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Spring Fever

2026



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Finish off the semester strong with a spring reset

Sofia DiStefano | News Editor

As spring break wraps up and students return to campus, the final stretch of the semester begins.

Whether you're dreading it or not is a different story, but after a full week off, hopefully you can find a fresh sense of energy to finish off the school year strong.

Instead of falling straight back into the same routine, taking a little time to reset your habits and environment can make the rest of the semester feel more manageable and even enjoyable, especially for those who are preparing for post-grad life.

One of the easiest ways to start a spring reset is by refreshing your space.

Dorm rooms and apartments often collect clutter over the course of a busy semester, and cleaning up can have a surprisingly big impact

on your mindset.

A clean space can help you feel more focused and motivated when classes start back up.

Another helpful reset strategy is to revisit your semester goals.

Spring break offers a natural pause to reflect on what has been going well and what might need adjustment. Take a few minutes to review your course syllabi, upcoming assignments and personal commitments. If your schedule felt overwhelming earlier in the semester, this is a great time to reorganize your planner or digital calendar and create a plan for the weeks ahead.

Getting back into healthy routines is also an important part of the reset.

After a week of traveling or just vegging out at home, it can take time to readjust to academic life.

Start small by setting consistent sleep times or blocking out study sessions between classes.

Even simple habits, like taking a short walk outside or drinking more water, can help boost your energy.

Spring is also a great time to take advantage of all that is offered on campus.

Participate in Earth Month, go thrifting, or maybe even just do your homework or people watch outside of the Popp-Martin Student Union, honestly, just do whatever interests you.

But it's also important to remember that a reset doesn't have to mean completely reinventing your routine. Sometimes it is simply about slowing down long enough to check in with yourself and make small adjustments.



Lauren Steventon, Ava Weaver & Megan Khor/Niner Times File

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A look into some flowers and trees blooming this spring in N.C.

Giselle Jimenez Del-Carmen | Asst. News Editor

As spring approaches, so too do warmer temperatures thaw the body into new beginnings, accompanied by the various flowers and trees that bloom with new opportunities.

Below are some of the flowers and trees coming to life in front yards and parks this coming spring.

Snapdragons

What may look like a tiny, colorful Christmas tree will be a snapdragon. They come in all kinds of colors, adding vibrancy to spring greens. They have over 70,000 varieties, with some surviving the summer heat. Most varieties are perfect for spring, as they prefer cool, moist soil. Other varieties can survive the summer heat, but spring is their prime time, as they require well-drained soil and full to part sun. Snapdragons are also edible but bitter, so they may function better as a garnish.

Azaleas

These shrubs bloom in spring with hundreds of bright petals and can make good decorations for lining front yards or public spaces, as they come in a variety of colors. Additionally, they don't require strict conditions to grow; they only need moist soil and full or partial sun. Azaleas can grow up to two or three feet tall and around 12 to 15 feet wide. Once grown, they make a great addition to a fairy-like nature environment.



Ranunculus

Ranunculus flowers, also known as buttercups, have a shape similar to a rose but are a little flattened. They range in color from reds to violets and soft pastel colors. Their beauty is most commonly appreciated in bride bouquets, but if not used to marry, they require “just right” care to be grown at home, with full sun exposure and afternoon shade. Their soil needs to be well-draining with light sandy loam. Once cared for, they will bloom throughout spring and into summer for six weeks.

Flowering cherry tree

Larger than flowers and adding pink and white accents to spring temperatures are the flowering cherry trees. These trees are perfect for a “flowery” background, adding a whimsical ambiance. They come in small to medium sizes, measuring 15-25 feet, and they're commonly used for decoration, whether at home or in public. The reason they're great for decoration is due to the wide range of soils and sun exposure they can grow in. However, to keep this tree, moderate watering is a must.

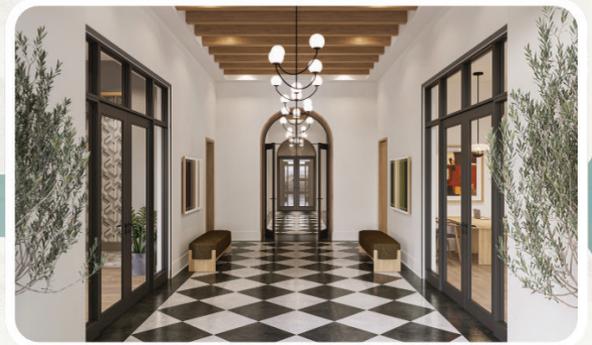
Daisies

The “they love me, they love me not” rhyme is associated with these flowers that, unlike the former ones, grow as individual flowers. They're most commonly grown as white, but they also come in pink or yellow varieties. Daisies are considered low maintenance despite having a flower within a flower. Their yellow centers are tiny flowers, and alongside their white petals, they love lots of sunshine to grow. When night approaches, they close up, waiting for a new day to begin.

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The honking truth about UNC Charlotte's geese

Davis Cuffe | Editor-In-Chief

They're on campus, in the skies and in a beautiful poem by Mary Oliver; Canadian geese are a key feature of spring at UNC Charlotte.

Despite their abundance during campus's warmer months, due to their unspeaking nature, much of these birds' identity remains shrouded in mystery.

The *Niner Times* reached out to a local flock of geese but did not receive comment prior to publishing.

Still, here's what we know about the campus's Canadian geese.

Why are they here?

All geese really need is green vegetation and a nearby body of water to sustain a habitat. Hechenbleikner Lake and Bocker Pond on campus have been the perfect catalysts in making the campus attractive to geese.

They don't mind humans, so places like golf courses, neighborhoods and college campuses

have become home to growing geese populations.

UNC Charlotte facilities management says the campus goose population is around 350. This population is managed with the help of Flyaway Geese, a humane migratory bird management company.

Do they actually migrate to Canada over the winter?

Flying around in their V-shaped migration formation, Canadian geese can travel 1,500 miles in just 24 hours. But, as southern goose populations have gotten more accustomed to suburban living and warmer temperatures, some have stopped migrating altogether.

Geese populations further north and in the Midwest still migrate due to harsher winters, but as southern populations have found homes in warmer residential areas and ponds, they no longer need to migrate.

Why are they called Canadian geese?

The correct term for these geese is Canada goose, but they're known colloquially as Canadian geese. The Latin name for them is "*Branta canadensis*," which means black goose from Canada. Canadian geese mated primarily in Canada for quite some time, but were never exclusive



to the area. The Great Lakes region and the northern U.S. have always had populations of these geese.

Why are Canadian geese protected?

In the late 1900s, Canadian geese were almost wiped out entirely by hunters and the destruction of their natural habitats in the U.S.

Facing extinction in parts of North America, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 made it illegal to hunt, kill, sell or possess Canadian geese, including their nests and eggs, outside of regulated hunting seasons.

With the help of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the introduction of a few resident flocks, the Canadian goose population has made an apparent comeback. They now live in every U.S. state and Canadian province.

After being introduced to parts of Europe and Asia in the 17th century for hunting, the geese established successful populations on both continents and now maintain breeding populations there.

Why are they so mean?

Canadian geese aren't necessarily mean, just protective. Male geese (ganders) take defending nests and female geese very seriously and will honk, hiss or even attack anything that they think threatens their nests or mates.

After years of living around humans, most geese have lost their fear of them, but fear may never have been a problem for geese; Canadian geese have attacked animals as large as gorillas.

Geese are especially territorial during warmer months when they breed and raise their young. Canada geese may display threatening behaviors such as head pumping, opening their bill with the tongue raised, hissing, honking and vibrating their neck feathers.

Should you feed Canadian geese?

If you have some extra Bojangles, don't give it to the geese. Canadian geese live on a healthy diet of green vegetation, and giving them food like crackers or bread can lead to deformities.

Even if you have a handful of grass handy or something that you think would be healthy for the geese, feeding them can cause a dependency where they no longer forage for things that would typically make up their diets.

Are geese romantic?

Well, I'd say so. Once Canadian geese are around two years old, they start looking for a mate and will mate for life once they've found love.

Geese typically breed assortively, with larger males pairing with larger females. Divorce rates among Canadian geese are around 15%, and divorce only really happens when a pair fails to breed.

These geese typically live 10-24 years in the wild, so their marriages often last longer than other waterfowl like mallards, which live 5-10 years. The oldest Canadian goose ever recorded was 33 years old.

Are there too many of them?

After flirting with extinction in the early 1900s, some have raised concerns over too many geese — especially in residential areas. Geese poop everywhere, can be aggressive and tear up grass and vegetation.

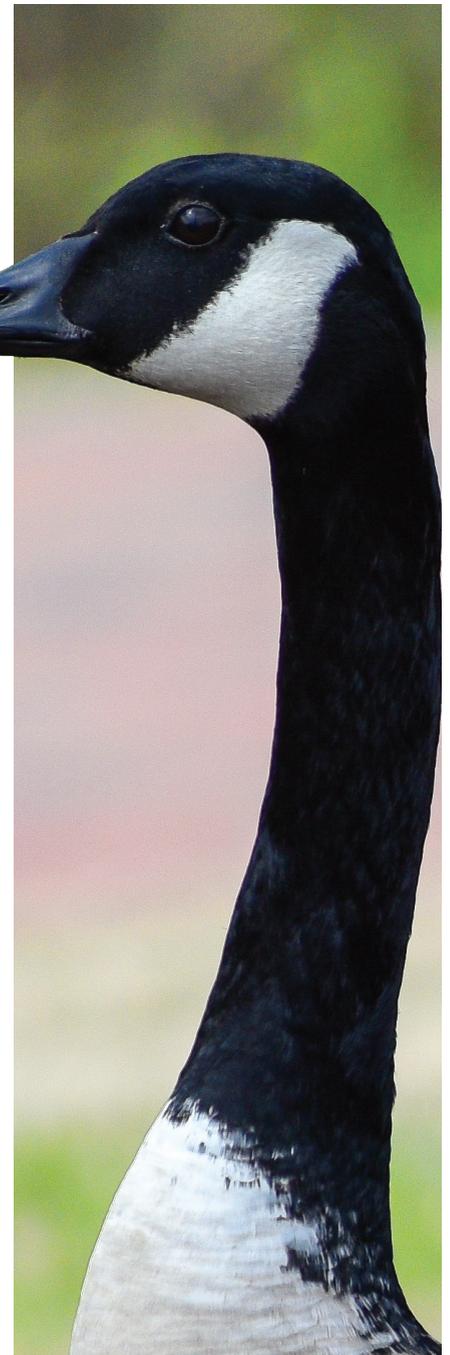
The North Carolina goose population is estimated to exceed 150,000 geese. One adult goose can produce up to two pounds of feces per day.

This has raised environmental concerns in states such as Michigan, where the goose population is approximately 280,000. Goose waste contains high levels of phosphorus and nitrogen, which in large quantities can cause eutrophication — the

growth of algal blooms in water bodies.

As Canadian geese are still protected by federal law, destroying eggs, killing or harming geese can lead to fines or even jail time. Still, there are ethical ways to deter geese.

Scaring them away, adding eggs or destroying empty nests are all perfectly legal geese protection methods.





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SPRINGING INTO CHANGE

NT PLAYLIST



Megan Khor/Niner Times

NT Playlist: Springing into change

Wes Packham | Writing Managing Editor

Spring brings change whether you're ready or not — the weather is getting warmer, trees are regaining their leaves, flowers are starting to bloom and the sun is setting later. For many, this season also brings a new sense of motivation and a striving for personal change.

Music is a large part of one's personal atmosphere, and has the

capability to shape how you move around the world. Picking your perfect soundtrack can be vital to entering the new season in the best mindset. This playlist has upbeat and varied tracks that reflect the changing season and don't settle in one place for long.

This tracklist offers a wide range of different tracks across the genre spectrum, featuring songs from

avant-garde jazz-rock to Jamiroquai's acid-jazz to cloud rap and neo-soul. Hella brings their unconventional time signatures, Cibo Matto brings some of their signature upbeat art-pop and rock outfits, Oasis, Led Zeppelin and R.E.M. round out the selection with some of their more laid-back tracks.

Take a listen, step out of your comfort zone and enjoy the energy.

Column: Spring is the season of reinvention; how I change with the weather

Emsley Jackson | Opinion Editor



Chris Crews/Niner Times File

I'm a big believer in letting the changing of seasons stand as to-do lists left on my metaphorical kitchen counter by Mother Nature. Everyone has heard of the chore that is "spring cleaning" and the notion that you should toss your closet at the first sight of a flower blossoming. Few people acknowledge that the real beauty of spring is not starting completely from scratch, but rather, making changes to the life you already live for a fresher perspective. With that being said, here's what has been on my to-do list to bring spring center stage and to clear out the cobwebs.

To-do:

Bring the green inside

Colors gradually come back to the outdoors when spring rolls around, but bringing the green inside makes all the difference. Even adding just one plant can brighten your bungalow. I recently made a trip to a plant nursery in Charlotte with a very specific goal in mind: find a suitable jade plant. Jade plants are beautiful, resilient succulents that I have a fondness for, along with the mystical orchid flower. They can survive for generations and have long been known as plants that spiritually represent good luck, harmonize environments and promote balance in the home or workplace. On a more practical note, they also help filter chemicals in the air and bring color to your space. After the tragic passing of my six-year-old jade plant, Jade-a Pinkett-Smith, I decided it

was time to turn over a new leaf and buy a replacement.

Acquire fruits coming back into season

As the weather gets warmer, certain fruits begin to reappear on shelves, at farmers' markets and even in the fast food drive-thrus. I love pears in the winter, and I really love autumn apples, but my fridge is always more colorful come spring. Peaches, blackberries, nectarines, apricots and kiwis — oh my! We live at a privileged point in modern history where much of our produce is grown and available year-round, but finding fresh fruit in its peak season is an incomparable, simple luxury. Spring is the hostess with the most-ess, ushering us outside and inviting us to bask in the beautiful decor she's set out for us. Seasonal fresh fruit fits perfectly with this theme, whether you enjoy it at a picnic or from a Tupperware container while eating your packed lunch on the front porch of the union.

Take inventory of the important people in your life

No, this does not mean taking them to Goodwill like the rest of your closet; this means taking inventory of who matters and letting them know that they do. These people, friends, romantic partners, coworkers, whomever, have been with you through the changing of the seasons, perhaps every season of your life, and deserve to be ushered into this new season too. Maybe a neglected friendship frozen over needs help thawing, or a reminder

to call a family member has gotten dusty and buried under clutter. I have made a physical list of people that I love, miss and need to get in touch with for any reason, and am reaching out to every one of them. Reinvention doesn't always have to be a solo journey.

Change your look

This one is a cliché, but what better way to feel like a brand-new person without doing too much? I started my spring change in January, admittedly, by cutting bangs for the first time in my adult life, but every girl knows this is huge and enough of a change to last until spring. I also got a color analysis done recently and learned that I am a "soft summer." This has completely changed everything I've ever known and permanently altered my shopping eye, as I now must look for items that are 'dusty', 'misty' and 'muted'. Trust me, I am none of those things.

My point in saying all of this is that change is good. It can be scary, but it helps us learn who we are. Spring is the most optimal time of year to make the jump and change your look a bit, even just minimally. Try a new haircut, color or style. Accessorize if you don't normally. Shop in the part of the store you never look in. Do something daring with your nails.

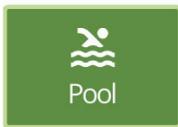
In conclusion, take all these changes in stride. Don't worry about if the journey is messy, it'll all buff out by summer.



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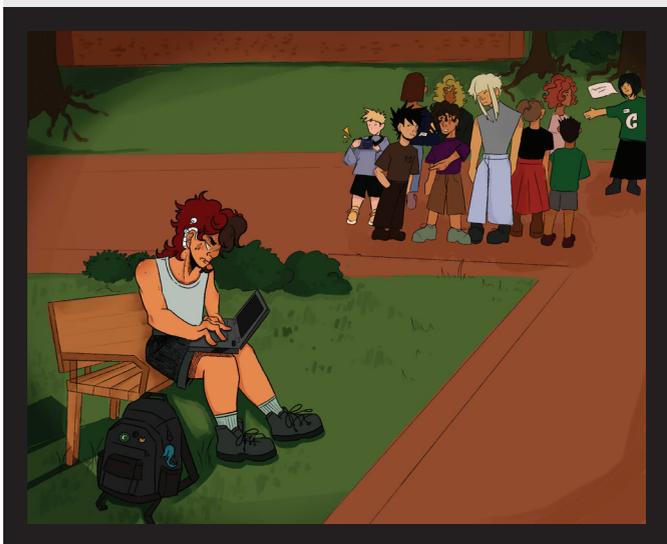
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Niner's Comics: Campus tours

Rowan Kaake | Staff Illustrator



Guide: Staying active on and around campus this spring

Wes Packham | Writing Managing Editor

With warmer weather and later sunsets, spring is the perfect time to get outside and stay active. Here are several options on and around campus to help you enjoy the season at UNC Charlotte.

Indoor facilities

The University Recreation Center (UREC) is one of the most popular spots on campus, whether you're a serious gym-goer or someone who simply enjoys the outdoor pool.

The UREC offers a variety of special programs and training courses, including Intro to Strength Training, Group Fitness Foundations, Advancing Your Pilates and a group fitness instructor training course.

The James H. Barnhardt Student Activity Center has an indoor climbing wall with beginner, intermediate and advanced routes, offering free admission and equipment for first-time visitors.

In addition to the UREC, the Belk Gym provides basketball and volley-

ball courts and a 25 meter pool.

More information and hours for UNC Charlotte recreational facilities are available at <https://urec.charlotte.edu>.

Getting outside

The Northeast Recreational Field Complex offers open field space on weekdays and allows students to check out equipment from UREC for free.

If you're more into aquatics, the UREC Outdoor Pool is expected to open April 1, depending on weather conditions. The pool offers lounge chairs, a wading area and open swim.

In addition to specific facilities, there are plenty of open fields all across campus to toss a Frisbee around or pass a volleyball back and forth with your friends.

Sports and competition

UNC Charlotte's Intramural Sports program provides opportunities for both individual and team competitions. Students can

participate in one-day activities and multi-week tournaments. Dozens of opportunities are offered each semester, including basketball, volleyball, table tennis and soccer.

There are also several dozen sports clubs on campus, providing a more community-driven space to enjoy your favorite athletic activity.

Off campus

Lake Norman — about a 25-minute drive north of campus — has several beaches for open swimming, including Ramsey Creek Park and Lake Norman State Park.

Inner Peaks Climbing Center is a popular rock climbing gym with three different locations across the Queen City, with facilities in North Davidson (NoDa), Matthews and South End.

For those wanting to try a new sport, disc golf might be a good choice. Charlotte is often regarded as one of the best cities in the United States for disc golf, currently boasting over 70 courses.



Earth Month events to look forward to this spring



Sofia DiStefano | News Editor

UNC Charlotte will celebrate Earth Month throughout spring with a series of events leading up to Earth Day on April 22.

Organized by the University's Office of Sustainability and campus partners, the 2026 celebration will feature more on-campus programming than in previous years.

Events include sustainability tours, volunteer opportunities, workshops and festivals designed to engage students in the surrounding Charlotte community in all things Mother Nature.

Below are some events pulled from the schedule of Earth Month events happening on campus.

March 24

Student Sustainability Summit from 5:45 - 7 p.m. in EPIC room 322

The Office of Sustainability and the Student Government Association will host their biannual Student Sustainability Summit in an effort to promote environmental awareness.

March 26 - April 16

Earth Month Tour Series from noon - 1 p.m.

A series of weekly campus tours will highlight sustainability initiatives at UNC Charlotte. Tours include visits to the Botanical Gardens, Hechenbleikner Lake and the EPIC building to showcase Charlotte's green infrastructure.

March 31

Earth Day festival from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. in Belk Plaza

The annual Earth Day Festival will feature environmental organizations from both UNC Charlotte and the Charlotte community. The event will highlight sustainability initiatives and offer educational resources.

'Swap Till Ya Drop' clothing swap from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. in Belk Plaza

The clothing swap encourages sustainable fashion practices by allowing students to exchange gently used clothing instead of purchasing new items.

April 2, 9, 16 and 23

Earth Month film series from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. in EPIC and Klein College of Science

The Office of Sustainability will host a four-part film series exploring environmental topics such as sustainable infrastructure, transportation, environmental ethics and consumer culture. Each screening will include a panel discussion.

April 7

Campus Beautification Day from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Students can volunteer to help clean and beautify various spots on campus through litter pickup and planting projects.

April 16

Wear, Care, Repair Workshop from 1 - 3 p.m. in Area 49 Makerspace, J. Murrey Atkins Library

This workshop will teach participants how to repair and repurpose clothing using sewing machines and basic materials provided by the Makerspace.

April 17

Student Garden Day from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. at student gardens, staff gardens, pollinator gardens and Jamil Niner Student Pantry gardens

Volunteers will help repair and plant garden spaces across campus. Registration is required through an online form, which can be found on Niner Engage.

April 22

Party for the Planet from 4 - 7 p.m. in Belk Plaza

The Earth Day celebration will feature student organizations hosting activities centered on sustainability, cultural diversity and wellness.

For further details on Earth Month activities, visit Sustainability's website.