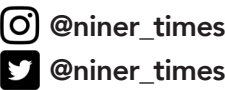




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“The Village of Vauvenargues” by Pablo Picasso

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UNC Charlotte student creates independent study project to help incarcerated women

by Jenny Kase
Staff Writer

In fall 2022, third-year UNC Charlotte student Zoe Brannon began an independent study (IS) project called Road towards Reentry to support incarcerated women pursuing reentry and gender-responsive programs.

Brannon is pursuing a bachelor's in social work with a minor in women's and gender studies. She began Road towards Reentry to understand how to be a part of the change in the struggles incarcerated women face in a hands-on way.

"I'm very passionate about incarceration and the formerly incarcerated women's struggles when they're trying to re-enter. I know society doesn't care for these people and often pushes them to the back burner, especially women and women of color," said Brannon. "I want them to have a voice and know that a community is here to support them. It's important for me as a woman of color to be the voice for them as they're often silenced."

Reentry programs are designed to help

formerly incarcerated individuals get back on their feet. Gender-responsive programs are reentry programs geared towards gender.

"There are a lot of reentry programs dedicated to men. But, unfortunately, women are often overlooked when it comes to reentry, and because of this, they lack the specific support they need," Brannon said.

Brannon emphasizes that these women have specific needs that must be met, particularly with feminine hygiene and mothers.

"That's why I'm doing the fundraiser because when I meet with the women, I want to hear what they're lacking at the halfway house, like feminine products," said Brannon.

The halfway houses take in and support individuals on their road to recovery and returning to everyday life. In addition, Brannon works with organizations such as Reentry Housing Alliance and Life Connections.

"It's been impactful to learn that, even though this isn't that known about, there are still

organizations that are willing to support and are very welcoming," said Brannon.

These organizations work to support formerly incarcerated individuals on every step of their journey, and this takes many forms.

"An organization called Common Wealth is a bank company that helps formerly incarcerated individuals build their credit. Because if you don't have credit, you can't get an apartment, car or things like that. They help them get on their feet that way," said Brannon.

Brannon plans to continue working with these organizations and is working on a new campaign.

"I didn't expect this project to go the way it's going, and I'm excited that it's pivoting the way it is. My mentor Chablis and I hope to do a letter-writing campaign where the individuals we meet at the halfway houses write to the youth at Life Connections," said Brannon.

Life Connections is an organization that works with local youth on the path to

incarceration.

"Getting the letters from previously incarcerated individuals could be impactful to tell them what they wish they would have done at their age," said Brannon.

They plan to extend this campaign to Charlotte students.

"We are hoping to get the campus involved and doing a letter-writing campaign here so that we can write letters to those who are already or formerly incarcerated. So it's a full circle moment," said Brannon.

Brannon encourages everyone to understand and spread awareness of the barriers formerly incarcerated women face when pursuing reentry.

The Road towards Reentry Instagram page is Brannon's digital portfolio for the project. She will continue to post updates for other students to keep up and get involved.

The Salty, a new breakfast spot, is coming to UNC Charlotte

by James Kmosko
Staff Writer

The Salty, a new campus dining option, will open near East Deck on March 20. The Salty will appear on campus in a food truck or vintage travel trailer serving donuts, coffee and other breakfast items.

The new addition will cater mainly to the commuter population.

"The reason that we chose [East Deck] is we did a survey with commuters," said Ben Kolnos, senior retail director at Chartwells, UNC Charlotte's campus dining service. "They say that they have such a limited amount of time to get here before class that going into the Thoughtful Cup or any one of our other locations doesn't always work for them. So we thought we'd bring something to them."

The Salty is a Florida-based company that recently expanded into Charlotte. They specialize in creating unique artisanal donuts. Depending on the week, The Salty's donut varieties range from traditional glazed donuts to donuts stuffed with stewed beef.

"They recently opened a location in the South End," said Kolnos. "It's easily accessible by the CATS rail system. They specialize in specialty doughnuts. Their flavors change monthly.

They also have baked goods, doughnut holes, specialty coffees. They are expanding their menu from just donuts, so they do offer cookies, breakfast options, coffees and stuff like that."

The Salty will be on campus regularly on most weekday mornings. Students can purchase items from The Salty with their school funds or with traditional payment methods.

"They will be on the Niner Diners mobile app," said Kolnos. "So you can use your campus funds to order. They'll be here Monday through Thursday in the morning. The hours are being finalized."

"The first week, because the donuts take 24 hours to make and proof and bake, they may sell out of certain flavors," said Kolnos. "They're going to try and guess which the students like, but there might be some availability issues, especially later in the day. But after that first week, we should have a full menu all the time."

Niner Diners will have promotional offers for The Salty during the food truck's initial launch.

"You should see us on campus the week before," said Kolnos. "We'll be trying to get the word out. We'll definitely have some promotions on Instagram. Especially [around] opening."

If there is enough positive reaction for the East Deck location, The Salty will become a common service offered across Charlotte's campus.

"They have plans to expand [off campus] and on campus as well," said Kolnos. "If this location at the East Deck does great, we might add another service where the typical food trucks are. We'll put them in the mix either at Prospector or in front of CHHS, and also utilize them at the football games. We'd like to start this relationship because one, their product is great, two, it's a local business that we'd like to partner with and three, it fills a location by the East

Deck that is underserved. Also, they have great doughnuts, and you [couldn't] really get that on campus [before]."



The Salty food truck | Courtesy of The Salty

CareYaya is a new platform that provides students with experience working in healthcare

by Haywood Hayes
Staff Writer

CareYaya is a care matching platform that offers pre-health students substantial experience in caregiving and pays students for their work.

The new company provides care for older adults and persons living with differing abilities.

“We brand ourselves as the new way to find care. CareYaya is not a traditional licensed home care agency. Instead, we’re the registry of college-educated caregivers,” said Roxy Garrity, director of communications.

CareYaya goes outside the traditional home care agency. Instead, their company seeks to solve one of many equity problems: educational equity.

“Many healthcare students have to make money and do DoorDash, but they have to get hours of healthcare experience. So they volunteer at UNC Hospital or Duke Hospital. Volunteering is nice, but it doesn’t pay in some of these programs,” said Neal Shah, co-founder and CEO.

“If you’re going to medical school, you must have 300-400 hours of care experience. However, if you’re in a physician assistant school, some schools mandate at least 1000 hours and then

say 2,000 to 3,000 hours to be competitive,” said Shah. “Can you imagine if you have to do a lot of volunteering or low-paid stuff to get that?”

CareYaya solves this education equity problem by offering students the care experience they need to fulfill their required hours to pursue medical school or physician assistant (PA) school. In addition, the hours worked through CareYaya are applied to their application to these schools.

“We log everything so when they’re applying. They can print this out and put it in their application. It makes them stand out and get into PA, medical and nursing school,” said Garrity.

The platform is also designed to offer flexibility in the student’s schedule. They allow the student to work whenever they want.

“It is a gig-based workforce. It’s like the Uber for in-home care,” said Garrity.

“You’ll put in your schedule when you would like to work based on your availability. But, what students love so much about CareYaya is that they can do it around their schedule and travel,” said Garrity.

This kind of flexibility offers students like

Addisun Myler, a graduate student at UNC Charlotte majoring in kinesiology, the flexibility needed to do school work and fulfill her hours for PA school. Myler and many other students can craft their work schedule so it will not hinder their school schedule.

“There are times where if the family wants you from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., you can say, ‘Hey, can we make a time adjustment,’ and they’ll cooperate with you,” said Myler.

Along with flexibility, the students are paid \$15 an hour.

“The family pays them directly. We don’t take a cut. We don’t take a fee,” said Garrity.

This allows CareYaya to be a portal for students to find patients to care for while the students collect the payment.

“As soon as you complete that service, you get paid for that service, whatever the timing is,” said Myler.

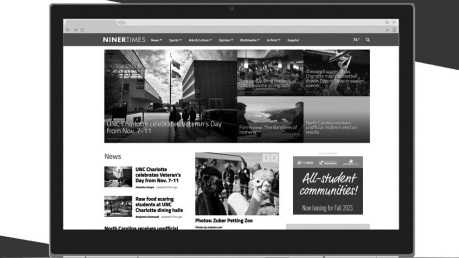
Although the platform is specific to pre-health students, any student can join CareYaya to provide care.

“We have some people who want to be social workers on the platform,” said Garrity. “Some people want to go into physical therapy,

occupational therapy, speech therapy, early childhood development or any of those careers. So it does not necessarily have to be pre-health.”

Garrity said, “As long as your heart is to give and you want to help people in your community, it’s pretty likely that you’re a good fit for CareYaya.”

READ MORE ONLINE



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Art therapy sessions with CareYaya student caregivers | Courtesy of CareYaya

Exploring student debt among UNC Charlotte students

by Olivia Fey
Staff Writer

Photos by Julie Parra

Student debt in the United States has increased to \$1.76 trillion as of September 2022. North Carolina students are no exception to this number, with a combined total of \$48 billion owed in student debt

To understand the effects of rising college tuition, twenty UNC Charlotte students share how much they owe. Students all over the country feel the burden of student debt as

college tuition increases annually. High costs deter young adults from attending college, while those who enroll work multiple jobs or reconsider an advanced degree to save money.



Name: Avery Merideth
Hometown: Havelock, N.C.
Major: Psychology
Amount of student debt: \$20,000



Name: John Hunt
Hometown: Laurinburg, N.C.
Major: Biology
Amount of student debt: \$15,000



Name: Theron Stauffer
Hometown: Fayetteville, N.C.
Major: Computer Science
Amount of student debt: \$0.00



Name: Sujana Sai
Home country: India
Major: Computer Science
Amount of student debt: \$26,000



Name: Saafa Shahriar
Hometown: Concord, N.C.
Major: Biology
Amount of student debt: \$8,000



Name: Tabitha Adaya
Hometown: Charlotte, N.C.
Major: Communications
Amount of student debt: \$10,000



Name: Sarah Mckeon
Hometown: Apex, N.C.
Major: Exercise Science
Amount of student debt: \$20,000



Name: Ella Cornwell
Hometown: Rocky Mount, N.C.
Major: Exercise Science
Amount of student debt: \$30,000



Name: Mietta Lewsader
Hometown: Mint Hill, N.C.
Major: Biology
Amount of student debt: \$0.00



Name: Tejaswi Mandem
Home country: India
Major: Data Science and Business Analytics
Amount of student debt: \$0.00



Name: Matti Renney
Hometown: Hollis, N.H.
Major: Health Systems Management
Amount of student debt: \$40,000



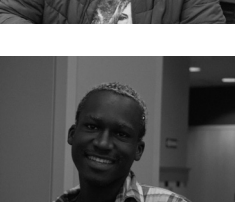
Name: Amya Moore
Hometown: Jersey City, N.J.
Major: Theater
Amount of student debt: \$14,000



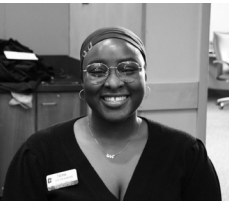
Name: Christen Smalley
Hometown: Greensboro, N.C.
Major: Nursing
Amount of student debt: \$4,000



Name: Kalani Sawyer
Hometown: Asheville, N.C.
Major: Psychology
Amount of student debt: \$0.00



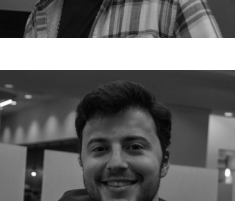
Name: Darius Simms
Hometown: Baltimore, Md.
Major: Biology
Amount of student debt: \$34,000



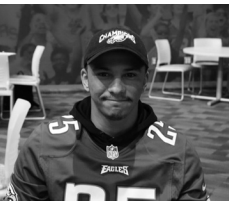
Name: Tiera Ray
Hometown: Wilmington, N.C.
Major: Finance
Amount of student debt: \$65,000



Name: Obed Mikombo
Hometown: Mooresville, N.C.
Major: Computer Science
Amount of student debt: "A good amount"



Name: Griffin Leger
Hometown: Bridgewater, N.J.
Major: Civil Engineering
Amount of student debt: \$40,000



Name: Mostafa Hammad
Hometown: Philadelphia
Major: Finance
Amount of student debt: \$30,000



Name: Claudia Quiroz
Hometown: Asheville, N.C.
Major: Pre-Nursing
Amount of student debt: \$7,000

Atkins Area 49 works to make innovation resources available to students

by Cat Beck
Asst. Arts & Culture Editor

The second floor of UNC Charlotte's Atkins Library is home to Area 49, a collection of innovation spaces with numerous opportunities. All students, regardless of their major or experience level, can use these resources to learn and create.

Area 49 includes the Makerspace, EZ Video Studios, Teaching + Technology Theater, Gaming Lab, Multimedia Lab and Visualization Labs. Beth Caruso, a librarian with Area 49, emphasized the importance of making these resources as accessible as possible. A vital aspect of the space is its availability for academic and personal use.

"The reason it's available for both of those uses is because we really value the idea of lifelong learning," said Caruso. "So if you are coming here for personal reasons in addition to

academic reasons, then you're going to learn so much more. And you're going to learn how to apply what you're learning in different contexts."

Training is offered every two weeks for Makerspace's 3D printer, laser cutter and CNC router, along with workshops for other resources. Whatever their previous experience, anyone can learn to use the equipment.

"We're open for everybody," said Caruso. "One of the benefits of having Area 49 and all these spaces in the library is that everybody can come together. Sometimes these types of spaces are in departments, so you can't use them in a cross-disciplinary way. So somebody from one department can't use it in another department. But you can in Area 49, which I think is really cool."

Caruso encourages anyone to contact the staff with concerns about their ability to use the equipment. She noted that visitors are often intimidated by the perceived barrier to entry, and she and the staff work to make it more accessible.

"When they come to Area 49, they see people already doing things, and if they don't already know how to do those things, then sometimes they're intimidated," said Caruso. "What they don't know is that any of those things they see people doing, they can learn how to do. All they need to do is ask."

Students of all majors and subject backgrounds regularly use Area 49. The Makerspace's sewing machines are particularly popular among people interested in making and altering their clothing. The EZ Video Studios

are also frequently used; two other studios were added after the first's opening.

In addition to the equipment, Caruso provides consultations, and the staff aims to be as approachable as possible. The openness to innovation and creativity is part of Area 49's mission.

"The main reason I do what I do is because I love thinking in unusual ways," said Caruso. "We always try to lessen the intimidation for people, so come talk to us. We're nice. We're fun. We like thinking about things in new and different and unique ways."

Students, faculty and staff interested in Area 49 can learn more at area49.charlotte.edu or contact atkinsarea49@uncc.edu.

TV review: 'Outer Banks' season 3

by Haywood Hayes
Staff Writer

"Outer Banks" has released its third season on Netflix, with John B (Chase Stokes) and his friends, the Pogues, continuing their journey for lost treasure. Unfortunately, this will not be their last treasure hunt.

The Pogues are once again connecting the clues to Denmark Tanny's wealth that has been hidden for ages. In previous seasons, they have discovered the shipwreck of the Royal Merchant, the gold buried underneath an idle home, and The Cross of Santo Domingo. However, this season, the Pogues discover that the clues left by Denmark Tanny now lead to a city of gold called El Dorado. Along the way, they face much opposition from old friends and enemies, lost and returning family and the show's newest antagonist, Carlos Singh (Andy McQueen). Singh is a killer who will not stop until he gets what he wants.

This season demonstrates character growth by being aware of their actions and understanding that every action has consequences. Even when introducing new characters like Singh, it matures the main characters and continues to push the plot forward.

This season, instead of JJ (Rudy

Pankow), John B's best friend and fellow Pogue, impulsively using a gun for no reason, he is now more aware, cautious and precise. John B is no longer led by his emotions but is now considering every action and relationship. Kiara (Madison Bailey) and Pope (Jonathan Daviss) reconnect with their families by understanding their parents' perspective of their reckless adventures. Cleo (Carla Grant) learns the meaning of being a part of a family. Sarah (Madelyn Cline) becomes more independent and no longer relies on her family, and her kook friends are more forgiving and loving towards her. They never acknowledge her being with a Pogue but accept her as if she is still a kook.

Unfortunately, the continual need to re-establish romantic relationships was unnecessary. There are moments in the show where the characters are in life-or-death situations. But for some reason, those specific moments in the show are the right time to kiss and tell each other, "I love you." It is understandable that John B and his love interest, Sarah Cameron (Madelyn Cline), are in love. However, the writers do not need to constantly re-establish it.

Netflix recently announced a fourth season of "Outer Banks." I would not be

upset by this if the cliffhanger to season four was not revealed at the end of season three. The cliffhanger shows that the Pogues could perhaps become the new Mystery Incorporated for the next potential season: solving age-old mysteries and puzzles, and with Twinkie, John B's van, becoming the new Mystery Machine. If the show's creators intended this, then season four may need to present a potential rebrand for the show.

Overall, season three was well-thought-out. In addition, the storyline was enjoyable: it was not complicated, and with its progression. Hopefully, the show will continue to leave audience members enjoying Pogue life.

Rating: 6/10



Courtesy of IMDb

Nova Literary-Arts Magazine to release new edition

by James Kmosko
Staff Writer

UNC Charlotte's Nova Literary-Arts Magazine will release a new edition of their magazine on March 16. The release will coincide with a reception held in the Popp Martin Student Union gallery.

Once a year, the student-led magazine publishes a collection of art, literature, poetry and photography submitted by students from UNC Charlotte and people across the world. The editors and a panel of judges choose a new theme every year and curate the submissions

they find most fitting the theme. Roughly 2,000 copies of the magazine are distributed to contributors and students at UNC Charlotte each year.

The reception will display the original versions of several pieces of artwork that will be in the new edition of Nova Magazine. The event will also highlight posters and merchandise for the latest edition of the magazine, featuring poetry from Nova's international contributors. The reception will be open to the public, where

food and refreshments will be provided for attending guests.

Formerly known as Sanskrit, the name of an ancient Indo-European language, Nova Magazine pursued rebranding in 2021 to prevent confusion over the magazine's contents. As a result, the 2023 issue of Nova will be the 53rd mainline issue.

Since 2022, Nova also sometimes releases shorter, special edition magazines called "zines." Digital copies of several of the last editions of

the magazine are accessible on Nova's website.

Nova Magazine provides updates and information on magazine editions and other events on their social media accounts. In addition, copies of the magazine are available for free on newspaper racks across UNC Charlotte's campus.

Humans of UNC Charlotte: Ava Lockhart manages going to school while finding a work-life balance

by Bethany Ivan
Arts & Culture Editor

Ava Lockhart is a third-year student at UNC Charlotte majoring in graphic design. While she is not in the lab working on various projects for class, she is also a full-time mother to her seven-year-old son, a model and a soon-to-be bride.

Lockhart grew up in Manila, Philippines. When she was a teenager, Lockhart lived in Dubai, UAE, for a few years before returning to Manila to finish high school. At 18, she moved to the United States and experienced some struggles, especially trying to learn English and racism.

"When I first got here, I felt like I was different. People look at or treat you a certain way because you look different. It's the first time I've ever experienced that kind of stuff. Not even in Dubai," she said.

"Some people talk to me like I'm dumb. Like I don't know English. They will talk to me slowly, trying to explain to me how to talk in English. I know English, but they treat you differently, said Lockhart. "I feel like I'm an outsider."

Lockhart models in her free time. From a young age, she was mesmerized by the models in the magazines she would browse. She began her modeling career with an agency called Maevee, where she now works as a freelance model.

"I was just having a little cake with my son, and this photographer came up to me and asked me if I was interested in modeling since I have nice features," she said. "So I tried modeling, and from there, I started to get to know different photographers, who reached out to me, then I started networking on every event they have."

Lockhart also pursues different art mediums, such as oil painting, drawing, woodwork and metalwork. She described herself as somebody who liked to try new things, which led her to want to pursue graphic design.

"I wanted to try something different, something new. I like to try new things all the time," said Lockhart. "I tried graphic design because technology is the future, and I got to keep up with it. Technology is the best thing if I want to express my art."

Along with school, Lockhart does some of her graphic design projects in her free time. She explained that one of her favorite projects is a "Grand Theft Auto" (GTA) character based on a photo of herself.

"I've wanted to do that since I was a kid. I grew up playing GTA, and it would be nice since I'm working digitally because no one's gonna do it for me, so I have to do it myself."

As the academic year becomes hectic, Lockhart manages her time in and out of school. As a student and mother who is planning a wedding, Lockhart is in no rush to get married, as she wants to focus on finishing school.

"I'm taking my time, and I'm not in a rush to get married, but I'm focusing more on school. I prioritize my son and my school before anything else. Because my son is my son, and with my school and me, that's my future," she said.

Lockhart explains how she manages her work schedule, school work and personal life.

"A work-life balance is really hard. Time management really helps me. I have a to-do list every single night. I plan things ahead of time

and I try to advance in my school stuff. I don't like missing any homework. I'm a perfectionist."

Lockhart encourages others to enjoy life, as she describes it as "a fun ride."

"It could be good or bad, and if it's bad, you learn something from it, and if it's good, then it's good. That's just how I put it in my daily life. It helps me sit back, relax, and be ready for what's coming."

MAR. 9-12

MOVIES

AT THE UNION THEATER

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH
RUBY BRIDGES

PUSS IN BOOTS
THE LAST WISH

A LEAGUE
OF THEIR OWN

FREE WITH UNC CHARLOTTE STUDENT ID • \$2 ALL OTHERS

SHOWTIMES: STUDENTUNION.CHARLOTTE.EDU/MOVIES

MAR. 16-19

MOVIES

AT THE UNION THEATER

MAFIA MOVIE WEEK
SCARFACE

THE GODFATHER

THE GODFATHER II

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SHOWTIMES: STUDENTUNION.CHARLOTTE.EDU/MOVIES

Review: Picasso Landscapes: Out of Bounds Exhibit

by Annie Turk
Staff Writer

The Mint Museum in Uptown Charlotte hosted the first-ever collection exploring Pablo Picasso's use of landscapes to describe his perception of the world in the traveling exhibition "Picasso Landscapes: Out of Bounds."

The exhibition opened on Feb. 11 and will be open through May 21. Being one of only two locations where the collection will be shown, and the only one on the East Coast, is an accomplishment for the Charlotte community, which gets to share Picasso's art with the world.

"Picasso Landscapes: Out of Bounds" will be the only exhibition on view on April 8 in the United States to commemorate Picasso's works on the 50th anniversary of the artist's death. This exhibit is a part of the Picasso Celebration 1973-2023, a structured 50 exhibitions throughout Europe and North America surveying Picasso's interpretations and works.

Over 40 paintings and sculptures from 14 different public and private collections show the evolution of Picasso's depiction of landscapes

throughout his career and different periods, including the Blue Period, the Rose Period, the African-influenced Period and the Cubism Period.

Many of his landscape works emerge as creative tokens and memories formed during his lifetime of travel and relocation. They give a glimpse into his thought process and show viewers his impression of the world around him, including Spain and France during industrialization and urban growth. Notable pieces featured in this exhibition include: "The Village of Vauvenargues" (1959), "Boisgeloup in the Rain, with Rainbow" (1932) and "The Reservoir, Horta de Ebro" (1909).

There are also photographs, films, newsreels and other materials displayed that encapsulate the full context behind Picasso's inspiration and works.

The guided audio tour available in English and Spanish is a unique addition that gives depth to the exhibition. Viewers can scan QR codes listed at 13 different points throughout the exhibit. These will link to a playlist where people can listen to background information, historical relevance, quotes from artists and descriptions of the places Picasso chose as his inspiration to help conceptualize his work.

The exhibit was organized by the American Federation of Arts and curated by Laurence Madeline, chief curator for French National Heritage. In addition to the "Picasso Landscapes: Out of Bounds," there is also the "Bearden/Picasso: Rhythms and Reverberations" portion of the exhibit which explores the relationship between the artworks of Romare Bearden, the namesake of

Charlotte's Romare Bearden Park, and Picasso. It highlights the commonalities and parallels in their cubist works.

Tickets allow for two hours to view "Picasso Landscapes: Out of Bounds" and "Bearden/Picasso: Rhythms and Reverberations" and include general admission for the rest of the day. Because this is a special exhibition, tickets are priced differently from general admission. However, Mint members, college students and seniors get a discounted rate, while students in grades K-12, art teachers and children four and under get in for free.

Writer's note

Most people do not typically picture landscapes when thinking about Picasso's work, which is astounding considering the high quality and depth of works within this exhibition. However, seeing Picasso's work is on many people's bucket lists, including mine, so when my grandfather and I walked in, we were blown away by the talent and wide array of works.

The Mint Museum has always stayed ahead of the game in bringing unique and highly sought-after pieces to the Charlotte community, reaching a new level of awe.

I was impressed at the diversity of the crowd, age in particular, viewing the exhibit, which shows the reason Picasso is so renowned is because of his ability to appeal to many different audiences and generations.

It took us about an hour to go through and view the exhibit. Since everyone has timed tickets, it can get quite crowded towards the beginning of the exhibition, so our suggestion is to move on to the second section and loop back around to the front at the end, so you can view the pieces and read the name plates without disruption.

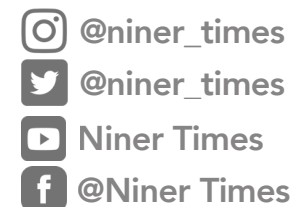


Everyone, including those unfamiliar with the arts, should try to visit and learn something new and enjoy the presence of talent.



Picasso landscapes displayed at The Mint | Courtesy of The Mint Museum

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Charlotte mens basketball vs. University of Alabama at Birmingham

Photos by Jacob Scannell

The Charlotte men's basketball team dropped a double-overtime battle in the regular season finale against the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Blazers on Saturday, March 4. The 49ers fell to the Blazers 93-91 in a back-and-forth battle until the

end. With the loss, Charlotte falls to 18-13 overall and 9-11 in Conference USA (C-USA) play.



The Gold Mine, Charlotte’s student section, creates an energetic atmosphere during gameday

by Haywood Hayes
Staff Writer

The Charlotte student section is a hidden gem to Charlotte athletes’ success on game day. Their energy brings joy and support to Charlotte’s players and coaches. “The student section and our fans are so valuable,” said Ron Sanchez, head coach of Charlotte’s men’s basketball team.

A crowd is essential to Charlotte’s coaches and players. Sanchez said the crowd became crucial after COVID-19. “Having experienced a COVID season, where we had nobody in the building, it’s what allowed me to appreciate the crowd’s noise in the arena,” said Sanchez.

The Gold Mine

The student section of Charlotte, The Gold Mine, is a part of the crowd that creates and facilitates the atmosphere. The Gold Mine was established in February 2022 and is designed to organize Charlotte’s student section and cheer the 49ers to victory.

During a game, The Gold Mine encourages and energizes the players. Through their chants, themes and excitement, these groups of students serve as helpmates to Charlotte’s athletes.

Nate McPherson, Sanad Musafer and Shawn Sizemore are leaders of the Gold Mine and oversee the group’s activities. McPherson said the student section gives a much-needed boost to the athletes.

“When the players are dead, we give them the extra push. We give them motivation,” said McPherson.

Musafer said the student section’s role is to have the athletes’ backs.

“As a student-athlete, you want an energetic and loud atmosphere. They feed off that,” said Musafer.

Impact on athletes

The players recognize their impact upon them in the game and appreciate their intensity. Charlotte men’s basketball guard, Jackson Threadgill, said the crowd’s enthusiasm is essential.

“They bring energy, so when we don’t have it going, they help bring us out of a funk,” said Threadgill. “You want to generate a good homecourt atmosphere so that when opposing teams are coming in, they can feel it. It gives a good amount of intensity towards our plays.”

Charlotte’s men’s basketball guard Isaiah Folkes said the Gold Mine gives him the energy to keep going.

“They get my adrenaline pumping,” said Folkes. “They make me want to go as hard as possible because I don’t want to let them down.”

Sanchez said The Gold Mine’s energy affects the momentum of a game.

“When your crowd is there, and they explode, it’s infectious, energizes you and helps our players to play harder,” said Sanchez. “When you have a guy like Aly Khalifa hearing his name chanted or Brice Williams hearing his name chanted by his peers appreciating what he’s doing on the floor, it’s really great.”

Expansion and purpose

The Gold Mine’s leaders have plans for expansion in the organization’s future. Musafer said the student section will continue to grow as an environment for all Charlotte sports fans.

“We want to make an environment where all students are welcome and can have fun with friends regardless of whether they’re a sports person. We want an inviting and encouraging space for students to come out and feel comfortable,” said Musafer.

The Gold Mine does not require a student to register to be a part of the organization.

“If you’re a student at UNC Charlotte, you’re a part of the Gold Mine,” said Musafer.

The Gold Mine can be found on Twitter and Instagram (@CLTGoldMine) for more information.



The UNC Charlotte student section on Saturday, Feb. 4, 2023 | Photo by Chris Crews



CHARLOTTE 49ERS SCOREBOARD

RECENT GAMES FEB. 26 - MARCH 5

MEN’S BASKETBALL
March 2: UTSA 78, Charlotte 73

March 4: UAB 93, Charlotte 91 (2 OT)

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL
March 2: UTSA 80, Charlotte 59

March 4: UAB 83, Charlotte 75

BASEBALL
Feb. 26: Charlotte 11, Army 2

Feb. 28: Charlotte 13, UNC Asheville 8

March 3: No. 11 Virginia Tech 13, Charlotte 11 (10)

March 4: No. 11 Virginia Tech 6, Charlotte 3

March 5: No. 11 Virginia Tech 12, Charlotte 4

SOFTBALL
Feb. 26: Charlotte 7, Georgia Tech 3

March 3: Houston 11, Charlotte 3

March 3: Charlotte 11, Arizona State 5

March 4: No. 11/12 Washington 10, Charlotte 0

March 4: Grand Canyon 6, Charlotte 2

March 5: New Mexico 7, Charlotte 6

UPCOMING GAMES

Men’s Basketball:
Vs. Middle Tennessee in the C-USA tournament on Thursday, March 9 at 7 p.m.

Women’s Basketball:
Vs. Florida International in the C-USA tournament on Wednesday, March 8 at 12 p.m.

Baseball:
Vs. UNC Wilmington at Atrium Health Ballpark on Wednesday, March 8 at 6:05 p.m.

Softball:
Vs. No. 14 Duke on Wednesday, March 8 at 5 p.m.

Softball freshman pitcher Lena Elkins starts career as C-USA Pitcher of the Week after no-hitter

by Sania McCoy
Staff Writer

Charlotte freshman pitcher Lena Elkins was named Conference USA Pitcher of the Week on Monday, Feb. 20. Elkins threw a no-hitter performance leading the 49ers to a 1-0 win over St. John's University on Feb. 17.

Elkins' no-hitter marks Charlotte's 16th in program history. Elkins showcased her arm and earned the accomplishment in just the second game of her collegiate career.

"It was our first game of the weekend, so I just wanted to really set the tone for the team and give us a good chance to get the win," said Elkins.

Elkins got the start against St. Johns batters, giving up no hits and striking out eight of her opponents.

"It was pretty awesome just to have my second start," said Elkins. "It was really

great having the team on my back. My teammates were awesome, and it was overall a really cool experience."

Winning mindset

It was just another game for Elkins, who said she puts a lot of time and preparation into studying her opponents before each game.

"I'm staying focused, watching film and seeing what the hitters' tendencies are," said Elkins. "Paying attention to that helps a lot, and then being in my bullpens before the game. I make sure I'm hitting spots and really focusing on what I'm going to throw in the game."

This game was significant for the freshman, who joined the squad in the summer of 2022.

"It brought my confidence up just

knowing that I can pitch at this level and get hitters out," said Elkins. "Whenever I'm having an off game, I can come back to this moment and remember I can do this."

During the Red and Black Showcase, the team also had a significant accomplishment with their win over No. 15 Georgia (17-5) on Sunday, Feb. 19.

"It was awesome just to make a statement for the whole team," said Elkins. "It just shows how good we are and how we can beat anybody on any given day."

Carrying over high school success

This feat is nothing new for Elkins, who threw three no-hitters in high school. Elkins did a lot more than just pitch in high school. She was a tri-sport athlete playing basketball, softball and soccer.

"It's been a big difference not having to worry about having basketball or soccer

practice," said Elkins. "But I miss those sports a lot."

Elkins said it was a special moment as her family witnessed her no-hitter in the stands.

"I'm thankful that they got to come and see that," said Elkins. "They were so proud of me, and they were just really, really happy."

Next up

Elkins and the 49ers return home on Wednesday, March 8 as they take on the Duke University Blue Devils at Sue M. Daughtride Stadium. First pitch is set for 5 p.m. and the game will be available to stream on ESPN+.



Lena Elkins (25) in her no-hitter over St. John's University on Feb. 17 | Photo courtesy of Charlotte Athletics



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Charlotte sports medicine celebrates National Athletic Trainer Month in March

by Megan Bullis
Contributor

March is National Athletic Trainer Month, and it is dedicated to shining a light on the crucial behind-the-scenes work that athletic trainers do to ensure the health and safety of their athletes.

Training and preparedness

Preparing to become an athletic trainer is intense but essential to ensure that trainers are ready for any scenario.

The Charlotte baseball Athletic Trainer Donna Nimmo said being prepared is crucial to the athlete's health and safety.

"A lot of our training is in pressured situations because we all know that life could be in our hands at any time. So they [schools] try to make sure that we understand how severe everything is and that we're put in situations where our instincts take over," said Nimmo.

Education and graduate programs help students get hands-on experience with the human body. Charlotte softball Athletic Trainer Brittni Hoover said these programs aim to equip athletic trainers for any situation.

"In grad school, we did a lot of crazy, insane scenarios. We would spine board down a staircase or spine board in a foam pit," said Hoover.

The Director of Sports Medicine and the Charlotte football Athletic Trainer Tony Cordova said everything must be set up on the field or court to help the athletic trainer operate efficiently.

"We have a medical tent we use that we pull up to be in a strategic location. Everything has to be placed strategically so that if we have to bring somebody off the field, we have easy access," said Cordova.

Charlotte men's basketball Athletic Trainer John Marshall said being ready for action is the difference between life and death.

"If there's a medical emergency on the

court, I'll give a hand signal above my head and signal for EMS to come on to the court. I'll be at the head directing what's going on," said Marshall.

Forming relationships

Relationships between athletic trainers and their athletes are essential to the job. Established trust between all parties is crucial to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Jennifer Winningham, Charlotte women's basketball athletic trainer, said trust with international athletes is vital to an athletic trainer's job.

"International students are so far away from their families. It was easy as a college student to call my parents because they lived an hour and a half away. These kids are hours away, so we work to build that trust with our student-athletes," said Winningham.

Hoover said a part of the job is to be there for the students through adversity.

"We're here for them when they're injured and go through a bad breakup or fail a test. We are usually the listening ear because they trust us, which is awesome. We're an adult in their life that they trust," said Hoover.

Marshall said working relationship with team doctors is fundamental.

"Emergency action plans are prepared in advance. We always have EMS, an orthopedic doctor, a medical doctor and an eye doctor in the stands if something were to happen," said Marshall.

Challenges

Being an athletic trainer can be time-consuming, and Cordova said the love for the job comes with sacrifices.

"I'm always on the clock and never turn my cell phone off. I've missed birthdays and events because I'm traveling, but thankfully my family knows and

understands it," said Cordova.

Nimmo said athletic trainers are behind the scene heroes.

"Our profession doesn't get the spotlight it deserves all the time, but we're not here if the athletes aren't. We are here to support them and help them. We are part of the team," said Nimmo.

Being a woman in the industry has presented obstacles, but Winningham said female athletic trainers are up for the challenge.

"There's been a lot of discussions about being a female in this industry. There used to be a significantly less number, but now we have way more females in our program here at Charlotte than before," Winningham said.

Rewarding aspects

Nimmo said the positives outweigh the challenges that come with the job,

"Seeing guys come off of a major injury and be successful is by far the most rewarding thing," said Nimmo. "This is why I go to the lengths I do. I want to ensure no hiccups because the last thing anybody ever wants is to make a mistake."

Cordova said it is a job he would not trade for the world.

"The funny part is that I didn't think it'd be so much fun. I began to enjoy this job when I started establishing camaraderie with players and coaches. I've been to many places in the world that I never would've been if it wasn't for this profession," said Cordova.

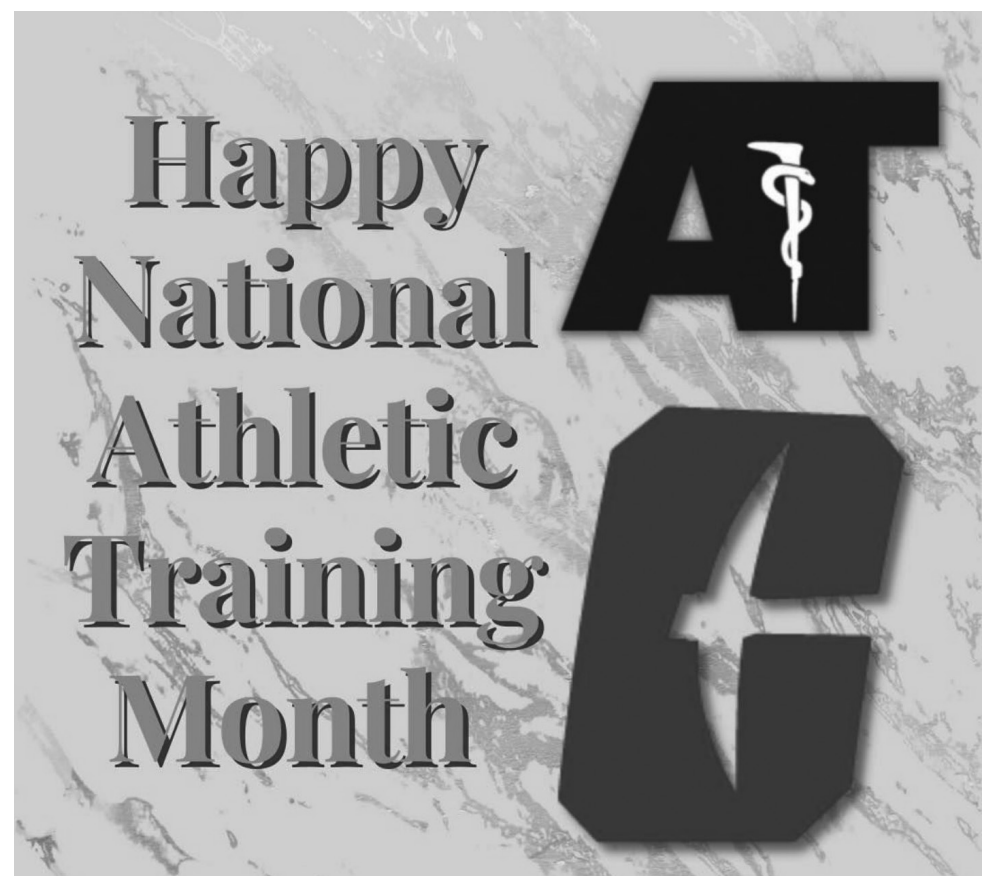


Photo courtesy of Charlotte Sports Medicine

Charlotte men's basketball drops double-overtime battle to UAB in regular season finale

by Bryson Foster
Sports Editor

The Charlotte men's basketball team dropped a double-overtime battle in the regular season finale against the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Blazers on Saturday, March 4.

The 49ers fell to the Blazers 93-91 in a back-and-forth battle until the end. With the loss, Charlotte falls to 18-13 overall and 9-11 in Conference USA (C-USA) play.

"I am proud of the effort the team put in after one day of preparation and a road contest," said Head Coach Ron Sanchez. "The guys locked into a game plan to face a physical UAB squad."

The contest marked the final regular season C-USA game for the 49ers as they move to the American Athletic Conference (AAC) for the 2023-24 season.

First half

The Blazers got out to a fast start in the first minute claiming a 5-0 lead off a layup from Tavin Lovan and a three from Jordan Walker.

The 49ers tied things up at seven at the 15:53 mark when Brice Williams drained a three. Jackson Threadgill followed it up with a jumper to give Charlotte its first contest lead.

After 10 minutes of play, Javian Davis pushed the UAB lead to three, 20-17. Threadgill nailed a free throw with 7:54 to go in the half to tie the game at 23.

After Montre' Gipson made a layup at the 7:04 mark, the game remained scoreless for three minutes. Finally, Threadgill ended the drought with a three to give Charlotte a 28-25 lead.

The teams continued to go back and forth, fighting for control. UAB's KJ Buffen hit a free throw to make it 32-32 with 21 seconds to go in the half.

Charlotte could not get anything going on the other end, and the game went into the break tied at 32.

Second half

The Blazers scored the first points of the second half when Trey Jemison converted on a jumper to make it 34-32. A Lu'Cye Patterson three gave the 49ers its first half lead, 41-40, at the 16:04 mark.

The lead would not be larger than two for the next seven minutes until Gipson made a layup to put the 49ers up 56-52.

The Blazers answered with seven straight points from Walker to extend the lead to 59-56 with 7:50 to go.

With 2:50 remaining, Eric Gaines hit a layup to put the Blazers up six, 73-67. However, the 49ers tied things up with a 6-0 run led by Gipson, Williams and Igor Miličić Jr.

The Blazers snapped the run when Jemison recorded a put-back slam to make it 75-73.

The 49ers got a final chance, and Patterson drove to the basket, tying the game at 75. Walker had a chance to end the game but missed a three at the buzzer.

At the end of regulation, the contest was tied at 75.

First overtime

Williams started the first extra period quickly as he made a fadeaway jumper to give the 49ers a slim two-point lead.

UAB continued to find an answer as Walker drained a three to give the Blazers a 78-77 lead with 4:16 to go.

The teams continued to battle, swapping the lead seven times in the period. With five seconds to go and the 49ers down two, Patterson was fouled and made both free throws to force a second overtime.

Second overtime

Walker continued to carry the Blazers as he poured in five more points to give UAB the 89-86 lead with 2:52 to go.

On the next offensive possession for Charlotte, Williams hit a three to tie the game once again.

A Lovan dunk put UAB back out front with 2:09 to go. The next minute remained scoreless until Patterson hit two more free throws to tie the game at 91.

With 23 seconds left, Lovan scored the game's last points on a layup. The 49ers had one final chance, but Williams could not make the three at the horn.

UAB won the back-and-forth slugfest 93-91.

Top performers

UAB's Walker led the game in scoring with 41 points and eight three-pointers. He also recorded six assists and four rebounds in the contest.

Williams recorded another 30-point performance as he finished with 32 points on 12-24 shooting, six rebounds and three blocks.

Threadgill, Gipson and Patterson all finished in double digits in the contest, while Miličić had nine points and 11 rebounds.

Takeaways

The 49ers brought the fight in the contest against the No. 3 seed UAB but still have work to do in the C-USA tournament next week.

The 49ers, who are No. 2 in the C-USA in scoring defense, must remain stout to earn the automatic bid to the NCAA tournament.

Williams will be crucial in the tournament, and if the team wants to go far, they will need him to step up. Over the last three games, Williams averages 25.7 points per game on shooting clips of 53% from the field and 47% from the three.

Next up

The 49ers will be back in action in the C-USA tournament on March 8-11. The No. 5 seed Charlotte will take on the No. 4 seed Middle Tennessee State University in the quarterfinals on Thursday, March 9, at Ford Center at The Star in Frisco, Texas. Tipoff is set for 6 p.m. EST and will be available to stream on ESPN+.



Charlotte men's basketball guard Brice Williams (3) | Photo by Chris Crews

8					1	2		
1		2		7				
6	5			2	3			8
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	4						9	
9			6		8			
2			7	9			3	4
				1		7		2
		7	4					9

2/21 ISSUE ANSWERS

The crossword puzzle grid is shown with the following answers filled in:

- Across: 15. 'auntieannes', 'starbucks', 'nineteyeight', 'desensitized', 'halloween', 'ogwood', 'salisbury', 'four', 'treat', 'lion', 'liar'.
- Down: 1. 'wimbledon', 'brylindis', 'hamrocks', 'famous', 'four', 'sister', 'treat', 'lion', 'liar'.

9	7	6	2	5	1	4	3	8
2	1	3	6	8	4	7	5	9
4	5	8	7	9	3	2	6	1
6	9	4	1	3	7	5	8	2
1	8	7	4	2	5	6	9	3
3	2	5	8	6	9	1	7	4
7	6	1	9	4	8	3	2	5
8	3	2	5	1	6	9	4	7
5	4	9	3	7	2	8	1	6

HONEY BEES CAN FLY UP TO ABOUT 20 MPH. THEY ALSO HAVE FIVE EYES AND HAVE SIX LEGS SINCE THEY ARE INSECTS.

3. East ____ (Ohio town in which a train derailed on Feb. 3)
6. Jeopardy champion Matt ____
7. Recently deceased owner and founder of the Carolina Panthers
8. Team that beat UNC Chapel Hill on March 4
10. Greek god of the sea
11. Social media app that sends an alert at a random time every day
12. Award show taking place on March 13

2. New Gorillaz album “ ____ Island”
4. Plaza of 2023 film “Operation Fortune”
5. UNC Charlotte’s literary arts magazine
8. ____ saving time
9. Teen drama that shares a name with a coastal area of N.C.
10. Spanish painter whose art is featured at the Mint Museum
13. Substance that a bear might get his paws on in a new film
14. Charlotte basketball player Jackson ____
15. The Salty serves ____
16. Gender that March celebrates the history of ____

Hollywood must work to diversify awards shows

by Lola Oliverio
Asst. Opinion Editor

Awards shows like the Oscars and Emmys are highly regarded events in the entertainment industry that often serve as a popularity contest between nominees. Unfortunately, for as long as award season has been around, so has the subtle yet ever-present racial discrimination and bias afflicting the outcomes of these events.

The lack of diversity in nominations and winners at awards shows – most notably the Oscars – has always been an issue. For instance, in 2015, a hashtag, “#OscarsSoWhite,” began spreading on social media as a response to the lack of diversity throughout the history of awards shows.

That same year, a study by the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School of Journalism highlighted the discrepancies between races depicted in films and found that in both 2013 and 2014, African Americans were completely absent from 17% of the movies.

Though Hollywood has historically been a white man’s playground, one would assume that

in 2023, the demographics would have begun to shift. Award shows, in particular, should be better, as they are designed to showcase a variety of successful films and actors from each year.

However, actress Angela Bassett of “Black Panther: Wakanda Forever” is the only Black actress nominated for an Oscar in 2023. This is jarring due to the amount of high-grossing, highly performing films released in 2022 with predominantly Black casts, such as “Nope” and “Till.”

Thankfully, due to the success of Disney’s “Turning Red” and A24’s “Everything Everywhere All at Once,” Asian actors and directors have been far more represented in the 2023 Oscar nominations than in previous years.

Still, one decently representative year for one demographic does not fix decades of blatant systemic racism and bias.

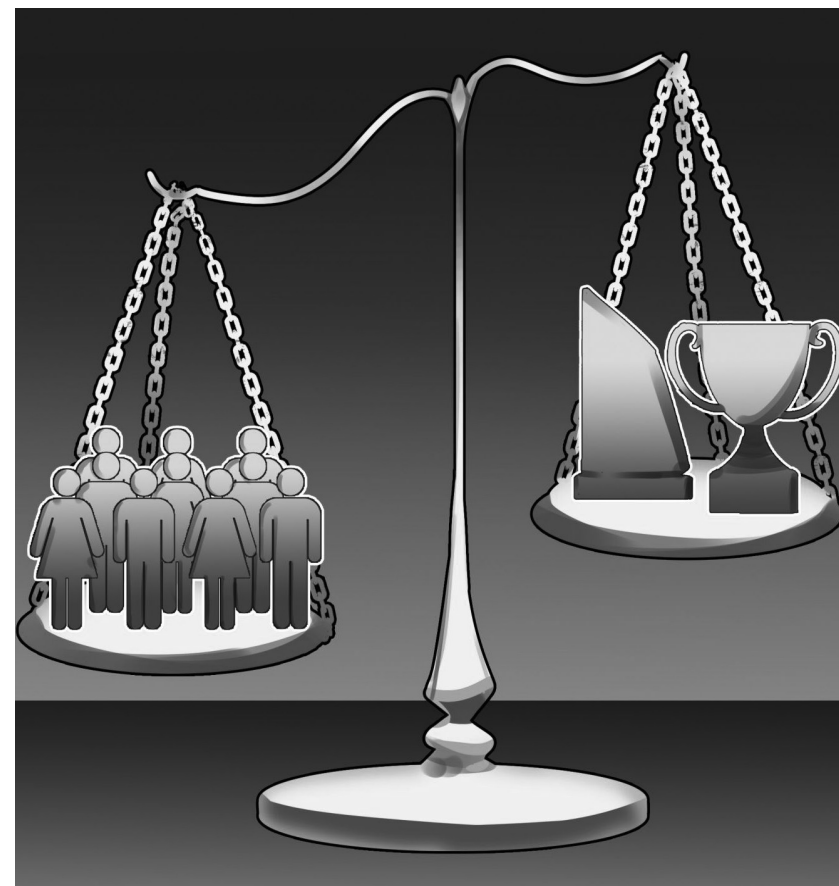
This is not to say that the Oscars is an intentionally racist event or that the array of nominees is entirely homogeneous. For instance, five out of 10 nominations for lead and

supporting actresses in 2023 are women of color.

Additionally, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has attempted to boost diversity in films, creating guidelines for Oscar nominations that include the inclusion and representation of minority groups to be considered for inclusion in the ceremony.

Ideally, the Academy would not have to create these guidelines, and the film industry would naturally diversify over time. Unfortunately, this is not yet the case due to the historically overwhelming whiteness of the film world.

The film industry and its awards ceremonies display a need for more representation of marginalized communities and must work to become more illustrative of the diversity present in society. These ceremonies are meant to exemplify the various successful films of each year, and showcasing art from all races and demographics is crucial to do so.



Award show unfairness | Graphic by Kim Zan

FDA ban against gay and bisexual men giving blood perpetuates stigma

by Natalie Monson
Staff Writer

The ban against gay and bisexual men giving blood is discriminatory and perpetuates stigma against the LGBTQ+ community.

The FDA ban began in the early 1980s after the AIDs epidemic was incorrectly labeled as a “gay disease.”

It imposed a lifetime donation ban against gay and bisexual men. The ban also included intravenous drug users, sex workers and those diagnosed with HIV.

However, gay and bisexual men were the only ones discriminated against due to their identities rather than behaviors.

HIV being considered a “gay disease” is a false label, as not all gay and bisexual men have HIV.

Additionally, those diagnosed with HIV are not exclusively gay and bisexual men.

Blood donation bans that single out gay and bisexual men contribute to harmful misconceptions such as gay and bisexual men are dirty, bad and dangerous.

The FDA has required tests on donated blood to search for HIV-1 since 1985 and HIV-2 since 1992, yet the ban continued for 30 years.

The risk of getting HIV by blood transfusion is low due to the screening process.

It was not until 2015 that the FDA changed the lifetime ban to a year-long deferral policy after individuals undergo a period of celibacy. The celibacy deferral period was then changed to three months in 2020.

In late January 2023, the FDA proposed a policy favoring an individual risk assessment model over time-based restrictions.

This means individuals giving blood would be screened with a questionnaire to identify their HIV risk regardless of sexual or gender identity.

Risk assessment is still a beneficial policy as there is a 10-day exposure period where HIV may not be detectable.

The policy is under review and will be subject to a final ruling later this year.

The new proposed policy is a step in the right direction after gay and bisexual men have been unfairly discriminated against for years.

However, there are still current policies that

discriminate against gay and bisexual men, such as prohibiting individuals who are taking HIV prevention medication from donating blood.

Policies like this discriminate against proactive individuals regarding their sexual health and attempt to characterize them as promiscuous.

In reality, taking preventative HIV medication reduces the risk of getting HIV from sex by 99%.

Often, the policies against gay and bisexual men do not align with scientific data. Instead, they are a repeated attempt to stigmatize and demonize members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Citizens impacted by Ohio train derailment deserve more justice

by Alina Madsourivong
Contributor

A train holding hazardous chemicals derailed in East Palestine, Ohio, on Feb. 3. As workers continue to clean up the mess, there is a rising concern about the impact on residents and wildlife.

The incident released chemicals into the air and contaminated soil and water. East Palestine residents deserve more accommodations from Norfolk Southern railroad company.

One of the chemicals involved in the incident was vinyl chloride. It is used to make a hard plastic resin for various objects. Exposure to this chemical can increase cancer risk and cause headaches and nausea.

Due to officials' concerns about one of the train cars exploding, workers released the chemical and burned it. However, the downside to this action is that it can release toxic gases such as hydrogen chloride and phosgene.

Aquatic life has also fallen victim to the chemical spill in local waterways. Around 3,500 fish have died from the event.

Residents have also been affected. They experience problems such as rashes, nausea

and sore throats. Despite the evacuation order lifting five days after the incident, residents are reluctant to return to their homes.

Even though officials say the water is safe, residents are not taking any chances. With residents concerned with their health and families, distrust towards officials has been growing.

It also does not help to know that the railroad company responsible for this incident had past derailment incidents. A 2018 incident resulted in bottles of Listerine spilling. In 2005, a chlorine spill in South Carolina resulted in nine deaths and hundreds seeking medical care. Hundreds of fish died as well.

It is a wonder how this company has been able to run for so long with these repeated derailments.

It is no surprise that residents are unwilling to return. Along with their current health problems, they must also consider long-term health effects.

Even with some people attempting to settle into their old routines, environmental conditions

are making it difficult for them. Children who returned to school were pulled out by their parents after developing rashes. People have gone to clinics because of respiratory problems and sore throats.

Things are uncertain for residents of this

community. Some have deliberated over moving, but cannot due to their financial status.

The railroad company, Norfolk Southern, has attempted to compensate the residents, but the damage and stress will continue to eat away at them.



Derailed train car in East Palestine, Ohio | Courtesy of CNN

UNC Charlotte should have more inclusive food options

by Amna Noyal
Staff Writer

Students from all backgrounds come together to pursue an education at UNC Charlotte. Despite this, there is not a diverse array of options available for people with dietary restrictions and accommodations for people trying to eat healthier.

College is an opportunity to experience new things and make campus a new home. But how can it be classified as a new home if it does not fulfill essential needs?

For instance, the dining halls have protein options, but none specifically cater to religious accommodations, such as halal or kosher meals. There are also meager options suited for vegan or vegetarian students.

If students are paying for access to these dining options, they should cater to students' needs. Students cannot simply ignore their food restrictions because they live on campus. It is a lifestyle they must follow, and restrictive campus dining is making it harder for them to follow their beliefs.

Restaurants on campus also have this issue. Recently, Panda Express got rid of their Beyond The Original Orange Chicken, which many students claimed to be a good substitute for vegetarians and people who can only eat certain

types of meat.

This is not the first time a restaurant on campus has stopped selling—or has not sold—an accessible meal option off of the menu. Items like Subway's Veggie Patty, Wendy's Fish Fillet and even Starbucks' plant-based and fish options are unavailable on campus. Charlotte should offer these options on their menus once again.

"Having more accessible options promotes inclusivity on campus," said Rida Zainab, a fourth-year biology major. "I know colleges are all about increasing diversity and inclusivity, so this would obviously help with that."

Trying to eat well in college is an issue that students all around America have been struggling with. An ever-looming prophecy known as the "Freshman 15" is often thrown on social media. It refers to the idea that, when students start their college lives, they may neglect to stay healthy by being physically inactive or stress eating.

"Good health is very important for students who are still growing and developing and for maximum functioning," said Zahra Dar, an accounting graduate from Charlotte. "I'm sure it impacts mental health at least indirectly because

the better and more you're eating, the better you feel."

Serving oily and fatty foods in the dining halls does not help this issue either. For example, Crown and SoVi are filled with rows of pizza, fries, burgers, soda and desserts, yet only one small salad bar is hidden near the middle or back.

Charlotte should promote healthy eating habits with more than salads. For instance, they could include healthy meals such as roasted or baked chicken with greens, bagel bars for breakfast and a day in the week where the entire menu has more nutritious and enriched food items.

Charlotte should also work towards opening

another restaurant with a healthy menu, such as Charlotte Greens.

The campus worked hard to establish the Starbucks in Atkins. That same energy should be towards adding a healthy restaurant in Prospector's upper level or the Student Union food court. More accessible food options could generate more revenue for the University. This could generate funding for other campus projects, such as more parking.

Healthy food options and meals that cater to all backgrounds are essential to creating a more welcoming and inclusive environment at Charlotte. While it may not seem like it, establishing healthier and more inclusive food options could be a big step in the right direction if the University follows through.

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