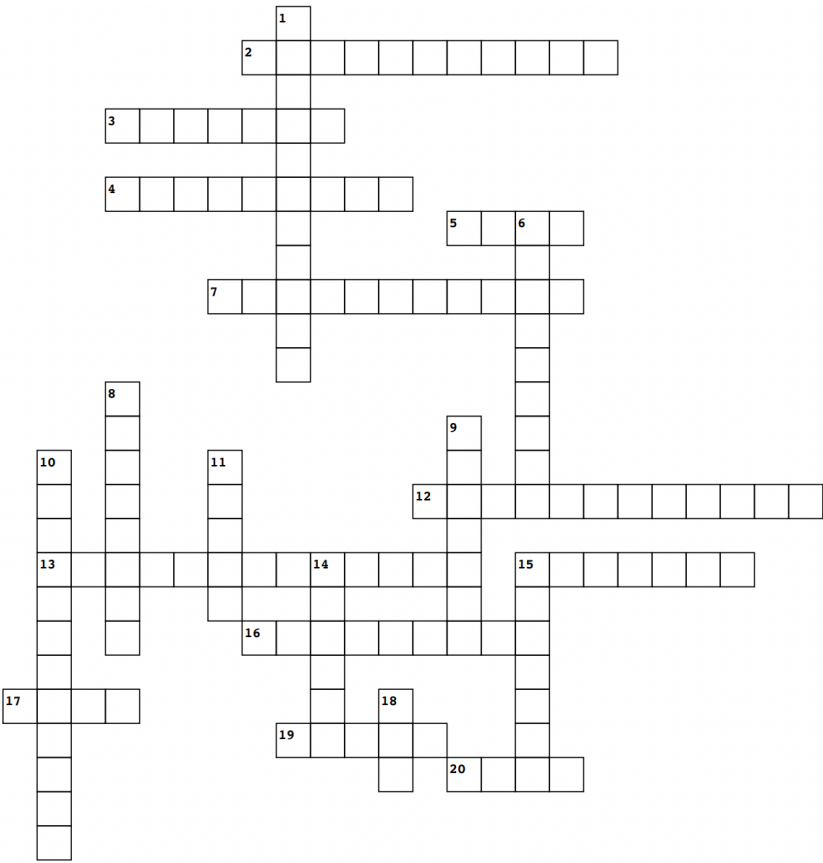
NINER TIMES CROSSWORD

Down

- 1. “Ant-Man and the Wasp: ____” (2023 film)
- 6. Mountainous N.C. city in which F. Scott Fitzgerald’s wife Zelda died
- 8. Hayley of alt-rock band Paramore
- 9. 2022 film starring Anya Taylor Joy
- 10. Only Niner Times editor with a Wikipedia page about him
- 11. Charlotte-based Latin Street Grill chain
- 14. UNC Charlotte bus route that services EPIC North and South
- 15. ____ 500 (NASCAR race)
- 18. Dave’s ____ Chicken

Across

- 2. Food retailer located in the Science Building
- 3. Musician that performed at the 2023 Super Bowl
- 4. Seattle-based coffee chain coming to the lower level of Atkins Library
- 5. Sandler of “Click” and “Happy Gilmore” that came to Charlotte on his tour
- 7. Age of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter
- 12. Gallery coming to Rowe Arts from Feb. 24 to March 24
- 13. Green seasonal drink at McDonald’s
- 15. North Carolina’s state flower
- 16. North Carolina city in which Cheerwine was created
- 17. Number of presidents that have been assassinated
- 19. Street that runs parallel to the Lynx Light Rail in University City
- 20. “Boy’s a ____ Pt. 2” (Ice Spice & PinkPantheress hit)



Honoring the months dedicated to marginalized groups is important

by Ruhshona Soledjonova
Staff Writer

In honor of Black History Month, it is crucial to understand why dedicated months to celebrate certain groups and cultures exist. Acknowledging months or holidays by empowering identities and communities honors their journey.

Following February, there are several other months dedicated to identity groups. For example, LGBTQ+ Pride Month is in June, and Disability Pride Month is in July. Highlighting these historically marginalized groups and their contributions toward social justice gives those who identify a sense of pride.

Eclipse Whetstone, a UNC Charlotte second-year student and treasurer of the Black Student Union, said there is always room for improvement when empowering marginalized communities.

“Black History Month, Pride Month or Women’s History Month are less about the length for which they’re dedicated but more about the social support that’s there,” Whetstone said.

Unfortunately, the standard United States education system fails to establish a curriculum on the history and culture of marginalized groups. As a result, censorship in the early years of schooling develops a biased interpretation of marginalized groups’ discrimination and exclusion.

Education should inspire connections between people, uplift unique voices and grasp cultural differences. Unfortunately, the progression of historically accurate education of marginalized groups is not at the same

speed as diversity in classrooms.

Nevertheless, dedicating months to different identities raises awareness of social justice among discriminated communities for youth and adults.

“This is a dedicated time where people can reflect on their history, and we can all openly talk about our experiences with misogyny, racism and transphobia,” Whetstone said.

The problem relies not only on the lack of education but the fact that discrimination is still present today. The erasure of literature designed to educate the public on racial and cultural history should be against everything we stand for.

“We need to talk about resource depletion, exploitation of colonialism and invasion of African territories,” said Whetstone.

Diminishing the voices of those who worked hard to battle discrimination, harassment and cruelty should not be tolerated. Taking away evidence of marginalized groups can cost the progression of learning from historical contexts and ultimately make people unable to understand each other.

Furthermore, by devoting specific times during the year when an underrepresented community can be highlighted

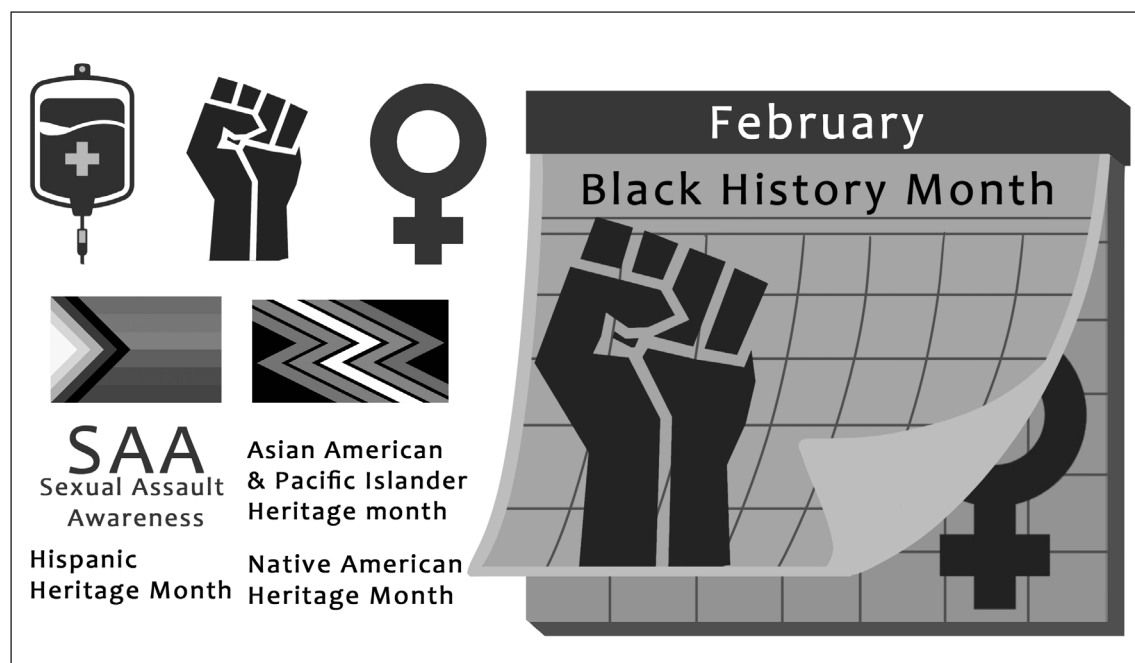
has a greater significance in understanding the harms of cultural appropriation. Any form of demeaning, mockery and taking advantage of others’ culture falls under this distress category.

The exploitation of others’ cultures should not be condemned. Instead, recognizing our differences and commemorating them through months of the year challenges societal faults for the greater good.

As Niner Nation, students must uphold respect and appreciation for people of different

cultures, ethnicities and marginalized groups. Becoming knowledgeable about the history and culture of marginalized groups, the consequences of discrimination today and empowering these identities should be the norm.

More exposure to the history and recognition of discrimination today will only educate us to respect one another. Society must continue this progression in avoiding ignorance.



Graphic by Kim Zan

N.C. 49 roadway expansion would improve driver and pedestrian safety

by Jessica Danesi
Opinion Editor

Projects that widen roadways often negatively affect local communities, including increased pollution and risk for pedestrians. However, expansions in University City could improve traffic and safety.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation intends to extend 1.2 miles of

University City Blvd. between John Kirk Dr. and I-485 from four to six lanes.

Additional changes include turn lanes, a raised median and the disallowing of left turns on N.C. 49. Left turns would be accommodated by making right turns onto a “quadrant roadway” and then making another right turn onto N.C. 49.

A proposal such as this would significantly improve the University City community. The most notable change would be the road’s additional lanes, bringing consistent traffic circulation. Consequently, this would reduce stress for drivers trying to get to and from campus.

According to the NCDOT website, the

primary purposes of this proposal are to reduce traffic buildup and improve pedestrian safety. To protect walking, biking and skating commuters, a 12-foot path will be built on both sides of N.C. 49.

The median’s design, known as a Reduced Conflict Intersection (RCI), would help reduce

Continued on p. 16

Continued from p. 16

the number of potential locations where vehicles could collide. With this new design, drivers can easily turn right to enter the traffic flow or make a U-turn to cross the highway.

University City is a busy area with congested roads, resulting in many car accidents. The proposed modifications would reduce potential vehicle accidents and keep pedestrians safe. In addition, those commuting on foot would have more space on each side of the new “superstreet.” With the area’s excessive traffic, this proposition would be very beneficial.

However, some UNC Charlotte students are concerned about these changes. They worry about longer pedestrian crossing distances and increased vehicle emissions. Pedestrian crossing distances would increase due to more

car lanes, but with effective traffic lights, this should not be an issue.

That said, increased pollution may result from roadway expansions. More lanes mean more cars and traffic, increasing carbon dioxide emissions and consequent air pollution. To combat this pollution, Charlotte residents can use the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) and the light rail.

To learn more about Charlotte students’ attempts to prevent this expansion, there is a change.org petition and #LivesNotLanesUCB.

Despite concerns, the widening of N.C. 49 would yield more benefits than negative results. University City is a high-traffic area, so more road lanes would improve traffic flow. Moreover, pedestrians would remain protected in designated paths.



Traffic on University City Blvd. | Photo by Jade Suszek

AI is positively changing the future of education and work

by Annie Turk
Staff Writer

Technological innovation has been on an upward incline for the past century. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming a part of our daily lives. For better or worse, AI is positively changing how we approach education and work for the foreseeable future.

AI is the process of machines or a non-living form developing, organizing and synthesizing information. For example, advanced AI can understand human speech, automate decision-making and even write academic papers.

AI has the potential to increase decision-

making efficiency and accuracy in a wide range of fields, from medicine to education. However, with the many ways AI can help in our educational and work-related careers, we also have to understand the downsides.

Unfortunately, AI can have biases based on the information it is sourcing from, especially if it is incomplete. Different AI machines have different inputs that could alter the possible results. This can result in unfair outcomes for certain individuals or groups. Therefore, it is important to develop AI systems that are transparent, explainable and free from bias.

AI researchers, developers and policymakers are responsible for considering AI’s ethical implications and developing guidelines and regulations to ensure that AI is used ethically.

This includes creating strong security measures, enhancing privacy rules, eliminating biases and thoroughly testing the AI before it is publicly available. The technology must be developed and used responsibly to ensure that it benefits society.

Another concern many have about AI is how it has the potential to replace human roles in the workforce. AI is already part of our everyday lives,

such as self-driving cars on the roads, using telehealth instead of going to the doctor and even self-checkouts at grocery stores.

However, most jobs being replaced with AI are then being supplemented by creating new job opportunities in other areas, especially in the tech industry, such as data analysis, programming and machine learning.

A new AI platform created by OpenAI called ChatGPT has taken the internet over by storm. ChatGPT can respond to prompts, write poetry, teach languages and much more.

Many students find ChatGPT helpful while writing essays because it provides feedback and suggestions for improvement. It will even teach them something they do not understand. In this way, it has the potential to enhance the personalized learning experience and make it more efficient. This can be especially useful in online and distance learning, where access to teachers and resources may be limited.

It is worth noting that just as AI has to be responsible producers, users must be responsible consumers concerning their education. Writing papers and solving problems are part of its capabilities, but AI should not be used to replace working through problems on our own with critical thinking skills. AI is simply a tool, not a replacement for learning and education.

AI has the potential to revolutionize how users interact with technology, learn and work. However, being aware of the pros and cons of AI and developing ways to use it responsibly is essential to its success.



Illustration by Kim Zan