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State of the University Address

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POLICE BLOTTER

Damage to Property 2/11

Officers responded to damage to a restroom in McEniry.

Firearm Discharge 2/12

Officers responded to a building to recover a bullet that was found in the room. This is an ongoing investigation.

Harrasmentt 2/12

Officers responded to the Student Activity Center in reference to harassing calls and messages.

Tresspass Order 2/14

Officers responded to Fretwell in reference to a suspicious person. The person was located and issued a trespass order because he gave false information to a law enforcement officer.

VIEW FULL BLOTTER AT
[HTTPS://POLICE.UNCC.EDU/POLICE-LOG](https://police.uncc.edu/police-log)

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STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS

Chancellor Dubois and President Crean deliver their last State of the University address

by Megan Bird
News Editor

Chancellor Dubois delivered his last State of the University address on Feb. 13 during a general body Student Government Association (SGA) meeting. SGA President Chandler Crean also gave his first and final address. The night was largely dedicated to discussing recovery steps after the April 30 campus shooting that left two students dead and four others injured. Dubois also touched on the chancellor search and major construction projects.

Dubois and Crean both began their speeches with updates on April 30 remembrance efforts. The University will host activities all day and evening on the one-year anniversary. There will be yoga sessions, storytelling outside of Kennedy, individual and group listening sessions hosted by the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), guest speakers and student performances. At 5:30 p.m., participants will observe a moment of silence in the Star Quad and at 7:30 p.m., there will be a remembrance concert at the Belk theater.

Dubois said they decided to charge students \$10 for the concert tickets to discourage people from

reserving a seat and then deciding not to go.

“It doesn’t look good, and we want the Howells and Parliers to feel good,” he said.

When asked about the most memorable moment of his tenure, Dubois said April 30 was both his biggest regret and the longest day of his life.

“All of us who worked after that kept racking our brains for what we could have done differently to prevent it. I think I’ve come to accept that you can’t prevent an assailant determined to hurt people,” he said.

After the tragedy, the University hired an independent agency for \$650,000 to review and advise on UNC Charlotte’s security efforts.

Crean said that planning the vigil – just 6 days after he took office – was the proudest moment of his time in office.

“Seeing students, alumni and community come together was probably one of my proudest moments,” he said. “I don’t think Halton has ever been that filled.”

Dubois also discussed the shooting’s impact on undergraduate enrollment. After an all-time

high of 29,710 students in fall 2018, fall 2019 enrollment dropped 95 students overall with a decrease of 250 freshmen but growth in the graduate program. Spring semester enrollment decreased by 233 students from spring 2019. The University projects that 2021 fall enrollment will increase by 33 students.

UNC Charlotte won’t experience any budget cuts for the 2020-2021 school year but could see a decrease in 2021-2022 associated with the decline in enrollment. Dubois said this won’t be an issue of concern for facilities like UREC and the Student Union which have operating reserves, but it could impact CAPS, which has recently seen a large increase in demand.

The University is still pushing on, however, with several major construction projects. The science building as well as the conference center and hotel are expected to be completed by March 2021. The \$45 million needed to renovate the Burson and Cameron buildings still has yet to be approved as part of the state budget.

Dubois also discussed the process of finding a new chancellor. Officials are now considering three applicants who were selected from a group of 65 candidates. These three will come to campus for highly confidential tours and interviews. Two names will be sent to Interim UNC System President Bill Roper, who will approve one candidate for review by the Board of Governors. The Board is expected to make the final decision at their April 17 meeting.

“I’m sure I’ll look back and say I could’ve done that differently or that differently. But I think generally speaking, I’ve had a great relationship with the students, staff and Board of Trustees, so that’s a great way to go out,” said Dubois.

Dubois added that the biggest challenge for the next chancellor will be handling the University’s growth, “even though we’re a little bit in the doldrums with respect to enrollment.”

Crean and Dubois also discussed plans to invest millions in information and technology services, add more law enforcement along the light rail, add more women’s sports, including the new women’s lacrosse program, and bring motorized scooters and bikes to campus.



Photo of the Chancellor Dubois speaking at State of the University Address, photo by Niyathi Sulkunte

UNC CHARLOTTE'S BLACK STUDENT UNION: "A PEOPLE UNITED"

A brief history of the University's Black Student Union

by Kathryn Caudill
Intern

During February, which is Black History Month, the Black Student Union and their members find themselves reflecting on the past and present while also looking toward the future.

According to the Black Student Union, the organization was born from the need to represent the voices and lives of the black students on campus.

On Feb. 7, 1969, a small group of black UNC Charlotte students, community leaders and civil rights activist Dr. Reginald A. Hawkins held a vigil near the flagpole to commemorate the lives of three black students who were killed in the Orangeburg, SC massacre -- a civil rights movement turned deadly.

During the ceremony, the American flag was replaced with the Black Liberation flag flown at half-staff, which would later be removed by campus security.

The students sent a memo requesting the replacement of the flag to mourn the lives lost. The flag was not replaced, prompting the idea for an organized group to voice the opinions of black UNC Charlotte students. The process of forming this organization would be a test of perseverance and patience.

Student legislators voted against the student's charter to become an official student organization because of the ideals and values expressed. The black UNC Charlotte community then made a series of demands as an ultimatum that would attract the attention of faculty and eventually the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs on Feb. 28, 1969.

The Vice Chancellor agreed to a private meeting to discuss the demands imposed on the University. Then, the University pressed charges on the students, calling their actions "mutinous." Counter charges were then placed on the University by the students as they felt their freedoms were being impeded.

Chancellor Dean Colvard became involved in the matter in March 1969 after a month of negotiation.

On Nov. 26, 1969, the Black Student Union was granted their charter.

Today, the Black Student Union focuses on fulfilling the mission set forth by their predecessors to combat institutionalized racism on the UNC Charlotte campus as well as the

greater black community. The organization has a goal of creating an internal safe space for all black individuals to grow and learn, as well as progress and elevate the black community as a whole.

"The Black Student Union strives to be a nucleus for black individuals and organizations on campus. Our mission is to encourage self-actualization and create the space for the free flow of ideas and perspectives by allowing our members to lose themselves of inhibitions imposed on them by an oppressive reality," said a representative from the Black Student Union. "The black experience is by no means monolithic, but the ability to congregate as a kindred and support each other as individuals invaluable enriches our communal experience here at UNC Charlotte."



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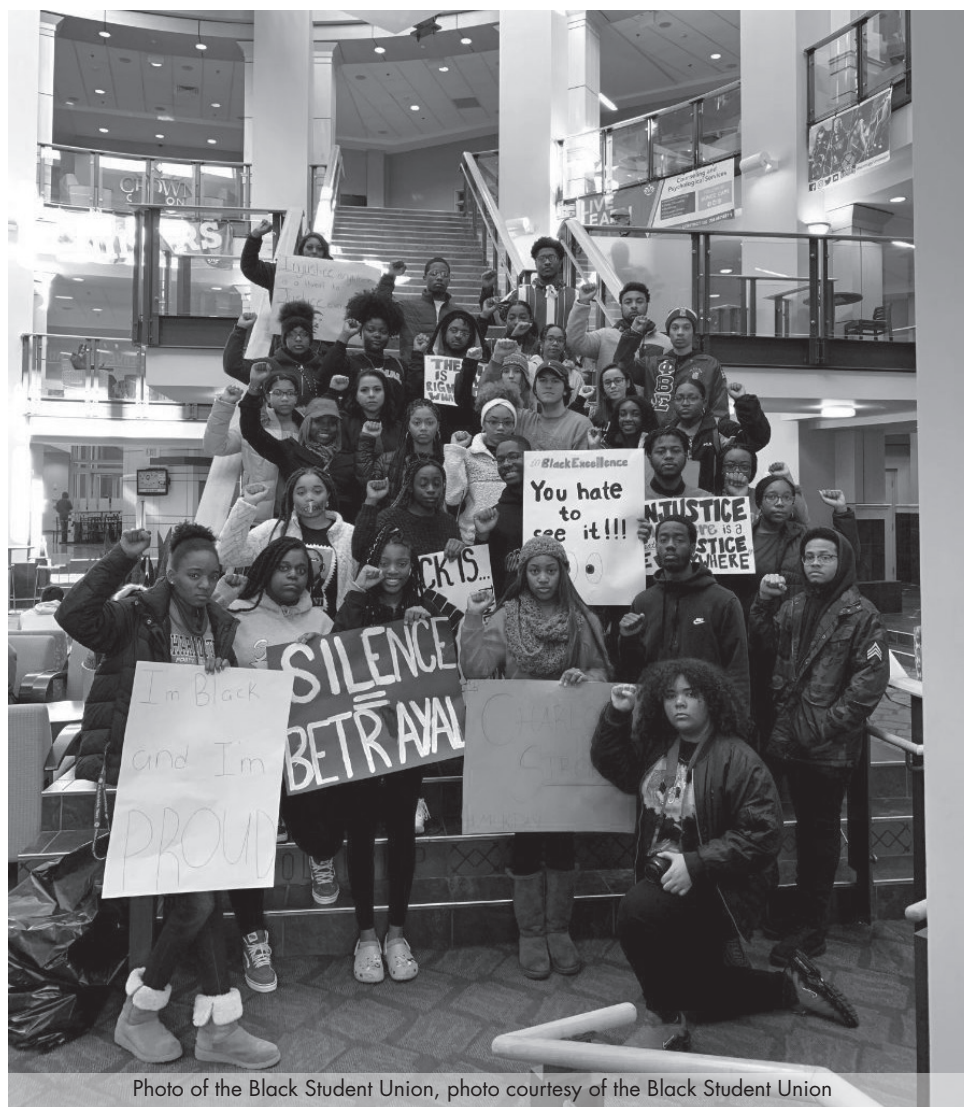


Photo of the Black Student Union, photo courtesy of the Black Student Union

TRAFFIC IN CHARLOTTE HITS A ROADBLOCK IN THE SUBURBS

The consequences of city traffic due to rapid population growth

by Matthew Hall
Staff Writer

The city of Charlotte, as most of us have experienced, has seen major growth within the past decade. As a student at UNC Charlotte having to traverse Charlotte on a regular occasion, I find myself constantly in traffic jams and having to bypass numerous wrecks. While this is to be expected in any major city, Charlotte has had record growth which has led to the increase in traffic. However, this does not only affect Charlotte, it also affects surrounding municipalities, such as Belmont or Lake Wylie. Rapid growth can have a multitude of negative effects that affect workers and residents in and around Charlotte.

As of 2019, according to the Charlotte Observer, Charlotte is the 16th largest city in the United States. The Charlotte Observer also reports that the population of the city of Charlotte, between 2017 and 2018, has grown by about 13,000. This brings the total population to about 870,000. But Charlotte is not the only growing city in the area nor is it the fastest growing city. Between 2017 and 2018, suburbs of Charlotte such as Waxhaw have grown by 6.44 percent and Fort Mill by 13.20 percent. This compares to the 1.53 percent growth that Charlotte experienced during the same time frame. The Charlotte Observer also points out that many millennials are moving to the suburbs in order to find cheaper housing, hence the exponential growth in Waxhaw and Fort Mill.

An article in The Wall Street Journal details the difficulties faced by Lake Wylie, another Charlotte suburb, due to this growth. Lake Wylie has faced several problems resulting from high growth. Rapid development has resulted in an increase in traffic, so much so that in an interview conducted by The Wall Street Journal, a resident stated that it took her forty minutes to drive three miles from her daughter's gymnastics class to their home. But this wasn't the only issue related to rapid growth as the city of Lake Wylie has had issues relating to the water provided to residents. Due to the demand for water, there has been numerous boil-water advisories (meaning water must be boiled because the filter system is not working properly). Lake Wylie, as a result of the rapid growth, has

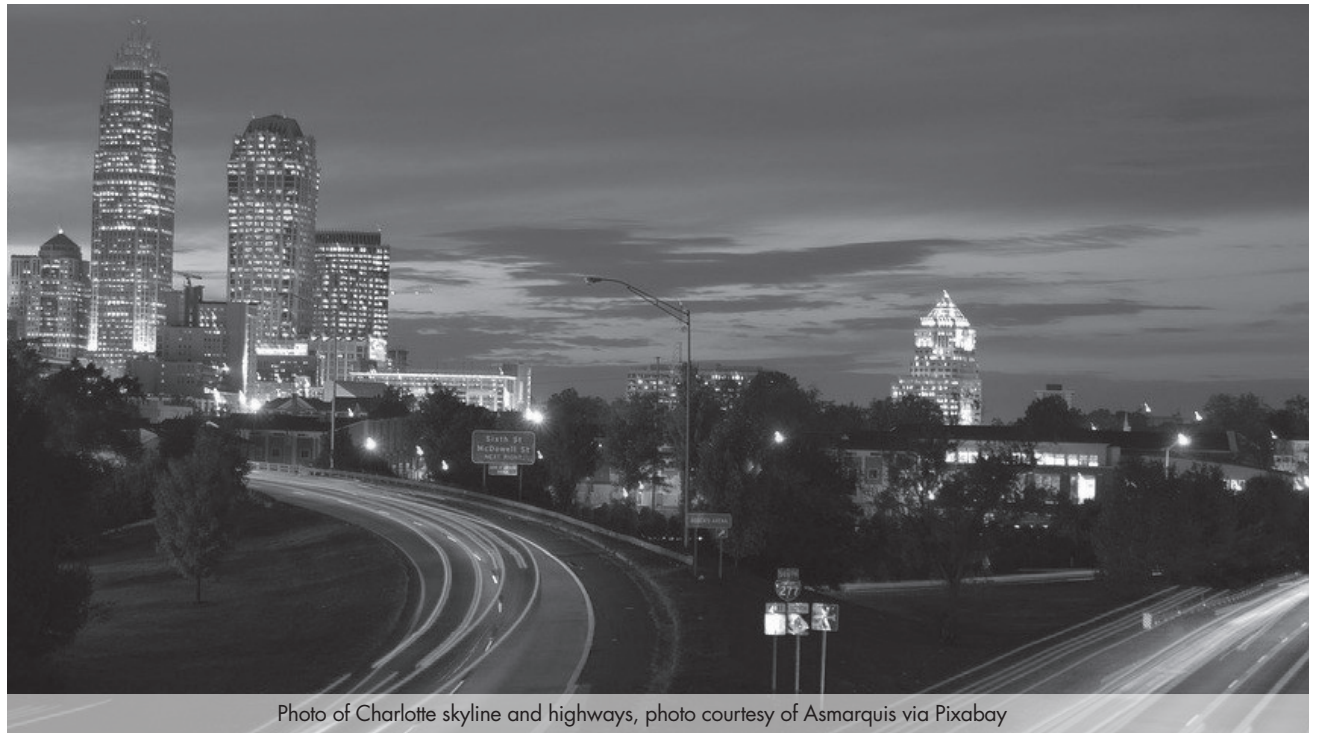


Photo of Charlotte skyline and highways, photo courtesy of Asmarquis via Pixabay

committed to a sixteen-month moratorium in which Lake Wylie will not accept any residential or commercial rezoning requests.

As someone from a suburb of Charlotte, I have found it quite frustrating as buildings seem to pop up out of nowhere and increased traffic has forced me to find new routes. According to The Charlotte Department of Transportation, in the last ten years there has been an increase of about 200,000 drivers, cyclists and pedestrians on roads within Charlotte. While this statistic only pertains to Charlotte, much of that traffic most likely comes from commuters from surrounding areas, such as Waxhaw and Fort Mill. I myself know a number of people who live in the suburbs and commute to work in Charlotte and they feel the same way.

When you're used to living in a somewhat low-density town and over a relatively short period of time it becomes a much higher-density town, it can be a shock. Of course this is not to say that growth is inherently bad as a town needs some growth to help sustain itself and the community

within it; however, there comes a time when there is too much growth in a relatively short period of time, such as in the case of Lake Wylie. That's why I support what Lake Wylie has done in terms of temporarily freezing new residential and commercial construction. In my opinion, if more towns around Charlotte implemented a similar plan to Lake Wylie, they would be better equipped to handle rapid growth. Charlotte and the surrounding areas will only continue to grow for the foreseeable future, but allowing towns to plan ahead would alleviate growing pains such as heavy traffic and overworked water systems.





PREVIEW: UNC CHARLOTTE WIND ENSEMBLE

A quick preview of the Wind Ensemble's upcoming concert

by Cecilia Whalen
Staff Writer

The UNC Charlotte Wind Ensemble's upcoming Feb. 19 concert will be a remarkable one for a few reasons. First, the concert will feature two brand new commissioned works from two nationally renowned composers. The works were commissioned by UNC Charlotte and a select group of other bands. Second, the concert will feature a special guest professional vocalist. Finally, it will be the same concert that the ensemble will present at the College Band Directors National Association Southern Division Conference in La., for which the ensemble will depart the following morning.

Being selected for this conference is no small honor. Bands are selected through an audition process from a pool of college bands from all over the southern United States. The Wind Ensemble will be one of only a handful of college bands to perform at this conference, which will take place in Natchitoches, La. Feb. 20 through 22. Dr. Shawn Smith, the director of the Wind Ensemble who will accompany them to Louisiana, emphasized the accomplishment of being selected as a featured band in a recent interview.

"Around the time I started here in 2013, the Wind Ensemble and I sat down



Dr. Shawn Smith, UNC Charlotte Director of Bands, photo by Daniel Coston

and talked about a few goals we would like to have for the ensemble as a whole," Smith said. "We had short-term, long-term and medium-term goals. Getting selected to perform at this concert was one of our medium-term goals."

Smith said that being selected for this conference also allowed them the opportunity to select a collection of challenging and meaningful pieces to prepare, particularly the two commissioned works, one by Venezuelan composer and professor at Michigan State University Ricardo Lorenz and the other by John Mackey. Smith considers Mackey's piece to be the centerpiece of the performance.

"The idea of doing commissions is exciting," Smith said. Some of the other bands that commissioned the works were able to perform them first, allowing Smith to hear the pieces before choosing what music to select for the concert. "I immediately wanted to do 'Places we can no longer go' by John Mackey."

"Places we can no longer go," according to Smith, is a very unique piece for composer Mackey. To begin with, the piece is soft and introspective: a change from Mackey's other more commonly loud and brash pieces. Most importantly, this piece is a very personal one. The piece depicts Mackey's mother's struggle with dementia. The music is played from the mother's point of view and features a solo soprano who represents her perspective. The Feb. 19 concert will feature guest soloist Lindsay Kesselman, a Charlotte-based soprano.

Mackey's mother was alive at the time of the commission but unfortunately has since passed. Smith similarly lost a family member to Alzheimer's and thus felt a particular relationship to this piece of music. At the same time, Smith feels that the piece holds a relatable and moving story that reaches all people, regardless of relationship to this particular experience.

"We, as human beings in general, turn to the arts when things are hard to deal with," Smith said.

Lorenz's piece, "Caminantes," also deals with human struggle in its exploration of migration, both physical and emotional.

"[The piece addresses] that process of leaving home and not knowing whether or not you can ever go back," Smith said. "There's all the uncertainty that goes with that, as well as the good memories that go with people's native lands."

Smith feels that this piece -- like that of Mackey -- is one with universal themes, relatable even to those who have not had the same literal experience.

"Abstractness can apply in so many ways," Smith said. "We [are able to] find whatever is in us that connects us to the music."

Along with the aforementioned pieces, the Wind Ensemble will be performing three other pieces ("Punch for Brass Ensemble" by Katy Abbott, "Spiel fur Blasorchester" by Ernst Toch and "Concerto Grosso for Saxophone Quartet and Wind Ensemble" by William Bolcom).

DATE: Feb. 19

LOCATION: Robinson Hall

PRICE: Free for College of Arts & Architecture majors, \$8 all other guests

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

F*CK the WORLD

Breaking down the latest EP from Brent Faiyaz

by Anders Hare
Staff Writer

The introspective commentary that was popularized by rap music in the 2010s has spread to other spheres of music over the last ten years. Today, songs from all genres embody this theme. R&B artists such as 6LACK and Russ have been able to wield this rhetorical device and use it to their advantage. However, no urban contemporary artist has been able to cradle this sound and attitude like the elusive Columbia, Maryland-native, Brent Faiyaz.

After a successful run with fellow DMV-natives GoldLink and Shy Glizzy on their hit song “Crew,” Grammy-nominated Faiyaz released his debut album “Sonder Son” back in 2017. A sleeper hit, the album developed a cult following from fans, and Faiyaz became known for his slow-burning instrumentals and haunting vocals. As a fan of Faiyaz’s debut—and the fact that he lived in Charlotte for a few years— I anticipated his return to the stage as an artist who not only had more stories to tell but developed a signature sound that could reach the masses. Instead, what came with Faiyaz’s latest release “F*ck The World” was a 10-track EP that appears to be more of the same.

Faiyaz is known for soothingly introspective R&B ballads, songs about his childhood and dealing with the world’s problems from the inside-out. This sound is prevalent on tracks from his debut album like “Gang Over Luv” and “First World Problemz / Nobody Carez.” While Faiyaz is known for this sound, there is not much growth between his projects. For example, “Let Me Know” is a beautifully arranged track from the EP, but its simple hook sounds monotonous at times. However, this does not negate the fact that the album does highlight important social issues in not only Faiyaz’s life but in the lives of his listeners. The hook of the track goes, “Who can I love when they tell me I can’t love myself? / How in the hell could I possibly love someone else?” While the song is repetitive, its lyrics pose questions that the listener may pose in their own life.

On “F*ck The World,” Faiyaz develops a voice that is directed toward his audience. On “Skyline,” the EP’s first track, he poses the question “Do you know what makes the world go ‘round?” in a high-pitched vocal, similar to

Photo courtesy of Lost Kids



Frank Ocean on “Nikes” from his sophomore album “Blond.” This rhetorical question is followed by commentary on how every decision we make affects not only us, but everyone around us. The lo-fi backdrop of dark synths and ghostly vocals adds depth to an already heavy topic, and it is a moment that makes you think about the track even after listening in a way that only Faiyaz can. He turns the camera back on himself to discuss the pressures of fame on the sonically-lighter “Clouded.” Faiyaz mentions the fear of people not seeing him for who he is, but rather his status and the achievements he has obtained.

As a fan, I believe Faiyaz’s intimately-propped sound makes him one of the best new artists in R&B today. As a lyricist, he is rich in social commentary and his sound is heavy enough to invoke listeners across all genres. However, Faiyaz’s latest body of work seems stunted; it is no different than what he has done before. In order to grow as an artist, Faiyaz needs to expand on his context and sound. “F*ck The World” is merely a stepping stone for Faiyaz’s true artistry to unfold.



Rating: 3 out of 5



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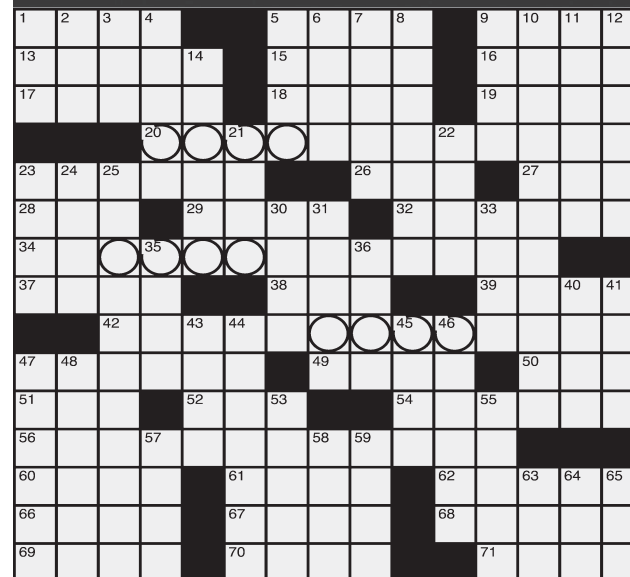
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DOWN

- 1 Suffers from
- 2 One of an inning's three
- 3 Pitcher's stat
- 4 Soothing cream
- 5 Carol kings
- 6 Hoppy brews, for short
- 7 Serious criminal
- 8 Portmanteau for a false ally
- 9 "Beat it, feline!"
- 10 Is remembered
- 11 Addictive narcotic
- 12 Oil cartel ship
- 14 Started the grass-growing process
- 21 ___ me tangere: "Don't touch me"
- 22 Place to park it
- 23 Ocean motion
- 24 Skip over
- 25 Age-old romantic adage
- 30 A single time
- 31 "___ it my best"
- 33 Graceful pond swimmer
- 35 "That ___ fair!"
- 36 Fedora feature
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- 57 "Insecure" Emmy nominee ___ Rae
- 58 Knighted actor Guinness
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- 63 ABC show for early risers, briefly
- 64 Long, long time
- 65 ICU workers

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- 13 Sainly glows
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- 56 Attributed speaker of the circled words
- 60 Medical suffix
- 61 Sentry's "Stop!"
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- 66 Eye part
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- 68 Iced tea wedge
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- 71 Avec's opposite

UPDATED EVERY DAY!

New faces

With a young team, Charlotte and new coach Chastain look to bring back energy to softball program

by Bradley Cole
Staff Writer

Photo courtesy of Pixel Perfect via flaticon



The 2019 and 2020 seasons have been full of change and new beginnings for the Charlotte athletic department. The men's basketball, baseball, tennis and football programs have all received new coaches in the last two years.

The softball team has a new face as well for the 2020 season and looks forward to get back to their winning ways.

Ashley Chastain takes the reigns as head coach after 25-year head coach Aimee DeVos was not retained by Charlotte last summer.

DeVos was the longest tenured softball coach in school history and racked up 630 wins. She helped Charlotte win a conference championship in 2006.

Chastain will have big shoes to fill at Charlotte but has been ready for the challenge since she was hired June 2019.

"I am extremely humbled and excited to be the next head softball coach for the Charlotte 49ers," Chastain said at the time of her hire. "We are going to build a foundation of competitive excellence in every aspect of the program in order to provide our student athletes the best experience possible."

Plenty of experience

Chastain comes to Charlotte with plenty of experience under her belt. Chastain was the pitching coach at the College of Charleston for three years and for one year at Michigan State. Her latest stint was with Ole Miss, where she helped the Rebels advance to the Super Regionals in 2019. The team had a 2.29 earned run average with Chastain as the

pitching coach.

Chastain herself has plenty of pitching experience as she played at SEC powerhouse South Carolina for three seasons. She had the lowest ERA on the team and led the team in starts her junior season.

Even though Chastain has plenty of experience under her belt, the new task at hand is the main focus for the young coach.

Charlotte is coming off of a tough 15-35 season and hasn't had a winning season since 2017. Chastain looks to turn things around.

"I'm excited to take Charlotte softball to the next level," Chastain said. "We look to contend for a Conference USA championship and get to the NCAA playoffs."

A young team

Chastain will have a young team on her hands this season with plenty of new faces. There is a total of eight newcomers and the infield will be made up of primarily freshman. Cori Henderson, Hailie Webster, Madelyn Wright, Tessa Hawkins, Reagan More and Riley Krueger are among those freshman. Maddux Hughes (Wright State) and Maddie Marchiando (Stetson) are the two transfers for Charlotte.

Chastain has seen her team come a long way since she first met with them back in the fall.

"We've come together as a team since September when we started practice," Chastain said. "We've learned a lot of lessons and we are still growing and learning."

Charlotte will be very young on the mound but still have some experience. The two seniors on the pitching

staff are Carson Pace and Alison Green. Pace has compiled a record of 7-8 while Green threw 61.1 innings last year and had 40 strikeouts.

"I think with the pitching staff we are learning how to compete," Chastain said. "Teaching the staff on how to go out with the right mindset and get as many strikes as possible."

When it comes to hitting, Charlotte does have a key returner in Bailey Vannoy. The sophomore catcher is coming off of a season where she had the second highest batting average on the team with a .331. She also had 39 hits and drove in 22 runs. Vannoy was also the only player for Charlotte to make the C-USA Preseason All-Conference team.

Vannoy will be a key leader for the 49ers as she not only brings talent to the table, but experience as well. Vannoy looks to be that leader Charlotte will need this year.

"What I see for our team this year is that we just need to keep moving forward," Vannoy said. "We've had some downs, but we can't ignore the highs we have had. I think we need to run with those highs we have had."

Vannoy was brought in to be a dominant hitter and hasn't disappointed so far. She knows how important she will be for a successful campaign.

"Coach puts a lot of belief in me and just tells me to do what you do and hit the ball hard," Vannoy said. "I think our lineup behind me has a really big role in keeping the momentum going. As long as someone starts it, we can keep going."

Big games ahead

The road to having a turnaround season won't be an easy one. Char-

lotte will have to play C-USA powerhouses such as Western Kentucky, Marshall and North Texas.

Along with that, the 49ers will have a tough run of non-conference teams on their schedule. Some of the most notable teams include SEC powerhouse South Carolina, the ACC's Clemson and Pittsburgh. Charlotte will then have to take on North Carolina (Mar. 17) and Duke (Mar. 18) in back-to-back games in the middle of the season. Towards the end of the season in April, Charlotte will visit Auburn for a two-game series.

Chastain has had plenty of experiences playing big teams in big time games and hopes her and her staff's experience translates into success for the 49ers.

"I think what rings true at the highest level can ring true here," Chastain said. "It's just about putting everything together."

Charlotte has already played ten games this season with five wins and six losses as of Sunday, Feb. 16. The 49ers lost two games to a tough Virginia team on opening weekend. Both games went into extra innings. Charlotte then went 1-1 against Appalachian State. In just those games, Chastain has seen a lot of improvement in her team that she hopes to continue to see.

"I think we have a lot of power at the plate, but I think we need to learn how to just keep it simple sometimes," Chastain said. "We just need to simplify our mentality moving forward."

Charlotte will have their first non-tournament style game this week. The 49ers will host USC Upstate on Wednesday, Feb. 19 at 4 p.m.

2020 SOFTBALL ROSTER

- 1 Bailey Vannoy C Soph.**
- 2 Paysia Reed C Soph.**
- 4 Cori Henderson INF Fr.**
- 6 Anna Devereaux OF Soph.**
- 7 Hailie Webster INF Fr.**
- 11 Madelyn Wright P/INF Fr.**
- 13 Tessa Hawkins INF Fr.**
- 14 Maddie Marchiando OF/UT Soph.**
- 17 Carson Pace P R-Sr.**
- 20 Maddux Hughes P Jr.**
- 21 Spenser Gray UT Sr.**
- 23 Imani Rochelle OF Soph.**
- 24 Reagan More P Fr.**
- 26 Riley Krueger INF Fr.**
- 27 Alison Green P Sr.**
- 99 Maggie Cannon P Soph.**

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Finalists will be invited to attend the Honors & Awards Program on **Monday, April 20.**

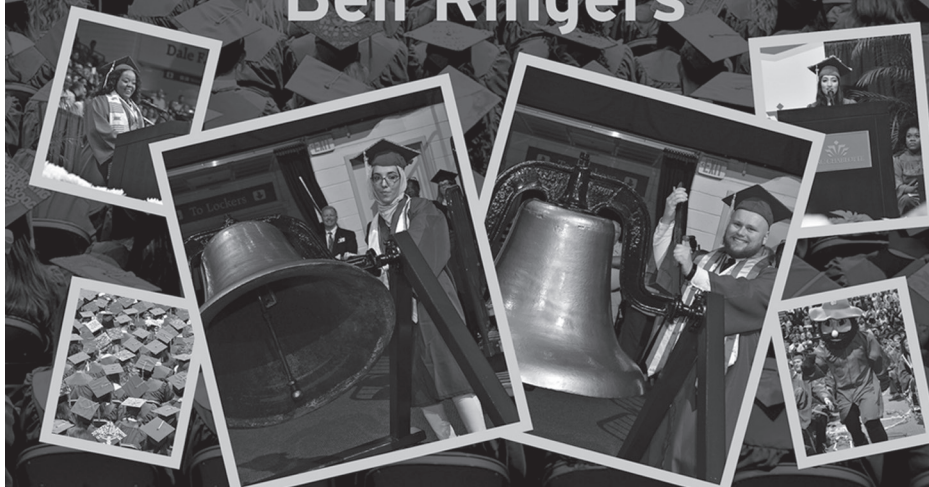
APPLY NOW!

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Deadline: Sunday, March 15 by 11:45 p.m.



Commencement Bell Ringers



• Must have minimum 2.75 cumulative GPA and be in good disciplinary standing

• Finalists invited to join the Dean of Students for lunch this semester

• Entered into Prize Drawings!

Apply Now! dso.uncc.edu

Deadline: Sunday, March 15 by 11:45 p.m.

One Bell Ringer will be selected for each ceremony



BOOK REVIEW: THE DISASTERS

A sci-fi thriller full of unique and relatable characters



by Sam San José
Staff Writer

Warning: There may be puns. I don't apologize. "The Disasters" is out of the world. This fast-paced space adventure is a wild ride from start to finish that I, could not put down. This novel is stellar in more ways than one and, hopefully, you'll be able to overlook the puns.

Set in the distant future, as the human race has extended their reach to the stars, the fate of the colonies is put on four washouts from the elite Ellis Station Academy where they have just been framed for a terrorist attack. What a start.

These four characters must race against the clock to uncover who was behind the attack. They also want to clear their names and get some payback along the way. They're out to make the Academy regret ever rejecting them.

The story is told from the point of view of Nasir Alexander "Nax" Hall, a hotshot pilot-wannabe from North Carolina. He has issues concerning anxiety, family and self-worth which make him a relatable character. The other washouts are just as troubled and fantastic. Together, they are a fantastic ensemble to go to the end of the universe with.

The amount of diversity among the characters is one of my favorite things about this book. I can't wait until that no longer has to be such relevant and high praise. Representation is so important and so many bases are covered in this book. This novel has so many characters of various races, religions and orientations (gender and sexual) that I can't even begin to give praise for. It has multiple characters of various backgrounds who fight to save the universe after only a short time frame of meeting. Nothing makes connections deeper than shared trauma.

"The Disasters" is for anyone who has struggled with never feeling good enough. Each character deals with this in some form or another and it is absurdly validating and reassuring to see it portrayed this way. Each character is complex and multifaceted. The world-building is ornate and intriguing. The writing is brilliant and witty but can be serious where it counts. It's fast-paced and constantly moving so you have to keep reading or bust.

I'm not really a sci-fi person in terms of literature. I get easily bogged down in the

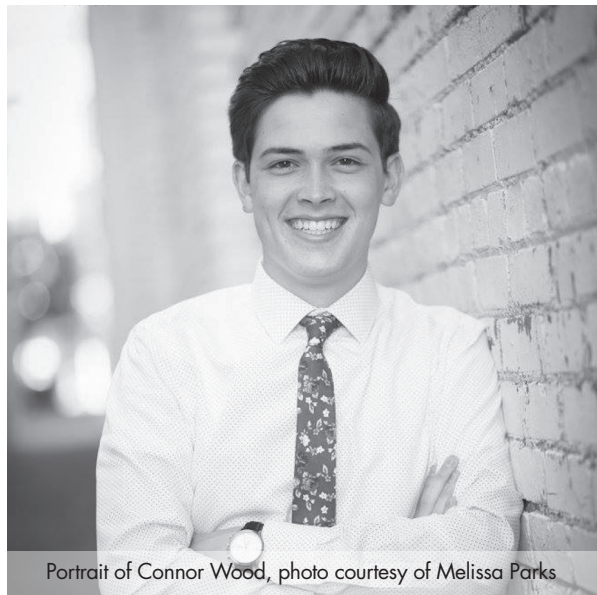
explanations and descriptions of technology and how things work, which is also an issue with the high fantasy genre, but that's for another day and another article. This book is an exception. It's easy to follow without sacrificing quality over quantity. The world-building is immersive and intricate, and anything to do with technology is simple to understand without having the struggle of rereading and losing pace or place.

"The Disasters" is a wild ride from cover to cover. M.K. England invited us into this great and terrible world of the sci-fi genre. England touches upon issues in such a profound and subtle way, so as to not make it suffocating for the reader or create a plot with overbearing themes. Overall, this thrilling action-adventure tale is phenomenal to the moon and back.

Genre: Sci-fi, Y/A, LGBT+

Rating: 4.5/5

Humans of UNC Charlotte: Connor Wood



Portrait of Connor Wood, photo courtesy of Melissa Parks

by Gracie Hood
Staff Writer

As a fall 2020 anticipated graduate, Connor Wood has not only impacted but inspired his colleagues throughout his time at UNC Charlotte. He represents the University as he strives for success while exemplifying school spirit through his various involvements: being an RA for two years, serving on the Homecoming Committee and working as the Live Program Coordinator for the Campus Activities Board (CAB). Some popular events he's helped plan are the Union Takeover and Roller Skates and Milkshakes.

Over this past summer, Connor completed research relating to his major in Geography and his minor in Economics. He participated in the Applied Geography Conference in Charlotte last semester and placed first. His research topic, "Crisis for the University Student: Changing Rents & Growing Campuses," discusses university housing and how it financially impacts students and residents of the entire UNC system. Additionally, Connor is heavily involved with the Office of Leadership and Community Engagement as one of two STAR Coordinators for the well-known program Leadership Fellows. Previously, he was a successful STAR Mentor and a fellow for this program. Last year, he was selected to attend the LeaderShape Institute with other campus leaders for a six-day discussion on leadership and implementing a vision to make a difference.

After college, he plans to earn an advanced degree pertaining to policy and law in order to focus on unjust housing in America. He has a passion for everything he does as a UNC Charlotte student and leader; he plans to take on the world to serve others one day.

NINER MEDIA SPEAKER SERIES

February 20th - CHHS 281 - 5:45PM

Student Niner Media will be hosting a speaker series this semester featuring several professionals in the communications and journalism field. Please join us for discussion and Q&A. **THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO ALL STUDENTS.**



RYAN PITKIN

Queen City Nerve
Co-Founder & Editor-In-Chief

Ryan Pitkin began studying journalism at Central Piedmont Community College in 2008, and interned with local alt-weekly Creative Loafing that same year. He later transferred to UNC Charlotte, where he worked as an editor at Niner Times before graduating in 2012. He worked as a freelancer with Creative Loafing — covering activism, poverty, crime and other similar beats — before getting a full-time job with Union County Weekly and

becoming managing editor. In 2015, he returned to Loafing and was editor-in-chief there in October 2018 when the publisher shut it down. A month later, he and his business partner launched Queen City Nerve, where they recently celebrated their one-year anniversary.

For more information please email studentmedia@uncc.edu
or call 704-687-7129

