

# Interviewing Tyler Oakley

Fame, LGBTQ+ activism, YouTube culture, and more, page 6



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# SGA PASSES NEW CROSSWALK SAFETY ACT

*Student Senate of UNC Charlotte passes “Act to Address Pedestrian and Traffic Flow”*

By Josephine Justin  
Intern

On Sept. 12, 2019, the Student Senate of the UNC Charlotte passed an “Act to Address Pedestrian and Traffic Flow,” also known as the “Crosswalk Safety Act.” The primary sponsor of the legislation, Jacob Baum, is the Pro Tempore of the Student Senate.

Over the past couple of years, off-campus housing has grown to include Haven49 and University Crossing, resulting in hundreds of students who have to cross University City Blvd to enter campus every day. Many UNC Charlotte students who live or park off-campus either walk or bike to class. The legislation

addresses this concern by asking for the City of Charlotte and UNC Charlotte to partner together to establish proper infrastructure to regulate pedestrian and traffic flow in and around the University area.

On Aug. 2, UNC Charlotte graduate student Vivek Pathipati was fatally struck by a van while walking along University City Boulevard. The North Carolina Department of Transportation has been working with others to make the area safer by adding concrete medians so drivers won’t be able to turn left.

Currently, UNC Charlotte has created crosswalks at Craver Rd,

Mary Alexander Rd and Cameron Boulevard in order to regulate pedestrian and traffic flow. In Section I of this legislation, the Student Senate proposes that UNC Charlotte “conduct a study on pedestrian safety and traffic flow at the crosswalks of Mary Alexander Rd at Robinson Hall and University Rd at the Reese building.”

The Student Senate also “supports and encourages UNC Charlotte to consider implementing temporary or permanent signalized crosswalks on Mary Alexander Rd at Robinson Hall and University Rd at the Reese building” in Section II of

the Crosswalk Safety Act.

Enrique Rodriguez-Cue, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee and a secondary sponsor of the legislation, believes pedestrian safety is a “widely-held concern of the student body” especially when it comes to “crosswalks that operate on a yield system.” Rodriguez-Cue is concerned for students because he sees how “drivers speed on John Kirk Drive all the time, but people who walk to class from the apartment complexes surrounding campus use that crosswalk frequently.”

The City of Charlotte’s “Vision Zero: Safer Streets for Charlotte 2019-2030 Action Plan” aims to “reduce crashes and eliminate traffic-related deaths and severe injuries.” E Mallard Creek Church Road, located in the northeast perimeter of campus, is identified as an area with a high incidence of severe and fatal crashes in this plan.

Inside UNC Charlotte, which is produced and maintained by the Office of University Communications, published an article on Sept. 16, 2019 about a University Area Thoroughfares Study that will be conducted by UNC Charlotte, University City Partners, the Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) and North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). The purpose of the study is “to improve access and safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and motor vehicles that may enter and exit UNC Charlotte’s main campus.”

The University Area Thoroughfares Study is in the initial public involvement phase that includes a survey. All faculty, staff, students and visitors are encouraged to participate and can choose to be entered into a prize drawing.



## NEWS



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# ON CAMPUS ORG: WITCHES ACROSS CAMPUS

*Witches Across Campus explains why witchcraft is more than just some hocus pocus*

by Emily Kottak  
Intern

Photo courtesy of Roadcrusher via Wikimedia Commons

UNC Charlotte has over 400 student organizations, all with differing missions. One of UNC Charlotte's newer organizations is Witches Across Campus.

Witches Across Campus is a student organization targeted for students who believe in or are simply interested in the idea of witchcraft. The organization is open to everyone and hosts various events throughout the semester to help members learn more about witch-related traditions and activities.

"I think the biggest misconception about our group is that people think we go to cemeteries and sacrifice things, which is totally not true,"

"Since this organization is fairly new, we are still in the process of planning some of our events," said Julianna Peres, junior and treasurer of Witches Across Campus. "We are thinking about events like teaching book binding, essential oils workshops, what different spells and colors denote and spell casting."

Witches Across Campus' most recent event was Mabon Pagan, a holiday which celebrates the autumn equinox. The idea behind Mabon is that the harvest is winding down as crops are being stored for the approaching winter. Mabon is the mid-harvest festival where many Pagans or those who follow Wiccan tradition give thanks for what they have.

It is considered a time of plenty, thankfulness and sharing with those who are less fortunate. Witches Across Campus celebrated Mabon Pagan by gathering for a potluck and sharing in fellowship.

Witches Across Campus aims to challenge the commonly accepted idea of what makes a "witch."

"I think the biggest misconception about our group is that people think we go to cemeteries and sacrifice things,

which is totally not true," said Peres. "Also, a lot of people use the term warlock, but that is actually a derogatory term; men can be witches too. I feel like being a witch attracts a lot of people interested in feminism and LGBT rights."

So how does one get involved with learning about or discovering him or herself to be a witch? After talking to a few members of Witches Across Campus it appears that the best way is to partake in a lot of research, reading and self-discovery.

"There are so many various types of witches; it is a very customizable practice," senior and president of Witches Across Campus Iva Austin said. "You have to find the path that suits you best and fits your lifestyle. It's not hard to get into, it's just knowing where and how to begin."

Austin leads an online social media platform on the site Amino, a network for joining communities based on personal interests. Austin's community is called Witches and Witchcraft and has 38,000 members worldwide.

Students can find more information on the Witches

"I want people to know that anyone is welcome here," said Peres. "You don't have to be any sort of kind of anything to be here."

Across Campus page on Niner Engage. The student organization is still getting started, but current members emphasized that the group is not closed and anyone is welcome anytime.

"I want people to know that anyone is welcome here," said Peres. "You don't have to be any sort of kind of anything to be here."



# WHAT SCHOOLS DON'T TEACH US

How the NC school system ignores our controversial past

by Meghna Iyer  
Intern



It would be impossible to fully teach a state's entire history during a student's time in school -- I know that. Nonetheless, there have been many key events in our past that changed the course of the future, and to disregard that is to deny something that shaped who we are today.

Take the Mecklenburg County Declaration of Independence: An article published in the spring of 1819 in the Raleigh Register proclaimed that over a full year before the United States of America sent its Declaration of Independence to Great Britain, more than twenty citizens of Mecklenburg County got together and wrote of their own secession from England. It was stated that one of the leaders, Thomas Polk, read it on the stairs of the Charlotte Courthouse. Another one of the men, James Jack, rode up to Philadelphia for the Second Continental Congress to deliver it to the North Carolina representatives, who decided it was too drastic for the time and didn't tell the others. The original version of the document was apparently lost to a fire in the early 1800s and it was pieced together through the notes of one of the signers. Thomas Polk's son even tracked down some of the original signers, and while details varied, they all agreed that the declaration was genuine.

In North Carolina, this was hailed to be indisputable, but when news of this reached John Adams, and through him, Thomas Jefferson, the skepticism grew. It turned out that there had been some passages in the "Meck Dec" that had been copied verbatim from the nation's Declaration of Independence, which brought into question not only the authenticity of the former, but which document came first. One conclusion guaranteed that the Meck Dec wasn't valid, and the other implied that Jefferson copied from a low-profile document that most didn't know existed, and neither was ideal.

North Carolina's 1975 license plate said



"First in Freedom", but in '82 was changed to "First in Flight" as time went on and more and more evidence proved the Meck Dec to be fake. All we know for sure now is that there was a document called the Mecklenburg Resolutions which talked about not accepting Great Britain's laws, but it was far from a petition to leave the Mother Country entirely.

On a more serious note, another event not talked about in schools is the Greensboro Massacre of 1979.

Much more recent, it originally was meant to be a march against the Ku Klux Klan — the event was dubbed "Death to the Klan" — and a challenge printed in the newspaper by the organizers, the Communist Workers Party (CWP) told the KKK of the time and place of the march. The CWP was a multi-racial labor group, and the place they had chosen for the march was called Morningside Homes, a predominantly Black community. The Klan arrived armed nearly an hour earlier than the start time. Meant to commence at noon, a group of white supremacists (a mix of the KKK and neo-Nazis) drove multiple cars into the crowd and started shooting at the CWP at 11:23.

Local authorities allegedly assumed a small-scale event wouldn't need much protection, so there had been only four police officers on scene. In the end, the police officers didn't do much

and they never received backup.

Five people were killed and another 10 were injured. Only one person had a weapon and started firing back, and he was one of the five that died. Two days prior to the march, one of the officers who was also part of the KKK got a map of the route they planned to march with the intent of starting a violent altercation.

Video evidence gave undeniable proof to the event, but in two separate criminal court cases in 1980, all of the accused were acquitted by an all-white jury. Another case in 1984 also acquitted the culprits, but they managed to win a \$48 million civil case in 1985. However, they were only awarded \$400,000

of the original request and only seven of sixty-five perpetrators were even charged.

Though these are two vastly different stories, they are connected by our desperate need to see the past as a gilded age. The fact that there are still people that believe that there really was a Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence and there are people that have no idea that the Greensboro Massacre was a real event shows that rather than acknowledging our mistakes to move forward, we try instead to erase our history of wrongdoings. What we don't seem to realize is that ignoring our problems and teaching our children that we have done no wrong is more detrimental to progress than realizing them. Only learning from our mistakes will we prevent the repetition of those same mistakes in the future.

Our goal as a society is constantly to progress and make life better for all, and denying the truth only spells more disaster. Important events that shaped us should not be hidden away like a shameful secret — whether rightfully or not. Secrets are not things we can learn from. The same way running away from our problems makes them harder to solve, running away from our past can ruin our future.





by Elissa Miller  
Asst. Arts & Entertainment Editor

A New York Times Bestselling Book. Charity Work. A podcast. 7.42 million subscribers on YouTube. Since starting in 2007, Tyler Oakley has gained an immensely powerful platform. Many fans remember watching his fun videos and challenges in middle school, and they've stuck around ever since. As one of the first openly gay YouTubers, Oakley also utilizes the channel to raise funds and awareness for issues in the LGBTQ+ community. The 49er Forum Speaker Series invited him to UNC Charlotte for a speaking event on Oct 1. Before he went on stage, The Niner Times spoke with him about activism, Youtube culture and fame.

**I personally am really interested in your charity work and how you evaluate which projects you're going to work on, which organizations you are going to give money to. How do you decide that those are organizations that you want to work with?**

Well, a lot of what I do, whether it's creatively or with charity work, it really comes from my audience. The first time I ever heard of The Trevor Project was when I asked, like, "Hey, I'd love to start supporting nonprofits. What do you guys care about?" and The Trevor Project was something that people kept bringing up to me as a resource that they found, you know, incredibly useful or helpful for people in their similar situations. And so when I try to consider who to support or who to shine the light on, I ask my people first. The Trevor Project is really near and dear to me because it's an organization that I've been talking about for more than 10

# INTERVIEWING

## Tyler Oakley talks about fame,

years now on YouTube, which is wild. But they are somebody who I used to make videos about and then it turned into me being an intern for them, and then I joined their board of directors and then I hosted all their red carpet galas and whatever way I could try to help or be a part of their legacy or try to help their cause, it's always been something that's really been important to me.

And then obviously any type of, LGBTQ+ type of charity and any charity that intersects with LGBTQ+ issues, whether that's GLAAD or GLSEN or HRC (when it comes to politics), refugee work and how that impacts the queer community, it's kind of endless how you can support. So it kind of depends video to video of what that applies to and how I can tell the story of the issue, personalize it and then direct the audience to a way they can help in a meaningful way, even if it's just sharing or donating or donating your time or whatever it might be.

**What about some of the smaller organizations, like those from "Chosen Family?"**

Well, what I love about "Chosen Family" is that it gives me an opportunity to explore these really specific issues within the queer community. And then, like I said, give the opportunity to the audience to get involved in how they want to get involved, whether that's donating, or we made like little pins this year or t-shirts the previous year. I'm trying to think of one in particular that I really loved. I mean, real small tangent: It was so weird this year because I was on "Amazing Race" when "Chosen Family" came out so

I didn't get to see any of the videos go live or any of the reaction to it. I just got home like after a month of everything happening and I was like, "Oh, I hope it went well." Whereas the previous year, I was like pushing upload, like reading all the comments and blah blah blah. But the most recent "Chosen Family," I know that we worked with GLAAD and GLSEN again. One that I really loved was helping small town GSAs form at high schools. That was the coolest experience of being able to go to a school, talk to the people that are affected by not having a safe space for their community. And then like trying to actually make change in that community and seeing how important that was and then telling the story of how kids can do that themselves (through working with an organization like GLSEN or however they want to get involved). That felt really good cause sometimes on the Internet you make dumb stuff, but to be able to also make important stuff or do both is the dream.

**You've been an out outspoken advocate for LGBTQ communities for a long time. How do you think it's changed since 2007 and where do you think we have yet to go? What is the next big hurdle for the community?**

I mean a lot has changed laws-wise but a lot hasn't. A lot of people focus on small victories, which are great, or local victories, which are great. But it's important to listen to the most disenfranchised within the community and realize that it is a global community and that a lot of people's identities intersect in ways that force them to be even

more disenfranchised than the people around you every day. So I think listening and looking outside of what we know as our own personal experience is going to help us with what we need to do within the queer community. Because there are still places where you can be killed for being queer or imprisoned, where a lot of younger people here might not even know that to be the case. They might think that the biggest issue is getting fired, which also is an issue, but there are many issues to tackle at once. I think spreading information and sharing the stories of those who are currently going through those issues is super important. And when I first started YouTube, the pool of creators who were queer and telling their stories was much smaller and I think in the past 10 years being able to see, you know, the explosion of different identities, being able to finally have representation in media where traditional media might've ignored them and now they have cast themselves in the audiences found them. It's game changing. When you think about exposure to organizations like The Trevor Project or the It Gets Better Project or even being able to go on Google or YouTube and search "coming out story," a lot of kids are able to feel less alone because of that. When I was coming out, that wasn't a thing. So yeah, we've come a long way, a long way to go. And a lot is still at stake every single year, every single election. Local or bigger. Often people forget local, so that's really important.

**Moving into talking about fame and Youtube, I think part of what people find so engaging about**



# TYLER AKLEY

## LGBTQ+ activism and YouTube culture

**YouTube culture specifically is the focus on personalities. People feel like they're very connected to that person. How do you determine what is public and what is private? And have you ever struggled with that?**

Yeah. Well, do you have an Instagram?

**Yes, I do.**

Do you struggle with what you want to put on it?

**Of course.**

There you go. I mean, whether you have one follower, a hundred followers, a thousand followers, a million followers, you face that question of, "Okay, like, does everybody need to know my business?" And then when you have to worry about outside opinions about personal things and then especially when there are people in your life who didn't sign up for having people's opinions. Yeah, it's complicated. So I think my general rule of thumb is if it impacts somebody in my life who didn't sign up for that, then I try to keep that more private. But I think also the older I get, the more I'm like, "Okay, well maybe I don't need to share my opinion about everything," which I think is the experience for a lot of people, where it's like, yeah, nobody means to know my opinion on everything and I think that's a good thing.

**Do you think fame, especially with so much of it being attached to who you are as a person and your personality, do you think that has changed you in any way?**

Oh, I'm sure. Hopefully in positive ways just as much as negative ways. Yeah. It's so bizarre because YouTube has been a part of my life since I turned 18 and I am 30 now. So it has impacted and influenced almost every major decision that I've ever made whether I want to admit it or not or thought about it or not. You know what I mean? But I think that I navigate the world a lot more conscious of the weight of what I might say or what I might do. I'm grateful for that for a lot of reasons. It makes me think things before I say something or do something because I know people, whether it's something that I wanted or not, I know people might look to me or listen to me or take my opinion for more than what I might think its worth. So it makes me just a little bit more conscious and I think that's a good thing.

**I was going to ask, have you ever regretted posting something?**

Oh yeah. Oh my God. Many times. I have a really bad habit of tweeting... I feel like my most controversial thoughts and opinions happen right before I take off on a plane. It's like, I really want to tweet, but then I'm like, "What if this blows up in a terrible way and I'm off the Internet for five hours and then I land?" But yeah, I have...I love to stir the pot sometimes, so it's finding a balance of that. As far as hurting somebody with what I say or do, very rarely have I been in a situation where I've regretted something like that, thankfully. Usually it's just like bad pop culture opinions and, you know, a pop star's super fans coming for me as opposed to having hurt somebody in a terrible way.

I'm sure that's preferable. How would you describe the changes in YouTube culture over the past 10 years?

Well, when I first started, so many people were doing it just for fun and it wasn't even an option to make money off of it, so even the motive for joining YouTube has changed. There are people who, when they were in middle school were able to say, "I want to grow up and be a YouTuber." That didn't exist when I started. So I think motivation has completely changed YouTube culture. What gets clicked is not so...what's the word? Um, controversy is great for views and that was not the case when I was first starting. It was, it was more meaningful and peaceful and, I don't know, thoughtful and not so dramatic in some ways. Shock value sometimes reigns supreme. That's a frustrating thing because I don't care to play that game.

**How do you navigate that?**

It is an interesting world to navigate because it's like, I never want to play that game. Like I don't care. And I don't want to start drama with people that I like. Who cares? I very much am like, who cares? Every time I see drama happening on YouTube, I'm like, "Oh, so people care about that?" It boggles my mind. So I feel like I stay in my own lane, I mind my own business. I don't know, when you ask how I navigate it, I just don't really.

**What continues to draw you to the platform [Youtube] as it has changed and what do you find so engaging about it?**

I mean, so especially now that I

feel like I've been able to play in Hollywood for a little bit and see a little bit of what traditional media is like, YouTube is incredible because it is a democracy of who gets to have a platform. I love to follow creators that I know could never convince a room full of old white guys who think they know what's great for media to give them a TV show. But like to me, they're the best entertainers. You know what I mean? And so I love that it's a place where everyone has a chance. And not just that, but everyone has a chance to make stuff today. Whereas in traditional media, it's sometimes an idea can be pitched and then it's not going to see the light of day for two years (if it even sees the light of day). [On YouTube] I could come up with an idea and it can be up tomorrow and I could already be having a conversation about it with my audience. That is a world that had never existed before. So I'm really grateful for that because the turnaround is exciting as somebody who wants to create right now. And that has never changed. That's something that like, if there's something happening on the Internet right now, I know that I can be a part of it as opposed to "oh no!" and wanting to make something down the line.

**Do you think the perception in Hollywood and in mainstream media of YouTube creators has changed? And what do you think that perception is?**

Definitely. Before it was mystified by what was going on. But now you see celebrities with YouTube channels and celebrities wanting to do challenges on late night talk



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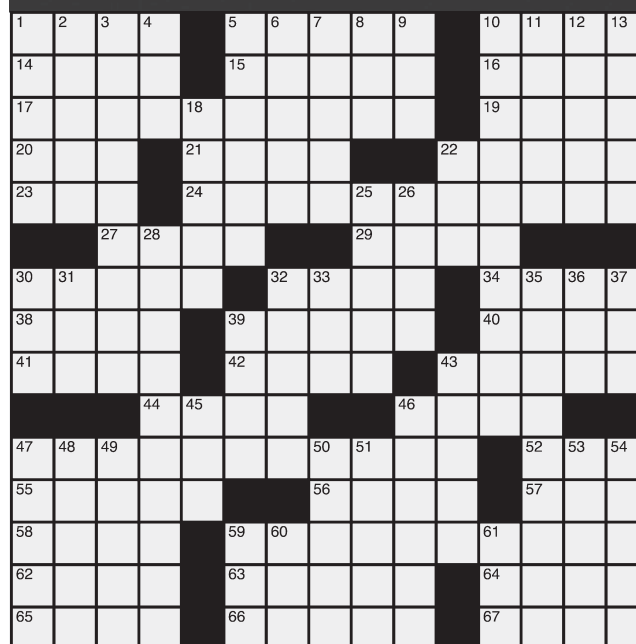


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shows and it's completely changed Hollywood. Whereas before, feeling like this distant high-up-on-a-pedestal person is what a celebrity might be, now celebrity culture is up on its head because culture demands closeness, authenticity and approachability and being able to interact with them on the internet, whereas you could never do that before. You know, whether it's like selfie culture or Twitter, being able to have a Q and A or, like I said, celebrities having a YouTube presence or late night talk shows being completely changed from conversations to gamified skits that will perform well on the Internet. It's like everything has changed because of YouTube.

### **Do you think there's still misconceptions in Hollywood about YouTube?**

Well, yeah. When I go on and do an interview or something and they're like, "So how do you go viral?" I'm like, "Oh God, I don't know." I've never gone viral. You know what I mean? So the perception that so much of it is an overnight success or that it's an accident or somebody's lucky because they have a full time job as a YouTuber, I think discredits a lot of what I love about YouTube. And what I love about a lot of creators is that there's a lot of work that goes into it and a lot of years that go into it that are not successful or viral. So there's a perception that it's easy and that anybody can do it -- which I think the barrier of entry is low -- but I think a lot of people don't give it the credit that it takes a lot and a lot and a lot of work and a lot and a lot and a lot of flop videos and a lot of learning how to edit or a lot of work.

### **Where do you see YouTube going in the future? Where do you think it's heading?**

Oh girl, I don't know. I could never have predicted anything that's going on on YouTube now. Every year I go to like a convention or anything YouTube related, I'm mystified by it because I don't know. Every year there's a new something, whether it was Vine or TikTok. I think the one thing that remains the same is that there will always be a new type of something or a new type of platform where people are able to express themselves creatively and there will always be a group that resists it and doesn't understand it but that doesn't make it not a valid platform for connecting. So whether that's going to be YouTube or whether YouTube will someday not exist, there will always be a place where people are -- young people especially -- are creating and changing culture in their own way and deciding culture in their own way. That's what I love about it. I mean from the start, that's what I've loved about it. It's a community that anybody can be a part of and like shape the Internet and shape culture and shape everything.

### **Gotcha. So you mentioned that you watch a number of creators that you think wouldn't necessarily be taken seriously by Hollywood. What content creators do you enjoy watching? And is there anything unexpected that people might not know about?**

I am currently on an ASMR kick. I was just talking to Lisa about it. If I were to look through my history on YouTube [it's] all ASMR. Um, who else do I love? I mean, there are so many creators that I think are hilarious classics. Like Mamrie Hart. It boggles my mind that she doesn't have a show yet or a something, a vehicle to showcase her talent. I love that Colleen [Balinger] is taking the world by storm, doing Broadway and having a Netflix show. All these things. Who else do I think deserves a platform? I'm so bad on the spot about all my friends. Who do I love? I love Chris Klemens. I love Elle Mills. Ben J Pierce. I don't know, I'm so bad at this.

### **No, that works. That's a solid playlist.**

I mean, it is endless how many YouTubers there are out there now. Whereas when I first started, my first YouTube convention, I think it was 40 people that showed up. It was in 2008 in Toronto. We drove there and it was like everyone had 2000 subscribers and I was star struck by everyone. And now you can go to VidCon and see thousands of screaming teenage girls crying over somebody that you've never heard of, thought of, didn't know that this genre of creation on YouTube existed. It boggles my mind how big it is now, which is incredible. Like I said, everyone has a chance to do their thing.

### **Do you still get starstruck even as a person who has a platform and as a person people are definitely starstruck by?**

Yes. You know the kombucha girl?

### **Oh yeah!**

I posted one of her memes and she replied to it and I screamed and then we were DMing back and forth. I was like, "Okay, well we need to hang out." But I was like, "Oh my God, I'm so nervous." I'm not good with meeting people. So yes, I do get starstruck by people that are like that, that seem...the thing I love about YouTube is like the approachability factor. It's like who I love most are like people that I would want to be friends with. And so it's like a star struckness in the same realm of like somebody that you think is fun and funny at school and you wish you could be friends with them.

### **We've all been there.**

Yeah. It's the same type of feeling on YouTube. And when I see somebody at a YouTube event or

something and I'm like, "Oh my God." I don't know if I've ever met them or we just liked each other's tweets, but I love that person and I don't know how to go and say hi, that's how I am.

### **Is there someone you'd like to make content with that you haven't had the chance to yet? You interact with a lot of people, you've interviewed the Obamas...**

Celebrities? I would love to make a video with Oprah. I have been really lucky that I've made a lot of stuff with the people that I want to make stuff with. Who is a YouTuber that I want to make a video with? Oh, do you know that...oh, what is her name? She takes edibles and then she tries to do makeup.

### **What? No, this sounds incredible.**

It's incredible. I would love to do a video with her. I wish I could remember her name off the bat. She's great, there's no explaining it. [Editor's note: This YouTuber is Brandi TV.] Who else do I love? All my ASMR Queens. It reminds me though of like Mirandasings. When I used to make videos with people her back in the day, I would sit there and even the most recent time we've collabed, I'll sit there and just be watching and forget that I'm in the video too because I am such a fan of these people. Same with Mamrie. Every time I make videos with any of the people that I think are the funniest, I'm like, "Oh shit, I have to participate!" I just, I would rather just be watching and listening to them. Um, who else do I want to make a video with? Beyoncé.

### **Good choice.**

Thank you. I would say Gaga again would be great. Yeah, those are my answers I think.

### **We've talked about number of projects. You have a podcast, a book and YouTube channel. Is there an average day in your life? If so, what does that look like?**

Not really, which is great for me. I'm trying to get more of a schedule because it's good to have routine in your life. So on Tuesdays I take piano lessons, on Thursdays I have therapy. And then I surround all of that with filming, and Wednesdays I record podcasts, and writing, and a million things. I mean a lot of people think it's a lot less work than it is. A lot of being a content creator isn't just throwing spaghetti against the wall and hoping it sticks. It's also interacting with the people. And so all day, every day I'm on my phone...which I love.

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# A CHAMPIONSHIP-WORTHY TEAM

## A mid-season review of the Charlotte 49ers women's soccer team

by Daran Faust  
Intern

Tough. Resilient. Gritty. A few adjectives to describe the 2019 Charlotte 49ers women's soccer team. After an impressive 10-3 start and 5-1 conference record, this team has locked in the best start in club history since 2013. This is from an unwavering belief in their coaches and themselves starting the season with four away games a tough ask for any team. They stepped up, walking away 3-1. "To come back 3-1 after a four-game road trip is a strong sort of statement by the players," said Head Coach John Cullen about the start of the season.

A statement was made that these ladies are focused; they are all in. That does not just happen overnight. This team has something valuable, something coaches spend months to create. The Charlotte 49ers have a culture in which they practice just as hard as

they play. Sprinting and cutting hard in walkthroughs, nobody is slouching. You can feel the intensity in a light practice a day before Southern Miss. For this team it's business and they want to make sure they are ready and that you can see and hear the engagement and the body language on the field. This is who they are. "Last year our practices weren't as intense as they needed to be and that was our focus this year; to try and make them more intense and it basically comes from us getting each other through it and making sure we're all working as hard as we need to work and staying at that intense level," said Junior Midfielder and Defender Brianna Morris. With two overtime games this season, this team still thrives and finds a way to come out on top. Charlotte sticks together and finds a way to the end.



Photos by Meredith Murray



"It's amazing. It's unfortunate that we couldn't score during the games like this Western Kentucky game. We've gone back and had to come back twice, but it's great that we keep going throughout the whole game and making it to overtime and coming out with a win," said Morris.

No matter how big the moment is and no matter how long it takes, the 49ers do not quit and the moment they see the opponent quiver, they will pounce. Coach John Cullen speaks about the intensity of practice and the standard they hold their players to: "We try to create an intensity, so on game day, we're not going to be taken off guard. We've got a good competitive spirit in the group. They work hard because they know that the next girl up is just as good and they want to play."

The depth of this team is highlighted by contributions from their freshman player Julia Patrum who was asked to take on a bigger role due to injuries and who has scored four goals in three matches now.

"Goal scorers always like to score

goals," said Cullen. "I think that gives them that extra confidence but up until that point even though she hadn't scored I was very proud of her performances. Her performance levels have been good, her commitment to the team has been good, her overall level of play has been excellent. I knew the goals would come and hopefully, this is just the start."

The goal for this team is a championship and nothing less than that. After putting together a championship-worthy team and culture, this team is ready to take on this season and right some wrongs from last season.

"Our goal this year is to get back to that championship level form, any game we play we're capable of winning," said Cullen.

The Charlotte 49ers women's soccer team wants to win another championship, something they did in 2016 when they earned the title of 2016 Conference USA Champions. The way their season is shaping up it sure looks like that is the way it could end.



# Five reasons why you should keep a journal

*An easy method of self-care and reflection*

by Abigail Shumar  
Intern



As college students, we tend to have a lot going on. We overwork ourselves and oversaturate our schedules in an attempt to “have it all.” We try to balance classes, homework, a social life, a good night’s sleep and sometimes a job as well. We are under the constant pressure of obtaining good grades, passing our classes and building an impressive resume in the hopes of bettering our future. On top of that, we also commonly have worries in our social lives and our home lives. This can lead to a lot of stress, and if you’re not careful, it can overwhelm you and become a gateway to other issues like anxiety, eating disorders and even substance abuse. Taking breaks from your responsibilities and caring for yourself is very important. Self-care has a huge impact on your mood, stress levels and mental health. I have found that keeping a journal is the simplest, easiest and most effective form of self-care. It is also perfect for the busy college student. Here are 5 reasons why you should keep a journal.

## **1. Keeping a journal can help you clear and organize your mind.**

When you’re writing down all of your thoughts and feelings, it becomes easier for you to see patterns in your thinking; which can help you to better understand how you feel. This is especially important for those who feel overwhelmed by the amount of thoughts and feelings in their mind. Once you write everything down on paper and look at it, it becomes less intimidating. This can help lessen anxiety and stress. It also frees up space in your mind so you can focus on what you deem important.

## **2. Journaling helps you work through difficult situations.**

I have solved many issues in my own life by writing about them and then using what I wrote to find a solution. You will be surprised by how much simpler a problem becomes once you write it down and understand how you feel about it.

## **3. Journaling also helps you better understand your thoughts and put them into words so you can confidently communicate to others about how you feel.**

Communicating your feelings to others is very important because it lets you connect with people on a deeper level and create a better understanding of each other. Working to understand your thoughts is especially helpful if you commonly have a lot of thoughts running through your mind. I, personally, overthink most of the time. All of the thoughts running through my mind can become extremely exhausting and overwhelming to keep up with. Writing everything down and accounting for every single thought is a very calming and awakening experience, and you’ll learn more about yourself in the process.

## **4. Writing in a journal is not a huge time commitment at all.**

In fact, it can be very easy to fit into any kind of schedule. You can write in your journal for as long or as little as you want. Depending on the day, I typically spend anywhere between a couple minutes to a couple of hours writing in my journal. It all depends on you how you feel and what’s going on in your life at that moment. This is very important because most people are too busy to meditate or take a yoga class, but everyone can spare five minutes

to dump their thoughts out on paper. This makes journaling a great method of self-care for busy college students.

## **5. Journaling is a relaxing and therapeutic exercise.**

I am a huge advocate for therapy and other types of professional help, but I am also a huge believer in the power of writing. Whether you’re someone who goes to therapy every week or you’re just someone wanting to blow off a little steam, writing is the perfect exercise. It can be a useful addition to therapy, but if therapy isn’t for you, then it is still a beneficial practice. Journaling opens your mind and creates a better understanding of yourself and your feelings. I believe that the power to better understand your own mind lives in you, and you just need to tap into it, which is attainable through writing.

To sum it all up, you should keep a journal because it can help you clear your mind, work through your problems, and organize your thoughts and feelings. It’s also a small time commitment and a therapeutic exercise that will teach you more about yourself. Regardless of what you decide to do for self-care, everyone should find something that works for them. Whether you’ve found that habit or not, journaling is always worth a try.



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