

# HISTORIC RUN COMES TO AN END

CHARLOTTE VOLLEYBALL'S 13-5 RECORD SEASON ON PG.6



Vol. 33, Issue 21  
Apr. 6, 2020  
NINERTIMES.COM



# NINERTIMES

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
Madison Dobrzanski  
editor@ninerimes.com

## EDITORIAL

Olivia Lawless MANAGING EDITOR  
Tyler Trudeau COMMUNITY EDITOR  
Megan Bird NEWS EDITOR  
Hiral Patel OPINION EDITOR  
Emily Kottak LIFESTYLE EDITOR  
Anders Hare A&E EDITOR  
Bradley Cole SPORTS EDITOR  
Max Young COPY EDITOR  
Niyathi Sulkunte PHOTO EDITOR  
María Solano VIDEO EDITOR  
Nic Jensen LAYOUT EDITOR

## ASSISTANT EDITORS

Jessica Ceballos NEWS  
Milo Cain OPINION  
Jake Pierce FEATURES  
Miles Ruder SPORTS  
April Carte COPY

Elizabeth McGuire VIDEO  
Brandon Mitchell LAYOUT  
Emma Lineberger LAYOUT

## CONTRIBUTING STAFF

Catherine Sawyers, Vasiliki  
Gkoulgkountina, Cooper Manley,  
Abena Atiemo, Joey Ellsworth,  
Bryson Foster, Amir Daniels, Gabe  
Lapalombella, Marina Kilmova

## COVER PHOTOS

Courtesy of UNC Charlotte and

NEWSROOM 705.687.7150  
NINERTIMES.COM/STAFF  
TWITTER @NINER\_TIMES

## CREATIVE DIRECTOR

James Bourke  
production@unc.edu

## MARKETING STAFF

Ridge Grant



LOCATED ON THE LOWER LEVEL OF THE STUDENT UNION

Niner Times • Uptown Audio  
Sanskrit Literary-Arts Magazine  
Media Marketing • Technical

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHARLOTTE  
Kelly Merges NINER MEDIA ADVISER  
Laurie Cuddy BUSINESS MANAGER  
Joshua Wood GRAPHICS &  
PRODUCTION

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



**PAGE 3** Black Lives Matter mural  
New Wake Forest Medical School

## NEWS

**PAGE 4** Chapel Hill MBA expansion



**PAGE 5** The line that divides

## OPINION



**PAGE 6** A historic run ends

## SPORTS

**PAGE 7** Hometown hero



**PAGE 8** COVID-19's impact on the music department

## A&E

**PAGE 9** FILM REVIEW: 'Godzilla vs. Kong'

**PAGE 10** What is NT listening to?



**PAGE 11** Learning instruments in college

## LIFESTYLE

**PAGE 12** Spring fashion trends

READ + WATCH MORE ONLINE AT  
**NINERTIMES.COM**

## POLICE BLOTTER

3/29: Assist other Agency

Officers responded Greenway/Lot 27 in reference to assisting the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department.

3/31: Damage to Property

Officers observed a first floor window damaged, while patrolling the building.

VIEW FULL BLOTTER AT  
[POLICE.UNCC.EDU/POLICE-LOG](https://POLICE.UNCC.EDU/POLICE-LOG)



**NINER MEDIA**

@UNCCMEDIA

**NINER TIMES**

@niner\_times



**UPTOWN  
AUDIO**

@uptownaudio

**SANSKRIT  
LIT ARTS  
MAGAZINE**

@sanskrituncc

*Sanskrit*  
LITERARY-ARTS MAGAZINE

Photo by Niyathi Sulkunte

# BLACK LIVES MATTER MURAL

## UNC Charlotte unveils new BLM mural in front of Student Union

by Catherine Sawyers  
Staff Writer

On March 19, UNC Charlotte unveiled its Black Lives Matter (BLM) mural in front of the UNC Charlotte Student Union. The mural, initiated by Student Body President Tahlieah Sampson, and the Black College of Arts and Architecture student artists, is in the Black Lives Matter acronym, BLM. The mural is shaped to represent a 3D visual timeline, where the B reveals historical truth and past, the L depicts the contemporary activism of a people, and the M represents the promising hereafter for the Black Diaspora.

The Black Lives Matter movement initiated in response to the murder of Trayvon Martin in 2012 and experienced an insurgence during the summer of 2020. Although the Black Lives Matter movement reveals the wide variety of struggles faced by all Black people, the organization aims to combat and prevent violence, amplify Black innovation and center Black joy. Currently, the BLM movement is fighting for better working conditions and pay for

Amazon workers in Bessemer, Alabama, and approving Medicare for All.

This movement is near and dear to Student Body President Tahlieah Sampson's heart. "When I thought about creating this mural, I knew I wanted something that would make UNC Charlotte Black students feel seen, heard and valued. Initiated, designed and created by Black students, this art piece captures the history, culture, struggles, achievements, triumphs, beauty, and fight of living in America as a Black person."

In thinking about UNC Charlotte's students, Sampson hopes that anyone "can look at this mural and see themselves, see their worth and know that they matter. I hope prospective students who are interested in attending UNC Charlotte feel the comfort in knowing that we are a university that is against any form of hate and discrimination and genuinely support all students from all backgrounds."

In addition to collaborating on the BLM

Mural, President Sampson was involved in creating a Racial Equity Task Force, a coalition advocating to eliminate systemic racial barriers and discriminatory practices for the success of students, staff, and faculty. She also helped found the Police and Public Safety Student Advisory Board "to ease the anxiety with police caused by acts of police brutality" with other student government members.



BLM mural in front of Student Union  
Photo by Dhruv Jani

# NEW WAKE FOREST MEDICAL SCHOOL

## School to be located near Dilworth

by Vasiliki Gkoulgkoutina  
Staff Writer



Photo courtesy of James Willamor via Wikipedia

On March 24, Atrium Health announced that the new Wake Forest medical school will be located near Dilworth in Charlotte. This will be the first official medical school in the nation to be built since the pandemic began.

Atrium Health CEO Gene Woods states that the medical school has ambitious plans to transform the local economy, health care innovation and become a distinct part of the Charlotte skyline. According to Atrium, Charlotte is the largest city in the country without a four-year medical school.

Leaders from Atrium Health, Wake Forest Baptist Health and Wake Forest University announced that they have chosen a 20-acre site in midtown Charlotte, at the corner of South McDowell Street and

Baxter Street. The medical school campus will be less than three-quarters of a mile from Atrium Health Carolinas Medical Center.

Atrium Health filed a rezoning petition for the 14.3-acre property on 801 McDowell St. It will contain the "medical school, research, medical office, office, residential, retail and hotel uses, among other uses," according to Charlotte records.

In 2020 Atrium Health announced that \$3.4 billion will go towards planned investments into Wake Forest Baptist Health and the communities it serves over the next ten years. In addition, it includes a \$150 million academic endowment created to fund additional education and research growth and a \$70 million Academic

Enrichment Fund to accelerate academic initiatives.

According to a recent study by Tripp Umbach, the new medical school will create 43,000 jobs over the next 20 years and will have an additional economic impact of \$5.2 billion.

Atrium Health Chief Academic Officer and Dean of the Wake Forest School of Medicine Julie Ann Freischlag said construction of the school is expected to begin by early 2022. The new medical school will host its first class of 48 students in 2024. This will grow to about 100 students per class; 400 students total studying at the medical school each year.



## NOW HIRING

- servers
- busboys
- cooks

Flexible hours, No tip sharing.

arsalco@aol.com  
or apply in person at  
230 East WT Harris Blvd.  
(Behind Walgreens)

STARTING AT

**\$415**

ALL INCLUSIVE

**Single Rooms  
2, 3 & 4 BR**

Campus Walk  
Colville Gardens  
Colville Townhomes  
UT/UT North

**LOWEST RATES!**



(704) 510-1993  
unccrentals.com

# CHAPEL HILL MBA EXPANSION

## Student leaders among the concerns over UNC Chappel Hill MBA program in Charlotte

by Cooper Manley  
News Intern

According to a recent report from the Charlotte Business Journal, UNC Chapel Hill is making plans to offer an Executive Masters in Business Administration degree via a new satellite campus in Charlotte.

Some individuals and groups within the Charlotte community have expressed concern that this expansion of Chapel Hill's Kenan-Flagler School of Business would directly compete with and draw some students away from the MBA program offered by UNC Charlotte's Belk College of Business.

In response, one Charlotte-based Twitter user wrote, "So instead of the North Carolina education system investing in their downtown MBA through UNC Charlotte and making a good program better, they cater to Chapel Hill per usual and push UNC Charlotte to the side." Another user said, "So [UNC Charlotte] already has a gorgeous MBA school in Uptown Charlotte, yet Chapel Hill wants to expand and siphon students away from another \*UNC\* school?! Why?"

One group speaking out is the UNC Charlotte Student Senate, which passed a resolution on March 11 opposing the expansion. They expressed concerns that the satellite school would interfere with UNC Charlotte's "unique claim to being the only UNC System institution in the city" and its mission statement directly addressing the city's economic needs. Many also worry about the impact this move would make within the UNC System.

"Charlotte belongs to Charlotte," said Student Body President-elect Dick Beekman. "We deserve a chance to develop and grow our program."

He explained that approving the Kenan-Flagler expansion would set a "horrible" precedent for the UNC System's future decisions. Beekman also expressed discontent with several elements of the idea outlined by Kenan-Flagler Dean Doug Shackelford in an interview with Charlotte Business Journal.

Primarily, Beekman refuted a line from

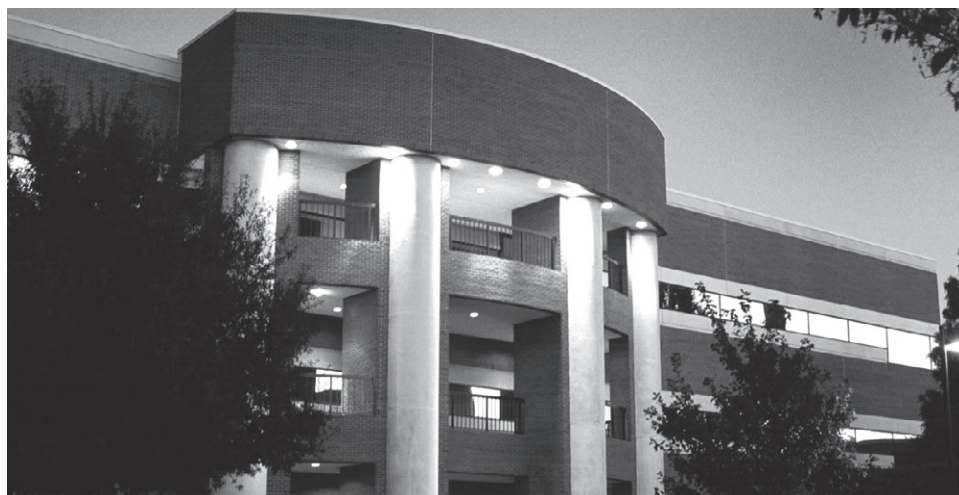


Photo courtesy of Belk College of UNC Charlotte

the interview in which Shackelford states that he and his team at Kenan-Flagler had "kind of reached an understanding" with UNC Charlotte leaders. Beekman stated that, after his own meeting with senior UNC Charlotte administration members, it did not appear to him that an understanding had been reached between the two universities or business schools.

In a statement to the Niner Times, Chancellor Gaber said, "We appreciate the support from our alumni, students and the community for UNC Charlotte and the Belk College of Business, who all recognize our well-established, nationally ranked part-time MBA program. We continue to work with the UNC System and UNC Chapel Hill to determine the best path forward to meet the needs of our region."

Dean Jennifer Troyer of the Belk College of Business gave a similar statement to the Charlotte Business Journal, in which she highlighted Belk's MBA and its accolades. Troyer also reiterated Belk's commitment to serve the Charlotte area and listen to its numerous businesses and large corporations' wishes.

Neither Troyer nor Gaber referenced an explicit "understanding," as Shackelford mentioned.

Shackelford also told the Charlotte Business Journal that he doesn't see his

proposed expansion as a direct competitor with Belk's MBA. The Kenan-Flagler program would be a full-time, Executive MBA aimed at established business professionals. In contrast, Belk's program is part-time and highly flexible, therefore aimed at a wider market.

Additionally, Beekman said he is displeased with the "full-steam ahead" strategy of Kenan-Flagler and its staff to promote the proposed expansion despite its current lack of approval.

Shackelford said he hopes to begin instruction in the Queen City in October of this year, although the school currently has no accreditation or set location in Charlotte. The Kenan-Flagler website even has a page that briefly describes the program and prompts readers to sign up for a mailing list to receive more information about the application process when it becomes available. The webpage does not indicate pending approval for the program.

Other universities run a few MBA programs via satellite campuses in the Uptown area, including the University of South Carolina and Wake Forest University. Queens University of Charlotte also offers an MBA program. However, a Tar Heel addition to the already-competitive Charlotte MBA market would be the first of those sanctioned by the UNC System.

# THE LINE THAT DIVIDES



Opinion writer analyzes the racial wedge between the Black and Asian community

by Abena Atiemo  
Staff Writer

On March 16, a series of mass shootings occurred at three massage parlors in Atlanta. Eight people died, six of whom were Asian women. In the following days, people marched against racism and to remember the victims. Injustices against Asian Americans have been taking center stage in our public discourse. Hashtags like #EndAsianHate have prompted individualized discussions on instances of xenophobia and racism that have existed long before the recent media attention.

In some of the attacks against Asian-Americans, the assailants have been Black, leading to a barrage of Anti-Blackness to be tied with calls of justice. While many Black activists showed their support, there's still a conversation to be had about the ties between the Black and Asian communities and what can be done to build solidarity between them.

On our very campus, experiences of Asian hate have permeated the culture of the Niner Nation. "When you're known for your characteristics, then you're being labeled as nothing. You're that characteristic, not a peer." President of the Asian Student Association, Benjamin Huang, explained how his experiences formed his political activism. "Being Asian, we're seen as quiet and submissive, and you get reduced down to that. If you see something happening to someone and choose not to call it out, you may forget it. One of my main goals is to plant the seed for people to simply do better. It's the bare minimum."

To look at the solidarity between the Black and Asian communities, we need to understand comparative racialization. Comparative racialization is how society treats racialized communities compared to one another. There are many commonalities in the struggles of communities of color, but their experiences are not the same and shouldn't be compared directly. Black people have worked to educate society on the Black experience when it comes to

knowledge on injustice, pushing us to the forefront of media. This has led many in the Asian-American community to pressure others, especially Black Americans, to speak on the violence against them. It is important to note, however, that hypervisibility does not automatically equal privilege. Notable sociologist Tamara K. Nopper said, "there is a way where Black people are expected to be responsible for showing up for everybody. There has been a discussion about whether this is a fair expectation."

Looking at varying statistics from the Pew Research Center, systemic racism disproportionately affects African-Americans the most. Anti-Blackness is a staple in many non-Black cultures, and this has created a lot of the tension we see today between communities of color. In Black and Asian communities, the model minority myth attributes many fraught relations between them. Yes, the model minority myth is harmful towards Asian-Americans, but when framed in the larger context, the effects of this myth harms Black people as well and in a way that often invalidates their fight. It creates a monolith from the Asian-American community. It frames an argument that the centuries of racism, beginning with African people's enslavement, can simply be overcome with hard work.

During the presidency of Donald Trump, communities of color faced increased sentiments of hate. With a president who refused to denounce white supremacists on a public stage and created a platform against Mexican immigrants, the message was clear: hate would not be punished. People of color suffered due to the consequences of Trump's behavior. According to a Stop AAPI Hate report, there has been a 150%

rise in anti-Asian violence since 2019. This rise is directly connected to former President Donald Trump, who repeatedly and incorrectly used racialized terms to connect Asians to the Coronavirus. Unfortunately, the conversation often does not address Trump or white supremacy as the problem, but it misattributes the issue to Black-Americans. The narrative of Black-Asian hostility continues to further the divide between the communities. There is a significant need for unity between the two communities, and this cannot happen without first understanding that the strategy is to divide.

Many of the responses to these incidents created pushes for harsh carceral punishment. Communities rightfully want to see punishments for those who harm. The difficulty around this conversation, however, lies in how disproportionality the justice system targets Black-Americans. Is it possible to punish without harming another group of people? "This is something abolitionists are thinking of, and they are very concerned about people living in a world

free of harm," said Nopper. "Very few abolitionists I know say that there will never be harm in the future, but how do we minimize the possibility of harm? If people are robbing people, why is that happening? If you aren't getting paid well, if rent is so high, if the cost of food is so high, these things happen more. We have to call for the state to solve some of these issues first- the root of the problem."

Talking about the strained relationship between the Black and Asian community is difficult, and solutions may not be immediately clear-cut. Addressing Anti-Blackness, Xenophobia, and the history of pain is a great way to build understanding. By re-imagining the coalition's new ways and focusing on the common target, white supremacy, we can start building solidarity between our communities.



Photo from Rally to Stop Asian Hate in DC. Photo by Victoria Pickering via Flickr



# SPORTS

# A HISTORIC RUN ENDS

UNC Charlotte's volleyball historic season comes to an end with a 13-5 record

by Joey Ellsworth  
Staff Writer

After beating UAB in the Conference USA in quarterfinals in Hattiesburg, MS on Thursday, Charlotte volleyball's historic season came to an end on Friday, April 2, at the hands of #24 Rice. The 49ers ended the season with a 13-5 record and winning percentage of .722, their highest in 41 years.

## UAB 2, Charlotte 3

Charlotte did well on both offense and defense to beat the Blazers in a tight game, 3-2.

"Our defense was phenomenal. They have some really crafty attackers so we knew we had to make adjustments rotation by rotation and I think our team really responded with the small things we were doing," said Head Coach Karen Weatherington.

The Niners were quick to take a 10-4 lead in set one. Four of those ten scores came off of kills by Lara Kretschmer. From there, Charlotte kept UAB at bay and maintained their lead, letting it get no lower than three points. The Niners took set one 25-19.

In set two, UAB was the one with the hot start, taking a 12-6 lead, giving them breathing room. A 6-2 run from the Niners put them back in it, finding themselves down by just two. The game was tied at 20 after a Nalani Lyde kill. Following this, for every two scores UAB got, the Niners could only answer back with one. UAB took set two 25-22.

Set three saw eight lead changes. Charlotte had a few runs, getting an early 3-0 run, taking the lead back a bit later with a 4-0 run, and with the score 24-23 and UAB nearing a set victory, the Niners scored three straight to take the set 26-24.

In set four, Charlotte had a five points lead over UAB early on, with the score at 12-7. UAB went off for seven straight points to bring them to a two-point lead.



Photo courtesy of Conference USA

Once UAB was leading 20-17, each team went back and forth with single points until UAB reached 25 to take set four 25-21 and tied the game up at two sets each. In set five, Charlotte didn't take the lead until 4-3, and they maintained that lead for the rest of the set.

Rowan Sydney and Emani' Foster combined for eight kills in set five, and it was Sydney who delivered the final kill to give Charlotte the quarterfinal victory following the 15-10 set-five win.

"We knew it was going to take everything we had," stated Head Coach Karen Weatherington in a post-game interview. "UAB is a fantastic team. We knew our defense was going to be key, but offensively we just had to out-muscle them today. Our team is super gritty and incredibly fiery."

The final kill by Sydney Rowan gave her 11 on the night to crack Charlotte's top-10 career kills list. Emani' Foster led the team in kills with 20. Amani McArthur and Nalani Lyde each had 15 kills which was a new career-high for McArthur and tied

Lyde's best this season. McArthur delivered her 15 kills on 24 total attacks for an extremely efficient .542 hitting percentage.

"We wanted to have really good distribution through this match and we knew we had to do that. I have to credit our setters. We're hitting .318 as a team, that's all setting. That's all offensive execution," said Weatherington.

## Charlotte 0, #24 Rice 3

Charlotte only scored 52 points in the 0-3 loss to the nationally-ranked Owls in their first semifinal game in school history.

"I thought today was a glorious beginning to our 2021 season," said Head Coach Karen Weatherington after the game. "That's how we're going to look at it. Rice is a very talented team, they should be ranked top-10 in the nation."

Rice had a clear advantage in the first set. They led or were tied with Charlotte for the entirety of the set. Rice led by as much as eight after a four-point scoring run and

went on to take the first set 25-17.

Rice took an early 6-4 lead in set two, but a three-point scoring run gave Charlotte the 7-6 lead. Rice answered back with a completely dominant run. They scored nine straight points and went on to have a 13-1 run to take the strong 19-8 lead. Charlotte got a few more points on the board before the end of the set, but Rice took set two 25-13.

Rice took control of set three and was up 21-14 mid-match. It looked like we'd see another poor set for Charlotte. However, the Niners showed a fight and went on a 7-1 run to bring them within one, 22-21. Four of these seven points came off of kills by Emani' Foster. Rice scored three of the next four points to take set three and the match victory.

"We proved we can play with any team in the country, that we can score and that we have systems and abilities to really show up and have someone contend against us," said Weatherington. "They had a great game plan, and you know when teams are designing their defense around quality players like Emani' Foster and Sydney Rowan, you find a way."

Nalani Lyde led the Niners in kills with nine, followed by seven from Rowan and Foster. Annika Wetterstrom had a team-high of 18 assists.

After a historic season, Weatherington had only good things to say.

"Throughout the entire challenge of this last year, this team has stayed together, grown together, worked hard for each other, and supported each other to establish a championship culture," she said.

Charlotte finished the season 13-5 overall and 9-3 in conference games. The Niners were flawless at home, winning all seven home games. The team will take the court again in the fall, losing only one senior.

# HOMETOWN HERO

## Star player Julia Patrum talks about her career in soccer

by Bryson Foster  
Staff Writer

From a young age, Julia Patrum was destined to be a great soccer player. Coming from a small hometown, she has had to fight for every opportunity and is now playing on Charlotte's big stage. The sophomore hails from Concord, N.C., and represents her hometown every time she steps foot on the soccer pitch.

Patrum started playing soccer at the age of four at her local YMCA in Concord, right down the road from Charlotte. She enjoyed playing the sport and never looked back. Being the first soccer player in her family, she paved a new path to get to the next level.

Many people have shaped Patrum, and she credits them for where she is today. And she credits them for where she is today. Her parents have always been her biggest supporters, and don't miss any of her games. Patrum's coaches have continued to push her and get the best out of her. They have been there for her on and off the field.

"My mom and my dad have been my biggest influences because they have supported me since day one," said Patrum. "I also had the same coach until the day I graduated high school, and he has shaped me as a player."

The status of a hometown hero has not always come easy for her. She put in the work, and it all paid off in her junior year of high school.

As a junior at Concord High School, Patrum scored 42 goals and 15 assists for a total of 99 points. She received many awards for her play, being named to the 3A North Carolina Soccer Coaches Association All-State Team. For her efforts, she caught the eye of Charlotte Head Coach John Cullen.

"I came from a high school that was not known for their soccer team," said Patrum. "There was pressure to produce immediately, and that is just what I had to

do which helped me to mature."

Patrum decided to play at Charlotte and follow in the footsteps of star player Megan Greene. She lived up to the hype she built up in high school as she had a very successful freshman campaign with the team. Patrum was named to the All-Conference USA Freshman Team. In her second season at Charlotte, she picked up where she left off and has picked up a leadership role for the team.

"I have been stepping into a completely different role this year," said Patrum. "I have done this by trying to become a leader that we need because I want to build a strong foundation at Charlotte."

This season has been one filled with adversity and the unknown. The team currently sits at 3-4 and has battled through game cancellations and postponements. Charlotte's season was scheduled to begin on Feb. 5, but the first three season games were canceled due to covid-19 clusters. Despite that, Patrum described this team as resilient for their ability to stick together and fight through the obstacles.

"We have done a fantastic job so far this season when it comes to getting through that adversity," said Patrum.

Through it all, the team is still in a spot to make a deep run in the C-USA tournament and a major reason for that is due to the efforts of Patrum.

Patrum has played efficiently so far this season, tied for the most goals scored on the team with three for a total of eight points. She received some recognition for her play earlier in the season when she was named a TopTracer National Team of the Week Honorable Mention and C-USA Offensive Player of the Week. The accolades have given her a new sense of confidence that has shown on the field.

"When you are in college and play against

some of the great talents, it is pretty cool to get a pat on the back," said Patrum. "These accomplishments almost solidified in my mind that I belong on this level."

Patrum leads by example and keeps the same approach of doing whatever she can to win. As an attacker, she is always trying to score and tries to work on the fundamentals of the game. Her mindset is key and is one that has led the team to many victories.

"I go in with the mindset of trying to score, but I also realize that the game is bigger than just scoring goals," said Patrum. "I don't measure myself on goals in a game, but rather what did I do to help the team get the win."

There's still plenty to be desired for the rest of the season. Charlotte has two more games this season before heading to the conference tournament.

As for the rest of her career, Patrum has plenty of goals to achieve at Charlotte. She wants to score goals at a high level while also lead the 49ers to the NCAA tournament. This objective will take a lot of hard work, but she is ready for the challenge.

"It would be an amazing feeling to be

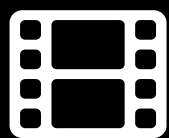
able to win regular season and tournament championships," said Patrum. "We are going to continue to put our heads down and work hard."

Patrum is the definition of a hometown hero. Even in high school, she had a strong passion for the game, the hard work she puts in, and is ready to rise to the challenge. The future is unknown, but she is ready for what is to come and will continue to leave Charlotte's mark.

"I have been able to build a sense of community as well as a family here, and I wouldn't want to play anywhere else," said Patrum. "It is great being able to succeed from a small high school to now being at Charlotte."



Photo courtesy of Robert Phipps



A&E

by Amir Daniels  
Staff Writer

# COVID-19's impact on the music department

## Meg Whalen Freemans speaks on the state of UNC Charlotte's music department following the pandemic

It is March 2020. Students and faculty are returning from spring break and looking forward to finishing the 2019-20 semester. Among the people returning to campus is UNC Charlotte's Department of Music, and they have a busy schedule. Between March and May 2020, the Music Department has several concerts on the schedule, including a "Remembrance Concert" on April 30, 2020. However, the Department of Music will have to alter its schedule for the spring and fall when COVID-19 cases begin to increase in North Carolina, forcing the entire state to go into a lockdown. As a result of the lockdown, the music department could not meet in person, and all of their concerts were canceled or postponed.

One of the people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic was Meg Whalen Freeman, the Director of Communications and External Relations for the College of Arts + Architecture since 2011. Freeman is used to seeing students perform in front of live audiences and rehearsing on campus. When the music department had to transition to Zoom for the remainder of the spring 2020 semester, Freeman knew it would be tough for students.

"It is possible to [teach a music class] virtually," says Whalen. "But it is complicated and time-consuming to put together...even in the best of circumstances, it is not the same thing as being in a room. Being able to truly hear the tone, level of volume, shape of the phrases, all of those things are affected."

While it took time to adjust to teaching classes online, teachers told Freeman that students were more focused when the individual lessons were taught on Zoom. "[The teachers] get down to business teaching the lesson," said Freeman. "The Zoom sessions focus everyone's attention and efficiency in their teaching, while the

students are efficient in their learning."

When the fall 2020 semester began, the music department was still teaching classes on Zoom. Then on Oct. 1, 2020, the university allowed the music department to hold in-person classes. While it was relieving to have in-person classes for the first time since early March, the music department had to make a few adjustments to comply with the COVID-19 safety guidelines. Before the fall 2020 semester, the music classes would last an hour, and the students would perform and rehearse on stage. To comply with the COVID-19 guidelines, the students had to spread out six feet apart and perform in the bowl. They also had to rehearse in half-hour intervals to reduce the aerosol build-up in the classroom. Most importantly,

every student and teacher had to wear a mask, even during rehearsals.

Despite the challenges, the musicians were able to come together again and record performances for a single concert called "The Music Ensemble Showcase." It was the music department's first concert since returning to campus. While it was good to come together and perform for UNC Charlotte finally, there was one thing missing: the in-person audience.

"It is very much a partnership between the performer and the audience," says Freeman. "When you do not have the presence of an audience, a big piece of the performing experience is lost and affects the quality of the performance because there is an energy fill that is not there."

While they could not perform in front of

an in-person audience, the Music Ensemble Showcase participants were pre-recorded and streamed on Dec. 13, 2020, via Vimeo.

A year after the campus went into lockdown, things are looking better for the music department. On March 8, 2021, the department held the "Spotlight" concert at the Anne R. Belk Theater in Robinson Hall; it was the first concert performed on campus in over a year. "Spotlight" will be the first of many concerts to be played on campus during the spring 2021 semester. While the concerts will be live-streamed on Vimeo—as there will not be any in-person attendance for the time being—it is the first step to returning to normalcy for the music department.



Image of Trumpeter Andrew Beiter performing Elon Tamberg's "Allegro." courtesy of Daniel Coston

# GODZILLA vs. KONG

## A movie that delivers on its promises and more

by Gabe Lapalombella  
Staff Writer

Photo Courtesy of  
Warner Bros

Warner Brothers' new MonsterVerse film franchise fascinates me in its order. Starting with 2014's underwhelming "Godzilla," then moving on to 2016's entertaining "Kong: Skull Island" and 2019's ridiculous "Godzilla: King of the Monsters," you never knew what you'd get. The one thing audiences knew was that a battle of titans was coming, and at the time, that was more than enough. Now enter the epic conclusion of this franchise, "Godzilla vs. Kong," and what do you get? The short answer is the most entertaining one of the entire bunch. Our story follows Godzilla, as he mysteriously starts attacking facilities all over the world. This leads a group of scientists (Alexander Skarsgard and Rebecca Hall), funded by an enigmatic billionaire (Demian Bichir), to find the only other King to stop Godzilla, Kong. Meanwhile, Madison (Millie Bobby Brown), her friend Josh (Julian Dennison), and a crazy titan conspiracy theorist Bernie Hayes (Brian Tyree Henry), out on their adventure to find out why Godzilla is on the attack.

If you read that overlong synopsis and started to scratch your head, I don't blame you. The draw of this monster movie franchise has never once been the humans. Their only purpose is to bridge the enormous gaps between what everyone wants to see: monster fights! Director Adam Wingard makes the fights the focal point of the film. They're both exciting and engaging, but the standout element is how both Kong and Godzilla are given their own style. In their own way, each titan is a force of nature, and Wingard knows exactly how to give them a moment to shine. It's what audiences love about these characters, and it's delivered in just about every sense of the word. The fight sequences have a raw and visceral energy that doesn't rely on the score to tell us how to feel.

The flipside of the coin is the lackluster human elements that stories like this need to have. Actors like Hall and Skarsgard thankfully have a clear understanding

of what their purpose in the film is. Here the humans serve as nothing more than connective tissue to lead us to the next monster fight. Narratively, the elements of heroes versus villains go just about how you'd expect. The villains have some convoluted master plan (that ends in an evil speech), and the heroes share quips. It's nothing you haven't seen before, and its delivery is what audiences are used to in this sort of film. The tricky balance gives us just enough expository scenes to let the dialogue get us to the next fight. The only massive problem on display here comes from one subplot involving Millie Bobby Brown.

No one will ever deny that Brown is a bad actress, and some may consider her great. In a film such as massive in scale and spectacle, her role feels like nothing more than a studio putting in the popular "young star." Her entire plot with Dennison and Henry feels unnecessary to the overall meat of the story. If this plot were removed, it wouldn't do

anything to change the overarching narrative. It plays like absolutely nothing more than to try and attract a younger audience which doesn't work. Clocking in at just under two hours, the film has a great pace. That one storyline feels like nothing more than a quota having to be met to attract a younger audience.

"Godzilla vs. Kong" delivers on all of the goodies that audiences will expect going in. The fights are thrilling and have phenomenal energy, which can hook an audience right in. Alexander Skarsgard and Rebecca Hall's story guides us swiftly to the following action sequence, whereas Millie Bobby Brown gets us stuck on the tracks. It's a slight quibble, but one that still felt like nothing but studio notes. Thankfully the monster fights are more than enough to split the narrative human difference. If you see it at home on HBOMax or in the theater, "Godzilla vs. Kong" delivers on the blockbuster entertainment we've been missing.

**Rating: 7/10**



✓ What is NT listening to? 



Bradley Cole  
(Sports Editor)



1:00

-1:21



 Devices Available



**WALK TO CLASS  
ALL 4 BEDROOMS  
2 & 4 BATHROOMS  
LEASE OR OWN  
UTILITIES INCLUDED  
INDIVIDUAL LEASES  
FREE PARKING**

**STARTING AT  
\$415  
PER MONTH**

**SAVE SOME GREEN**



**MOST AFFORDABLE OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING**  
UNIVERSITY TERRACE & UNIVERSITY TERRACE NORTH  
CALL (980) 226-1071 OR COME BY TODAY!  
NEXT TO CIRCLE K, BESIDE UNCC

# LEARNING INSTRUMENTS IN COLLEGE



LIFESTYLE

## The process of my musical development and venture

by Emily Kottak  
Lifestyle Editor

Graphic courtesy  
of Canva

At the age of 20, I decided to embark on a musical adventure and learn how to play an instrument. This has pretty much been my first experience with music and learning how to play an instrument—unless you count playing the recorder in fourth grade. For some reason, a few months before Christmas, I had the urge to learn how to play the ukulele. I had seen videos of people playing on social media and in movies. It seemed like a cute and simple instrument. For some reason, despite being a person with no musical background, I thought I could easily buy a ukulele and teach myself how to play. Two months later and I have learned a lot about the instrument and can play three songs, but it was with my ukulele instructor's amazing teaching.

I unwrapped a ukulele as a Christmas present and was so excited. It was brand new and came in a case with a strap for the ukulele and several strumming picks. I was so excited. That evening, I opened it up and began to strum but quickly realized it didn't make that beachy, relaxing, Hawaiian sound I had heard before. It was out of tune, and I had no clue how to fix that. After putting it off for a few weeks, my family saw a Facebook ad about a student in my hometown offering music lessons in various instruments, including the ukulele. The next week, we reached out, and my new teacher was sitting in my living room teaching me how to play the ukulele.

I have to admit I was nervous about the first lesson. What is a college student who is so musically talented going to think when I have zero experience? Am I even going to be able to understand anything he says or learn how to play? My fears quickly evaporated when I met my teacher. He was so kind and understanding and prepared to help me start this musical venture entirely from scratch.

We started by going over the parts of the ukulele and the main cords. My teacher tuned up my instrument so I could finally hear the lovely sound. I then learned the first four most common cords on the ukulele and quickly picked them up. I had high hopes but was still very much getting used to playing.

The first song I learned to play was "Over the Rainbow" in the style of Israel Kamakawiwo'ole. It is a classic ukulele song but has such a warm, peaceful, and happy tune (which I like). I grew up watching "The Wizard of Oz," so playing a rendition of this song on my own was pretty exciting. It took several lessons, but I finally mastered the song and can play it well now. The next song I learned was "Count on Me" by Bruno Mars. In this song, I had to learn a new cord, and it was almost like a Twister game trying to get my fingers on the right strings to play this cord. Once again, after a few weeks, I mastered "Count on Me" and was thrilled. I am in the process of learning "Best Day Of My Life" by American Authors, another fun and upbeat song

but one that I will have to learn a couple of new cords.

Learning how to play an instrument for the first time has not been quite as difficult as I had anticipated. However, I have come across a couple of hard things. To begin with, mastering the proper placement of my fingers on each cord can be difficult sometimes. This is because it is very important to make sure that you press down very hard on the fretboard of the ukulele to ensure that the best sound is amplified. Not only can this hurt your fingers, but it can also be hard to fit them in the right place when you have to press down on multiple strings on different frets at the same time. The other thing that is hard for me sometimes is transitioning between notes. I have significantly improved in this aspect, but it can be hard to quickly switch your finger placement at the signal of a word. But as the saying goes, practice makes perfect.

I have thoroughly enjoyed learning to play an instrument for the first time. I can't speak for other instruments, but the ukulele has been so much fun to learn to play. Even just strumming has become a fun and creative outlet for me, and others enjoy hearing it too. I was able to play for my Nana at her assisted living home, and she loved it. Music can bring a lot of joy to those who listen to it or play it. It is never too late to try something new.

Q Spring Fashion Trends

A Year of Optimism

# Spring Fashion Trends

## Bright and bold trends for this season

by Marina Klimova  
Staff Writer

Photo of pink cardigan  
by Marina Klimova

2021 is a year of optimism, and with it comes bright spring fashion. Get ready for pastels and neutral beige browns, poofy babydoll dresses and classic pieces mixing with the bold. 2021 is continuing the past nineties and eighties trends of 2020 with high rise everything, colorful windbreakers, chunky platform shoes, super crop tops, tie-dye and puffy airy sleeves. Joining those are slinky dresses, super mini skirts and retro knits.

Trends can be a way to spice up your everyday fashion and participate in your era's fashion. Even though they change as fast as the wind blows, they can present something new to try that can become a permanent part of your wardrobe. The key is to experiment, have an open mind and have fun with it! These are a few trends I've been noticing and am excited to wear this season.

### The Cardigan

If Taylor Swift's song, "Cardigan," didn't alert you of the popularity of this piece, you'll find you love it from its great versatility. Be it cropped or in a long minimalist design, the cardigan is making a huge comeback this year as an addition to any outfit. You can find it as a chunky knit or thin as gauze. It comes in pastels, standard white, black, or bold pinks. It can be oversized and tightly fitted along the arms or a classy piece for a professional outfit. One outfit option is a light cardigan as a cute date jacket paired with an A-line mini skirt for the warmer weather. Overall, the cardigan is my favorite spring trend of 2021 because it exudes coziness and sweet old-school vibes.

### Puffed Sleeves

Puffed sleeves are coming in big this season, with celebrities like Selena Gomez wearing a rose floral print puffed sleeve top in her music video for "De Una Vez" part of the new EP, "Revelacion." The airy look gives a strong silhouette and a unique variation to a blouse. Puffed sleeves are also popular in lacy baby doll dresses that float around you in an effortless cloud. Try wearing one of these dresses when going out or having a picnic.

### High rise

Even though high-rise jeans, pants, trousers and shorts had been popular last year, that trend isn't going away. The mom jeans look has solidified into a standard 2020s look of casual elegance paired with a plain tee or a statement blouse. High-rise trousers or wide-legged pants are the new staple part of 2021. These pants can make an innovative look either as gingham, houndstooth, checkered, or solid color patterns. Joining those in the novel ribbed knit pants replacing regular sweatpants. They're comfy, cute and fancier than your home sweatpants look!

### Colors

From pale green, sunshine yellow and bubblegum pink to potato brown and other neutral colors, these are the colors you'll be seeing this spring. Tik Tok and Pinterest have shown these to be popular leading up to this year, and now we'll be able to witness them in person as the pandemic restrictions ease a little. It can be styled as little green

purses and pink socks to potato brown pants and jackets and neutral all-white outfits. These colors give way to bold combinations together or a bright monochrome outfit.

Firily and cottage-core also fall along with natural colors and popped up as a new thing for 2021. Designers such as Christian Dior have turned their creativity to the Victorian and magical side, making a softer fashion. You can join in with this trend by wearing Peter Pan collar shirts or dresses and lacy ankle socks with Mary Janes.

