



CONFERENCE CHAMPS

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WHAT DOES LEADERSHIP LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

"The idea of leadership had suddenly changed from a mere requirement to gain college acceptance to real world change. My advice to other students at UNC Charlotte? Believe in yourself and your abilities. Never be intimidated by the next person, because you are capable of so much more than you may think and the only person who is stopping you from achieving your dreams and being a good leader is yourself!"

FOLLOW-UP: 49ER CONNECT SUCCESS GUIDES

Niner Times follows up on previous article about 49er success guides program

by Jessica Ceballos
Asst. News Editor

Photo of tutoring space in UCAE office
by Jade Suszek

The 49er success guides program is a new program the UCAE developed in fall 2020 to help provide student resources. The Niner Times covered the program and how it assisted students during the pandemic in March 2021. As a year has lapsed, the Niner Times followed up with members of the program.

According to the Assistant Director of Learning Strategies and Instruction, Mackenzie Barry, the program has been successful over the past year.

Ellie Nanney, a fourth-year student and a new success guide, said the program primarily provides resources and peer support. She emphasized the importance of being the first point of contact for the students who need assistance; the success guides help students with time management and study skills.

A returning success guide and fourth-year student, Tamia Lipscomb, tells the Niner Times about how the success guides help students.

“It’s a program for helping students navigate being a college student and handling the normal ways of college [such as] trying to navigate the campus, the new environment and the school,” said Lipscomb. “Being a student isn’t just education—there’s more to it; we have mental health. We’re trying to figure out where to eat on campus, be connected to other students [and] make friends. There’s a lot more to be a student than with just academics.”

In the past year, Nanney reflected on how the program works for students that want to use it. She said that the program

needs more student involvement and participation. “I think that it works well for students who want to utilize it,” said Nanney. “I think a lot of it depends on how much students put into it or don’t put into it because we are always a resource.”

The program is working towards becoming certified in the CRLA (College Reading Learning Association). This certification will allow the program to be trained to certain standards of CRLA, which would enhance student academic success. Barry says that she thinks this will elevate and help the program bring in more students.

According to the CRLA website, “The College Reading and Learning Association is the professional development resource of choice for college professionals dedicated to enhancing student academic success.”

Barry would like to see the implementation of adult student learners as a peer mentor to cater to the number of adult learners that reach out to the success guides program in need of resources and connections. These success guides would be over the age of 24 to connect with adult learners.

“We’re hoping we’re going to get an adult learner who wants to be a success guide because a lot of times this semester, we’ve had students who were over the typical college age,” said Barry.

“I think it would be really beneficial if we had an undergraduate student who was an adult learner—complicated to get because most of them have other full-time jobs and going to school. But we’re

hopeful that we’ll be able to get an adult learner who can help. The students feel more connected to both their peers [that] know exactly what students similar to their backgrounds are going through.”

The program is catered to all students, not just incoming first-year students and transfer students. “49er Connect helps students who are not freshmen or transfer students in a similar way to their counterparts,” said Barry. “[The] process does not differ for students who are not freshmen or transfer students because the student is the one that sets the agenda of what they want to work on with their guide, with their semester plans, not by the type of student they identify with.”

As a change since the beginning of the program, there are no more mandatory students participating in the program. These students were previously recommended by their deans and college to join the program and required to attend success guide sessions.

In reflection of 2021-2022 data, Barry says that they have reached out to a total of over 5000 students via personalized emails; 60-65% are responsive versus the fall 2021 semester, where 3500 emails were sent out with a 60% response rate.

“The excitement of the Success Guides paired with the responses we have gotten, both negative and positive, will shape the program moving forward. Receiving feedback from students and Success Guides is a crucial part of our program that will truly help us grow to our potential as a means of helping students reach their success and feel supported on Charlotte’s campus,” said Barry.



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PASSIO GO! REPLACES NEXT RIDE BUS TRACKING APP

3G issues cause PaTS to switch bus GPS and bus tracking app provider for UNC Charlotte

by Kathryn Caudill
Staff Writer

Photo on-campus bus
by Curtis Cheung

The Next Ride app, commonly known as Niner Transit, is replaced by Passio Go! as the newest form of bus tracking on campus as of Feb. 21, 2022.

According to Douglas Lape, director of Parking and Transportation Services (PaTS), the sudden app transfer was due to last-minute technological changes. The Next Ride App will no longer function and should not be utilized for tracking buses on the UNC Charlotte campus.

“With the sun setting on 3G technology, the GPS devices on the buses were no longer compatible with network providers,” said Lape.

AT&T, the network provider, had not effectively communicated with the vendor of the GPS products leading to a last-minute notice to UNC Charlotte’s PaTS that the product would soon be unavailable.

PaTS decided to utilize Passio Go! as a trial run since the app already functioned within the bus system for internal use. They were able to move the function over to GPS tracking quickly; the transition took only three days to complete.

“We were able to keep things going by only switching the app,” stated Michael Christenbury, assistant director for

transportation.

The app switch has had initially good user feedback, according to Christenbury. He is communicating with Dick Beekman, student body president, regarding student responses.

“The only complaints we have received are about not being able to see buses on the old app,” stated Christenbury.

According to user feedback from PaTS, Passio Go! is also more reliable in location and arrival time.

“The Next Ride app would often freeze, but the technology with Passio Go! is better, more specific and smoother,” said Christenbury.

According to students who have reached out to PaTS, Passio Go! has better maps and visibility.

However, there are some enhancement requests that PaTS has reported to Passio Go!. These include an update for the IOS platform as Android devices received an update the week of March 6. The update is for bugs in the system and is not substantial.

According to Lape, bus drivers are neither positively nor negatively affected by the app switch as it is only a backend public-facing change.

The trial run of Passio Go! will continue to the end of the spring 2022 semester. PaTS will then reassess the contract and decide to remain with the app or switch to a new platform based on student feedback.

At this time, PaTS sees no need for immediate changes or improvements but is waiting for more feedback in the coming months.

The app is available for download in the Google Play Store and the Apple App Store. To access UNC Charlotte’s bus routes when setting up the app, select UNC Charlotte or Niner Transit as the agency.

Once the agency is selected, access to bus routes, stops and locations will be available. Clicking on map icons will give more information, including current bus capacity, estimated arrival time and stops.

The bus icon in the top right will give access to specific routes and bus locations.

The ability to “favorite” frequent bus stop locations is also available for quick access.

Paratransit vehicles are also available for viewing in the new app, and desktop viewing is available through the Passio Go! website.

The app switch will not affect any other bus procedures.

Passio Go! is utilized by many other universities and public transportation systems, including apartment complexes and shuttle systems.

Feedback can be provided to the PaTS office Communication Center or through the online feedback system on the PaTS website.



‘CAMPS ON CAMPUS’ COMES TO UNC CHARLOTTE SUMMER 2022

Academic camps are available for elementary through high school students from June 13 - Aug. 12

by Bradley Stinchcombe
Contributor

Photo of main entrance sign
by Andrea Badillo-Pérez

opportunities for UNC Charlotte students. Positions are available for students interested in working as camp counselors. Counselor positions are open for all camps and age groups. Students can select topics that interest them and age groups they feel comfortable working with.

“They don’t actually have to know the topic [of the camp], as they’ll work hand in hand with an instructor who’s a subject expert on whatever that camp topic is,” said Wilson.

“A counselor’s job is more to make sure we have a safe operation to get our campers to and from pick up, drop off, lunches, classrooms, chaperoning our field trips, things like that. We are expecting our biggest camp offering to date. As of right now, we have over 1,200 campers enrolled, and we’re continuing to enroll campers up until camp starts—so we are in desperate need of some college students who want to work with our campers.”

Professionals instruct and curate the camp topics, including some UNC Charlotte faculty and local teachers. The topics cover a wide variety, ranging from “Harry Potter Adventure” for first through fourth graders to “Famous Trials of the Century” for ninth through twelfth grades. All are academic-based and designed to provide an educational experience.

“We offer an engineering camp, so I do try to look at their

majors and their intended career afterward and just try to pair those together. I think it really speaks for our camps if you have both an instructor and a camp counselor who are passionate about the subject; it’ll really bring that to life.”

Registration costs are \$275 per week for all full-day camps on-campus or \$395 per week for Black Rocket partner coding camps, and registration is open online now.

The program also offers ways to alleviate the cost of camps for parents. “This year, we’ve got a partnership with the college with a grant that we received,” said Wilson. “We’re offering five weeks of Digital Security Solutions for rising fourth through sixth graders, and with their grant money, we were able to offset the cost of those camps down to \$50 a week.”

“We offer a deposit option for parents not to [pay all] at once; you can find your child’s camp, pay the hundred dollar deposit, and then make payments until it’s time to start,” said Wilson. “We work with partners who offer scholarships, and some of our campers can use those different offers. That’s something we’re looking at expanding as camps grow because that is something I am passionate about, being able to make camps affordable and attainable.”

For any inquiries relating to the summer camps program, email summercamps@uncc.edu or call (704)-687-8900.

UNC Charlotte’s campus will host a variety of academic summer camps during the 2022 summer season for rising first through twelfth graders. The camps will be a week each, running June 13 through Aug. 12.

“We run camps for rising first through twelfth graders,” said Kristy Wilson, program manager of youth programming. “We break that up with what we call our ‘Cool School’ camps [for] first through fourth, our ‘49er Minors’ for fifth through eighth, and then our ‘Niner Academy’ is rising nine through twelve, which focuses on a pinpointed industry to try to get them ready for what their next step is, be that college or trade school or the workforce.”

“That’s what really drew me to this; it wasn’t just going out and being around the campfire,” said Wilson. “It was very much an academic focus, which is what we do here at the University.”

The summer camps program offers a variety of job

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

After years on near misses, Charlotte is going dancing

by Bradley Cole
Sports Editor

When the confetti settled and immediate celebrations ended, Charlotte basketball coach Cara Consuegra sat on the podium trying to win the program's first-ever Conference USA Tournament Championship as the 49ers beat Louisiana Tech 68-63.

After over a decade at the helm, Consuegra finally delivered an NCAA tournament berth.

"I'm not sure I can put everything that we are feeling into words," said Consuegra. "This team earned this. This is a lot of years of hard work by a lot of people."

Throughout the last few years, Charlotte's women's basketball team has put together notable seasons. In 2020, they were on a run heading into the conference tournament and won their first matchup. COVID-19 halted the run, and they finished 21-9. Last season, Charlotte showed promise with a bundle of close losses and win streaks along with pandemic related. They went on to lose in double overtime in the quarterfinals of the conference tournament.

The 2021-22 season has been a different story for Charlotte. They took their lumps early in the season with a four-game losing streak in November

but only would lose five more games.

With only two losses in the critical months of February and March, Charlotte won the C-USA regular-season championship and beat Rice (59-53) and North Texas (66-63) before edging out LA Tech for the conference crown.

A veteran group

A large part of the 49ers' success has come from their veteran group of players, starting first with Octavia Jett-Wilson, who scored a game-high 31 points in the championship win and won MVP of the tournament.

Jett-Wilson could have left the program last year but instead chose to use another year of eligibility to chase a championship. The feeling of accomplishing one of her main goals was hard to put in words for Jett-Wilson.

"This shows me I can do anything I put my mind to," said Jett-Wilson. "To be able to set those goals at the beginning of the year and accomplish them means a lot. I'm at a loss for words."

Jett-Wilson averaged 19.1 points per game and won conference player of the year. A mix of old and new faces has

contributed to the 49ers' success. Molina Williams and Jada McMillian are two players that have been around the program from their first days as an athlete.

Williams scored 15 points and grabbed 17 rebounds throughout the tournament. McMillian, a senior, quietly had two productive games in the tournament run with 13 points against North Texas and 18 against LA Tech.

When it comes to new faces, Mikayla Boykin scored 43 points in the championship run, which placed her on the tournament team. The transfer from Duke made an impact throughout the season and brought a veteran presence. Another transfer, Keke McKinney from Kentucky, made an impact defensively as she did throughout the year. McKinney had seven blocks, which had been her specialty throughout the season.

A championship run has been years in the making, but all the hard work has paid off. Charlotte never lost their cool, no matter how things were going on Saturday night. They had to score 49 points to secure the victory after a sluggish first half.

For Consuegra, keeping things calm was goal number one.

"For as veteran and composed as we were all year, this is a different stage," said Consuegra. "You could see it in our players. Every time out, I just said, 'calm down.' In the second half, we saw a basketball team that when we're clicking on all cylinders, we are really, really good. I'm so happy for our players. Today, we're champions."

Consuegra came to the 49ers in 2011 looking for exactly what her team captured against Louisiana Tech.

"We haven't won a conference championship in a long time; we haven't been to the NCAA tournament in a long time," said Consuegra. "It's really hard to do. But we know how hard it is... But one thing we say is success is on the other side of hard, and we've proven that."

Charlotte learned on Sunday night that they will be the #14 seed in the Bridgeport region and play #3 seed Indiana on Saturday, March 19.

"We're excited to be in the tournament. It wasn't necessarily about where our seed was or where we were going, it's about the opportunity to represent Charlotte and Conference USA," said Consuegra.

SCOREBOARD

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Mar. 9 C-USA Tournament:
Rice 73, Charlotte 61

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Mar. 10 C-USA Quarterfinals:
Rice 53, Charlotte 59

Mar. 11 C-USA Semifinals:
North Texas 63, Charlotte 66

Mar. 12 C-USA Conference
Championship:
Charlotte 68, LA Tech 63

BASEBALL

Mar. 8: Longwood 4, Charlotte 8

Mar. 11: App State 3, Charlotte 9

Mar. 12: App State 7, Charlotte 12

Mar. 13: App State 9,
Charlotte 7 (12)

SOFTBALL

Mar. 9:
No. 13 Duke 9, No. 25 Charlotte 1

Mar. 11: WKU 4, No. 25 Charlotte 2

Mar. 12: WKU 2, No. 25 Charlotte 4

Mar. 13: WKU 8, No. 25 Charlotte 7

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Mar. 11:
Charlotte 5, North Texas 2

Mar. 12:
Rice 4, Charlotte 0

MEN'S TENNIS

Mar. 11:
Rice 2, Charlotte 5

Mar. 11:
UTSA 2, Charlotte 4

STRIKING GOLD

Charlotte finds a star in David McCabe

by Sam Perry
Staff Writer



Charlotte's David McCabe rounds the bases
Photo by Chris Crews

Sophomore infielder David McCabe has joined the ranks of football star Chris Reynolds and star soccer player Michaela Arteta, thriving at Charlotte after not having many options at the next level.

"Charlotte was my only Division I offer, so it wasn't really much of a choice to me. But it was sort of a blessing that I was able to come here," said McCabe, "Everything just fell into place."

Finding Charlotte

Although choosing to become a 49er was for the same reasons as other players, McCabe has had a unique journey in getting to Charlotte.

"I just love the campus, the atmosphere, the city, everything about it. I just thought it was going to be a great place to develop as a baseball player and a person," said McCabe.

The relationship between McCabe and the 49ers goes back to 2013 when Charlotte first played an exhibition game against the Ontario Blue Jays. The Blue Jays are a high school level showcase baseball team based in Ontario, Canada. Every year they make the trek to the United States, playing at different colleges to give their players opportunities to showcase their talent across the nation.

In the fall of 2018, the 49ers hosted a matchup with the Ontario Blue Jays. In this matchup, McCabe shined in front of the 49ers' head baseball coach, Loren Hibbs. After this game, Charlotte offered McCabe a spot on the team, giving him his first and only Division I offer.

McCabe leaped at the opportunity and arrived at the team in the fall of 2019. He moved in one week after Charlotte had brought in their new head baseball coach with now head coach Robert Woodard.

Adjusting to new staff and philosophy

With McCabe's arrival at Charlotte, the team went through a significant philosophical change. The team moved from a very traditional coach with Hibbs into a more analytical style coach in Woodard.

"I was recruited by him [Hibbs] and Bo Rob, but Coach Woodard was announced to get this job, I think a week before I moved into campus, so it was a little bit of a nerve-racking time, but he's been great, and I've loved playing for him ever since," said McCabe.

The 2022 baseball season saw another coaching transition with long-time hitting coach Bo Robinson leaving the team to coach at NC State. Robinson was firm in his belief of old-school style hitting, with his departure the approach at the plate has seemed to change to be more disciplined when swinging the bat.

McCabe has found a way to thrive through all the changes and prove that he is the type of player every coach wants.

"I think there are still traditional elements in what we do and the training we do, but there are a lot more different things we do. I think it pushes us to challenge ourselves to be better; I think it helps us," said McCabe.

Accolades

In the young 2022 season, McCabe has made an impact. Having started and played in 12 games so far this year, he is posting a .429 batting average in 42 at-bats. He has also knocked in 11 RBIs, hit three home runs and walked 17 times.

Earlier in the year, McCabe was listed as the No.7 ranked third baseman in the nation by D1 Baseball. As a result, he has significant expectations on his shoulders for the rest of the season.

In 2021 McCabe was named to the Conference USA(C-USA) All-Academic team and was on his way to the All-

Conference team but was held back due to injury, holding him to just starting in only 34 games last season. In 2020 McCabe was named as a Collegiate Baseball Freshman All-American.

What makes Big Maple special

The 49ers star, nicknamed Big Maple, is defined as the type of player who does all the little things that are taken for granted perfectly. He is every coach's dream, not just as a player but as a person.

"David is as complete of a player and person that I have ever coached. In my 12 years of experience coaching Division I baseball, I've been very fortunate to coach many players with that talent or makeup piece. But he is that rare combination of elite talent and elite makeup," said Woodard. "David, the person, is even more special than David, the player, and as a coach, that is everything you could ask for."

Whether he is showing up early to practice or just being a humble star more focused on seeing the team succeed, McCabe is ready to do whatever it takes to help the team succeed. He is vocal with his teammates when necessary and can provide the critical hit when needed. Even his presence and discipline show his determination to improve.

McCabe's new home

The Canadian native has found Charlotte to be an exceptional place for him, finding it to be a new home and being able to thrive and be a part of a very special 49ers baseball program.

"It's been great. Charlotte almost feels like my first home now. I have not been able to go home the last couple of years due to COVID and things like that. This team is like my second family, and I'm really grateful for every second I get to spend here," said McCabe.

CONFERENCE CHAMPS

A comeback leads to the 49ers punching their ticket to March Madness

by Joey Ellsworth
Staff Writer

With a 66-63 win over North Texas in the C-USA semifinal game on Friday, the Niners moved on to the C-USA Championship for the first time in school history as they faced Louisiana Tech.

This is Charlotte's second time facing LA Tech this season, beating them 59-56 on Feb. 10. In a comeback effort, Charlotte completed the season sweep with a 68-63 win over the Bulldogs. The win marks four straight wins.

Charlotte was an unstoppable force during the regular season, but they looked sluggish in the first half of the championship, scoring just three in the first quarter.

The Niners dropped 49 points in the second half en route to their second-biggest comeback of the season. This was backed by a 31-point performance by C-USA's player of the year, Octavia Jett-Wilson, who was named tournament MVP after the game.

"That's probably not the way we drew it up, the way it started. A lot of that is a credit to LA Tech," said C-USA coach of the year, Head Coach Cara Consuegra. "They came out really hungry, ready, they frustrated us a lot on the offensive end to start, but a lot of that was just our nerves. As veteran as our team is and as composed as we've been all year, this was a different stage."

No matter the score, Consuegra strived to keep her team calm.

"You can just see it in our players, and every timeout I said, calm down. We don't have to prove anything. We deserve to be here; we've earned it, and now let's just go play. When we are clicking on all cylinders, we are really, really good," said Consuegra. "I'm happy for our players. There's not been a single game this year that we have not gone through significant adversary, not many."

First quarter

The first quarter was as bad as it gets for the Niners. Of their 13 shots, the Niners drained just one of them for a 7.69% field goal percentage. They were outscored 12-3 in the quarter, with their only field goal being a layup from Dazai Lawrence.

There was just one other time this season when Charlotte scored three or fewer points; in the second game of the season, the Tar Heels outscored the Niners 27-3 in the first quarter to head off their 89-33 victory.

Second quarter

In the second quarter, Charlotte looked improved, raising their shooting percentage to 33.33%. LA Tech increased their lead to 15 with 03:11 remaining in the half. In the next three minutes, Charlotte outscored LA Tech 8-2. Both teams scored 16 in the second quarter. By halftime, LA Tech led by nine.

Third quarter

The Charlotte team that had dominated all season showed after the halftime break.

Something clicked for the Niners during halftime. It took just seven minutes for Charlotte to tie the game up, thanks to a 15-7 run. Nine of these points were scored by Jett-Wilson, which made up 35% of her second-half points.

"I think it's easy to look at the offensive side of the court and how poor we were playing, but truthfully we were not executing our game plan at all. That's honestly what we focused on," said Consuegra. "I knew at some point the offense was gonna come, and I don't worry about that with this team. That was our focus at halftime; let's play the game plan, let's make it tougher for them."

Both teams exchanged points in the next few minutes and found themselves tied at 36, with 59 seconds remaining in the third. The score remained the same for the rest of the quarter. After a huge quarter for Charlotte, both teams went into the fourth with 36.

Fourth quarter

The fourth quarter was a shootout for

both squads. Charlotte held the momentum from the start of the quarter, slowly gaining a lead despite LA Tech scoring plenty. After four minutes, Charlotte had their biggest lead of the game with seven.

Both teams exchanged bowls for the remainder of the game, and despite LA Tech's 25 point quarter, Charlotte was able to keep their lead with 30 points to get the 68-63 comeback win.

In the fourth, The Niners shot an insane 77.78% from the field and drained 15 free throws. The last time Charlotte scored 30 in a quarter was in their 83-73 win over Florida Atlantic in March of last year. Charlotte hasn't seen a 31+ point quarter since January of 2017.

Key players

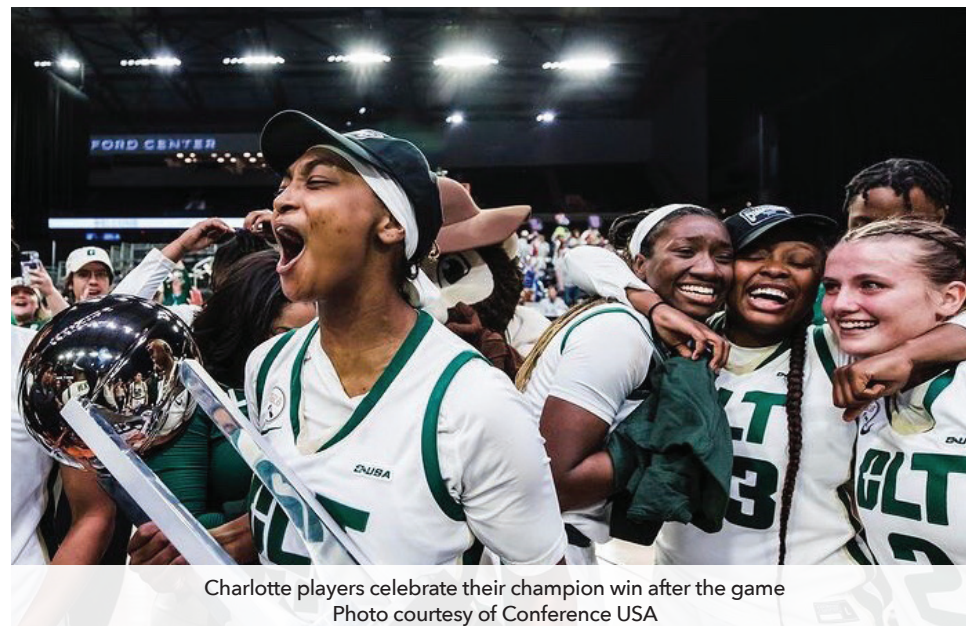
Octavia Jett-Wilson, the regular-season C-USA player of the year, dropped 31 points in the game, 26 of which were in the second half. She has been a huge part of Charlotte's success in the tournament for the Niners and was named tournament MVP. She made 8 of her 11 shots in the game and added a team-high three steals.

Jada McMillian also had a significant scoring impact, draining six shots and six free throws, totaling 18 points. This was her second-highest point total of the season, her highest in January.

Mikayla Boykin was named part of the all-tournament team following the game, and her performance in the Championship showed it was well-deserved. She had just eight points but had three steals, a block, five rebounds, and four assists. Her four assists made up 57% of the team's assists.

Next up

Charlotte will now head to the NCAA Championship. The annual selection show takes place on March 13 at 8 p.m. on ESPN, where the 49ers will find out where they are headed next.



Charlotte players celebrate their champion win after the game
Photo courtesy of Conference USA

OUR ENDORSEMENT FOR STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

by The Niner Times Editorial Board

The Niner Times Editorial Board endorses the Larson-Olusesi campaign for student body president and vice president. Voting runs from March 15-16, and the results will be announced on March 17.

The Niner Times has chosen to endorse a student body ticket during the 2022 SGA election because of the importance of informed voting, including student government elections. The Niner Times Editorial Board interviewed the candidates, evaluated their platforms, and voted on a final endorsement. Choosing a campaign to endorse was a difficult decision, but below, we explain some of the reasons for our decision.

The driving force behind our endorsement is primarily this campaign's commitment to "tangible, action-based plans." On their website, in our interview with them, and during the student body president debate on March 1, Larson was specific and thorough in regards to her goals and passions as a candidate. Although the two campaigns have similar goals, the Niner Times feels that the Larson-Olusesi campaign had more specific plans to execute those goals successfully.

In political campaigns, both student and professional, candidates often make promises and statements they cannot always follow through on. The Larson-Olusesi campaign did make promises and explain their plans; however, we did not see any empty promises.

The Williams-Warren campaign did make some promises that we found questionable, such as their statement in a Niner Times interview that they've reached out to "all student organizations, not just the top 10 you hear about." While we understand their intentions, we know from our experiences in many student organizations that they did not speak to all organizations. Therefore, claiming to give small organizations a voice in this capacity made us question some of their plans and promises.

The three guiding pillars of the Larson-Olusesi campaign are progress, unity and trust. In an interview with the Niner Times, Larson discussed these pillars.

"For progress, we want tangible, action-based plans. We know you can't just talk and not do anything," said Larson. "If we have action plans in place, whether that be for academics, Greek Life or student life, we can make progress," said Larson.

"For unity, April 30 was the beginning of that. Then we ran into the pandemic, which has not gone away and has been difficult on students' mental health. And the Black Lives Matter movement, which has impacted our community in Charlotte. We want to bring students together and focus on mental health aspects," said Larson.

Larson-Olusesi recognizing the many ways that UNC Charlotte needs to maintain unity was an important part of their campaign that the Niner Times found helpful in our decision-making. As a University that has been through so much, unity continues to be important to student leaders.

"For trust, we want to increase our transparency and communication with the University. Something we've seen in the past couple of years with the University making decisions is they're not always transparent with us and [not] taking our input until it's too late and decisions have already been made. We want to work with administrators and make sure that they're getting active input from the student body to represent each student in making important decisions," said Larson.

The "trust" pillar that Larson thoroughly discussed was another major factor in our endorsement. Larson-Olusesi's commitment to transparency and trust reminds us of one of the successes of their predecessor. The 2021-2022 Student Body President, Dick Beekman, has done an exceptional job maintaining transparency and trust between the University and the student body. In the Niner Times' experience, Dick Beekman informs the University of the student body's input and informs the student body of the University's choices and his role in those decisions. This is one way we believe that the Larson-Olusesi campaign will build positively off of their predecessors' leadership.

The Niner Times Editorial Board believes

that Tatiyana Larson and Tife Olusesi would make an excellent student body president and vice president. As such, we encourage you to vote Larson-Olusesi.

To learn more about the Larson-Olusesi campaign, visit their website or the Niner Times' interview with the candidates.

Voting will take place March 15-16 and results will be announced on March 17.

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DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE

THE BEST FOREIGN FILMS ON HBO MAX

by Jack Hale
Contributor

Photo of all ten featured foreign films
courtesy of Dazed, Letterboxd, "Mubi", Entropy, Criterion, FIAF, Slant Magazine, Alternate Ending, BBC, and Amazon

Ever since "Parasite" swept the 2020 Academy Awards, the popularity of foreign films seems to be rising, especially among everyday moviegoers. That trend seems to be continuing as the Japanese film "Drive My Car" was nominated for Best Picture, Best Director and many other awards this year. However, it can be a fairly daunting task to get into them, as there are quite literally hundreds to thousands of critically acclaimed foreign films out there to watch. Luckily, HBO Max has a fantastic selection of foreign films of various genres. To help explore which ones are right for you, I thought it would be fun to give my personal favorites on the streaming service. It was difficult to pick only 10 films and leave out many that I absolutely adore. To make up for that, here are five films that just barely missed the cut: "Stalker" (1979), "Yojimbo" (1961), "Persona" (1966), "Taste of Cherry" (1997) and "Spirited Away" (2001).

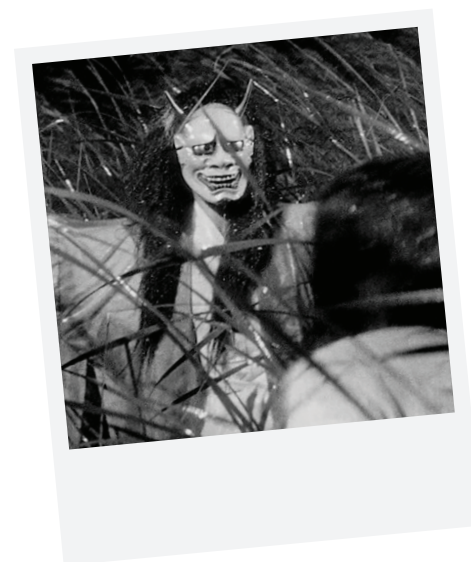


10. "Princess Mononoke" (1997)
Taking a different and much more mature approach than other films by director Hayao Miyazaki, "Princess Mononoke" is a methodical and action-packed film set in his usual fantastical imagination. Looking for a cure to a Tatarigami curse, Ashitaka must go on a journey where he finds himself in the middle of a war between a local mining colony and the forest gods. Exploring this world that Miyazaki built is a great pleasure, as it's one of his most unique films, and it's mature aspects do not leave the animation to be any less gorgeous. There is also a great message about respecting nature and how we treat our environment, something that is even more important 25 years later.



9. "Tokyo Story" (1953)
This classic heartbreaking film sees an old couple visiting their children, where

they receive very little attention. It is a situation that hopefully none of us can even imagine, as grandparents visiting is almost always a happy time. This makes the film that much harder to watch, as the actors who portray the grandparents play their roles to perfection. While technically the antagonists, the other family members are not necessarily bad people but are a great warning to all of us to be mindful of each other and take time out of our days to spend with those who care for us.

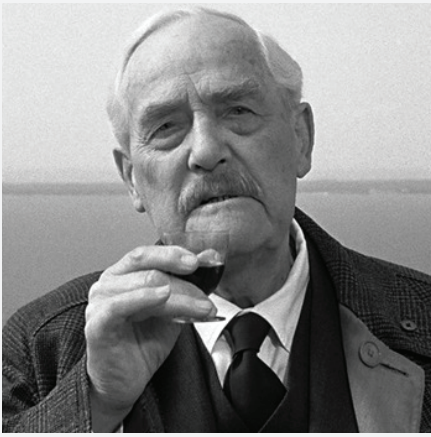


8. "Onibaba" (1964)
After her husband's death, a young woman has an affair with her neighbor, much to the dismay of her mother-in-law, who finds a samurai wearing a strange mask. "Onibaba" presents itself as a horror/thriller. While those aspects are certainly there in the third act, the casual conversation with the

characters and the stunningly gorgeous cinematography steal the show. It is a story that perfectly balances the themes of grief with the effects of war, highlighting that every action has consequences.



7. "Ponyo" (2008)
Perhaps Studio Ghibli's most underrated film is "Ponyo," which shows the studio at their most childlike in the best way possible. The film revolves around five-year-old Sôsuke, who befriends a fish who has learned how to transform into a little girl. The story is filled with a sweet innocence that makes it impossible not to put a smile on your face. Hayao Miyazaki is able to blend his usual fantastical elements in a more grounded and Earthly environment than he's used to with ease while also adding in a great message about conservation and how we treat our oceans.



6. "Wild Strawberries" (1957)

Swedish director Ingmar Bergman is known for his incredibly blunt and bleak films, but in "Wild Strawberries," Bergman aims for a much more loving and caring story. We follow an elderly man who is on his way to receive an honorary degree as he reflects on his past life. We see a moving and cathartic experience about both failure and success. While Bergman gives us perhaps his most humane film, it is certainly not without its sad moments, which only makes our main character that much more endearing.



5. "The Passion of Joan of Arc" (1928)

The true story is based on the trial of Joan of Arc, and this silent French film is absolutely beautiful from start to finish. Being tried for heresy, Joan desperately tries to convince the church court officials of her truth of speaking to God but is instead subjected to brutal treatment

and many scare tactics to change her story. The "dialogue" between her and the court officials is mesmerizing and thought-provoking and a final scene that is powerful enough to bring tears to your eyes. This is a must-see film based on one of history's greatest heroines.



4. "City of God" (2002)

Grounded in gritty realism, "City of God" shows the slums of Rio de Janeiro, focusing on two kids: one who eventually becomes a photographer and another who aspires to be a drug kingpin. The film was nominated for four Academy Awards and holds nothing back while showing extensive drug use and violence of all kinds, including involvement with children. It can be difficult to watch at times, but it is worth it to see that there is nothing holding anybody back from achieving their dreams, as long as they put in the work and effort.



3. "Autumn Sonata" (1978)

While "Wild Strawberries" saw Bergman at his most humane, "Autumn Sonata" shows him at his bleakest. When Eva invites her mother, Charlotte, to stay with her and her husband, past emotions quickly rise between the two. The dialogue throughout the film will leave you breathless as you learn little by little what happened in the past, giving an incredible third act. The actresses Liv Ullmann (Eva) and Ingrid Bergman (Charlotte), both Bergman regulars, give some of the best performances of their careers. Seeing the conflict between the mother and daughter is more than enough for anybody to rethink their own relationships and how our actions cause others to feel.



2. "Seven Samurai" (1954)

Arguably Akira Kurosawa's most well-known film, "Seven Samurai" is a behemoth of a film, clocking in at just under three and a half hours and spawning the surprisingly well-received American remake, "The Magnificent Seven" (1960). A poor village desperately seeks protection from bandits,

and seven noble samurai take the job to try to defend them. Even with the long runtime, it is incredible that Kurosawa gives each of the samurai and many of the villagers a great amount of depth that leaves us at the edge of our seat in the third act where anything can happen.

1. "Ikiru" (1952)

Although Kurosawa is most known for his samurai films (for a good reason), it is extraordinary when he tackles a much more dramatic film. The film follows Kanji Watanabe, a bureaucrat who just discovered he has a terminal illness and tries to find meaning in his life. While it is a story many of us have probably seen before, "Ikiru" handles it in a unique way that is both heartbreaking and heartwarming.

Takashi Shimura gives one of the best performances of all time with countless quiet and somber scenes. It is a fantastic message, or perhaps warning, to do whatever makes you happy. "Ikiru" is one of the rare films that will forever stand the test of time.



DEAR NINER TIMES,

How do I organize MY DORM ROOM?

by Sylvia Srinivass
Contributor

One of the big decisions first-year students make is deciding how to organize and decorate their dorm room. It can be overwhelming if you're planning your room from scratch, so it's important to keep two things in mind: space and taste. Your dorm room is your new home, so you will need to fit a lot of possessions into a smaller space than your bedroom at home. Trendy items are fun but not timeless. Make sure you pick decor that you won't get sick of after one month.

Since space in a dorm room is limited, it's essential to maximize the space with convenient storage options. Clear three-drawer organizers are a great option, and two of them fit side-by-side in the closet. These are great for storing smaller clothing items like socks, athletic shorts and leggings. Prioritize hangers for clothing that must be hung upright, such as jackets, dress pants, skirts and dresses. The shelf in the closet can house bulkier items such as sweatshirts and laundry supplies. The beds can be raised, allowing for storage underneath them, such as university-provided dressers and a trunk or drawer organizers. Some drawers can store clothes and shoes, and others can

store non-perishable food items, such as snacks and microwavable meals. If you have a mini-fridge and microwave, sandwich these between the foot of your bed and your desk. Pro-tip: leave no flat surface unused! If you have plants, picture frames, or something else you want to display, the top of your microwave or fridge is a great place. Instead of a nightstand, a three-shelf metal rolling cart is a great option. Another recommendation is to purchase a bedside lamp with outlets and a power strip for your desk.

The most time-consuming but rewarding part of moving in is decorating. There is a lot of wall space, which is perfect for displaying your favorite posters, artwork and pictures. Hanging up pictures of friends and family can ward off homesickness by bringing pieces of home with you to college. Hanging a bulletin board or whiteboard calendar above your desk can keep you organized by displaying due dates and reminders. Putting up fairy lights around your room can add a cozy touch and give you an alternative lighting option to the fluorescent overhead light. Decorating your new home is exciting, so keep these tips in mind and have fun with it!



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REVIEW:

GRAN TURISMO

Another Legacy Sony Franchise Roars Into Its PS5 Debut

by Jake Pierce
Asst. Arts & Culture Editor

Photo of Gran Turismo 7 car
courtesy of Sony Interactive Entertainment

“Gran Turismo” is the very definition of a staple franchise for the PlayStation brand. Nearly every entry in the now over 20-year-old racing series boasts impressive customization, buttery-smooth controls and stunning presentation and graphics.

Now, in the year of the franchise’s 25th Anniversary, Sony and longtime series developer Polyphony Digital have marked the occasion with the next mainline installment, “Gran Turismo 7.” This game is the series debut on the PlayStation 5, promising to put the system’s capabilities to use to deliver a never-before-seen racing extravaganza. So, did they pull it off?

The short answer? Heck. Yes.

Control, for starters, is more refined than ever. Upon booting the game for the first time, players are sent to “Music Rally” mode. After selecting a music track from a list that would be shockingly long to anyone who is not familiar with the folks at Polyphony Digital, players are tasked with learning the general driving controls while trying to complete as many laps of a basic course as possible before the song ends. Within about three laps of driving, I could already feel the controls becoming second nature. This is not an arcade racer like “Need For Speed” or even “Dirt 5.” Rather, it’s a highly nuanced driving simulator grounded in real-life physics and research.

Braking is the name of the game, and going into a corner without properly slowing down first will result in your car careening off-course every time. This may sound like a barrier to entry of sorts, and in a way, it can be. But the game has an absolute boatload of customizable difficulty options, including displaying “braking zones” during every race and even more drastic measures such as “auto-braking.” Of course, all of these features can also be fully disabled, allowing players to immerse themselves in the authentic racing experience once they’re confident with the basics.

The fact that the controls themselves are so precise is actually what makes that learning process so fun and rewarding.

Never did a mistake feel like it was not 100% my fault. If I happen to overshoot a corner and crash horribly, it’s easy for me to tell the exact point where I went wrong and how I can correct it next time. Predictability and adaptability in gaming are hallmarks of a masterfully crafted physics and control system. After all, how can you adapt and plan for a situation where the controls might not always do what you want?

Every vehicle in “Gran Turismo 7” follows a tightly-constructed physics system that accounts for body roll, downforce, drivetrain differences and so many more technical aspects of real-life motor racing. Learning these nuances over time has proven one of the most satisfying gameplay experiences I’ve had in years.

This feeling even extends to the upgrade system, where you buy parts that upgrade your car’s top speed or handling capabilities. However, this can also be devilishly complex with the inclusion of “fully customizable” parts, allowing complete player control over tweaks to gear differentials or suspension. It’s yet another example of the sort of “choose your own difficulty” mentality that allows any player to experience the game in a way that feels tailored for them.

Environments have seen a massive upgrade from 2016’s “Gran Turismo Sport,” showing a shocking level of detail in everything from the road textures and grandstands packed full of fans to the stunning forests and mountain views adorning the virtual horizons, which are near-perfect recreations of real-world racecourses. All of this is tied together wonderfully by an amazing soundtrack that includes everything from thumping techno beats to sweeping orchestral scores.

When playing in Performance Mode, the game also does a very admirable job at maintaining a solid 60 frames-per-second, with only a very occasional slowdown. It’s most pronounced in local multiplayer, but even then, the gameplay only sees brief dips into the 50-40 fps range, meaning it’s far from a major issue.

Finally, one of the more interesting aspects of both “Gran Turismo 7” and the franchise as a whole is the learning experience that comes along with it. Motorsports, and the automobile scene in general, is a worldwide culture in and of itself. It’s clear that Polyphony Digital are hugely knowledgeable of this culture, and “Gran Turismo 7” includes a virtual treasure trove of well-researched history and information.

As players make their way through the “GT Cafe” mode, which serves as the main single-player offering, they are periodically rewarded with stories and overviews of a particular car or group of cars and their significance in the history of the automotive industry. In addition, every single car in the game has a detailed description of its capabilities, origins, historical significance

and many other interesting tidbits and trivia. I’m well aware that this content will not be for everyone, but it makes for a fascinating read for those interested. I think the dedication shown by Polyphony Digital in including such detailed information can be appreciated by every player, regardless of their interest in the history of motorsport.

No matter how you look at it, “Gran Turismo 7” is a masterclass in racing games. The incredibly high level of customization, a dizzying amount of content, gorgeous visuals and pixel-perfect controls all combine to make one of Sony’s most impressive outings.

Final Score: 10/10

Read full story at ninertimes.com