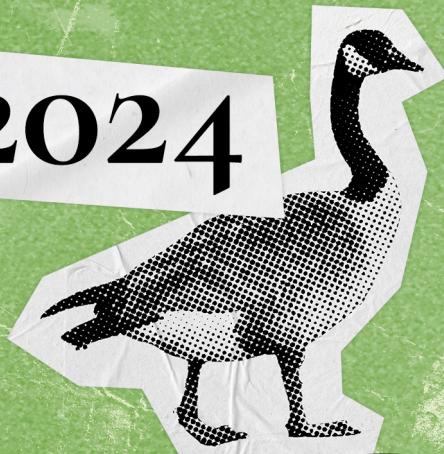


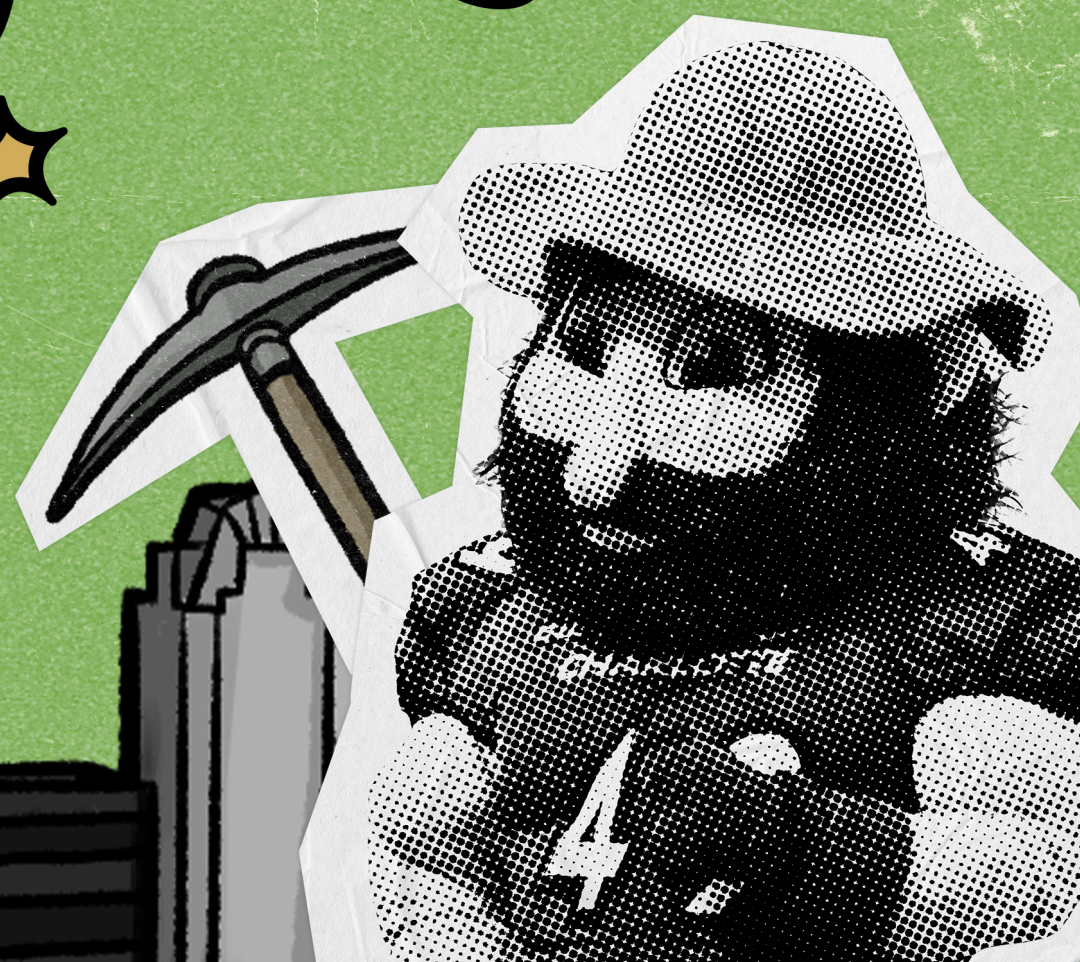
2024



WELCOME BACK



a niner times
publication



UNC CHARLOTTE DINING LOCATIONS



ATKINS LIBRARY

- Starbucks

CONE CENTER

- Market at Cone
- Panda Express
- Subway

FRETWELL

- Thoughtful Cup

PROSPECTOR

- Burger 704
- Chick-Fil-A
- Jamal's Chicken
- Mama Leone's
- Market at Prospector
- Salsarita's
- Wild Blue Sushi

COLVARD

- Auntie Anne's

TRANSACT MOBILE ORDERING AVAILABLE.

MOBILE ORDERING AVAILABLE FOR CUSTOM ORDERS AT SELECT STATIONS.

STARBUCKS MOBILE APP

SCIENCE BUILDING

- Auntie Anne's
- Change Please

SOUTH VILLAGE CROSSING

- Charlotte Greens
- Market at Sovi
- Sovi Dining Hall

STUDENT UNION

- Amazon JWO Market
- Bojangles
- Erbert & Gerbert's
- 49er Fresh
- Shake Smart
- Social 704
- Social 704 Express
- Starbucks
- The Bistro
- Wendy's

MUST HAVE APPS



DINE ON CAMPUS
Menu information, Hours of operation, map of dining locations on campus and more

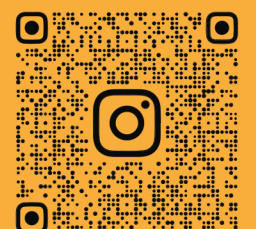


TRANSACT MOBILE ORDERING
Mobile ordering for dining locations across campus



STARSHIP - FOOD DELIVERY
Food Delivery from your phone on campus

FOLLOW NINER DINERS ON INSTAGRAM



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Letter from the editor

I believe one thing all Charlotte students, staff and faculty should keep in mind heading into this semester and new academic year is how we manage opportunity.

In college, opportunities are abundant, something especially true at Charlotte. There is a surplus of organizations, resources and events at Charlotte that you can learn about in this very issue. Each opportunity offers a unique chance to further yourself, meet new people and experience something new. It can also be a window to skip and catch up on sleep or study for an especially hard class; the choice is yours.

This will be my third year in college but my second year at Charlotte. I am a transfer student. Last summer, I transferred away from Catawba College and its 1,000 or so students for the opportunity that Charlotte presented. To the discontent of my parents, I abandoned my scholarship, friends and the sport that carried me through high school for a place I had not even toured.

I can truthfully say it was so scary entering a new school full of entirely new places and faces. I am an introvert, so the thought of interacting with 30,000 strangers scared me, and I sometimes find it hard to really engage—which is evident in the transfer.

Expectations were low.

That being said, the Niner Times was something I had eyes for going into Charlotte. I have wanted to be a journalist since I was nine, and I saw a strong journalism program that I thought could support and uplift me. More than anything, I saw—yes, I will say it, an opportunity.

Since joining the Niner Times in August of 2023, I have been promoted from staff writer to assistant sports editor to sports editor to now editor-in-chief and have written over 100 articles. I spent over 120 hours sitting on bricks covering campus protests last spring, traveled to New York to cover the BIG EAST Men's Basketball Tournament and even covered a Charlotte rally for Donald Trump.

It has been a mixed bag of experiences, but I am incredibly grateful for all of it.

Last year, I was so proud to be a part of one of the Niner Times' best years to date. We won 17 state and national awards and produced over 850 articles.

As the editor-in-chief and head of the Niner Times, I hope to push us to even greater heights in the coming year.

We always look for new photographers, writers, videographers, editors, designers and illustrators and would be happy to have you. But even if you are not a member, I encourage you to stay in tune with what we do. While the Niner Times offers a chance for you to stay informed about the place where you work, study or live, we also offer a place for you to get your story told. Follow us on Instagram at [Niner_Times](#) or keep an eye on our website at [ninertimes.com](#).

The Niner Times is the only publication that can inform you of campus happenings, relevant developments and stories from within our community, and all written by students like you for you.

I am so excited to share our plans for the coming year. But I cannot wait to connect further with the campus that drew me here in the first place.

If you have anything you would like to share, whether it be some of your own writing, a story idea or an anonymous tip, do not hesitate to contact us. You can submit a letter to the editor or tip on our website at [ninertimes.com/letters](#) and [ninertimes.com/tipline](#). Also, feel free to email me personally at [editor@ninertimes.com](#).

The next time you have some downtime in class, are curious about what is happening on campus or pass one of our many print racks across campus, I encourage you to check us out. This small action not only supports you in keeping you more informed and aware but also supports Charlotte students within the Niner Times. Another opportunity for you to maximize.

On behalf of our staff of over 115 Charlotte students, we wish you happy reading and the very best in the coming year. Welcome back.



Davis Cuffe

Editor-in-Chief

Letter from the Student Body

PRESIDENT & VP

Welcome back to campus! As your Student Body President and Vice President, it is our great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to all of you as we embark on another exciting academic year. Whether you are returning to Charlotte or starting your first semester here, we are thrilled to have you as part of our vibrant community.

The start of a new school year is always filled with promise and opportunity. It is a time for fresh starts, new beginnings, and the chance to set new goals. This year, try to embrace every moment with enthusiasm and determination. Each of us has the potential to make this year our best one yet, both academically and personally.

One of the best ways to make the most of your time here is to get involved. Our campus offers hundreds of clubs, organizations and activities that cater to a wide range of interests. Whether you're passionate about sports, arts, academics or social causes, there is something for everyone. Getting involved is a fantastic way to meet new people, develop your skills, and make lasting memories.

I encourage each of you to step out of your comfort

zone and try something new this year. Attend club fairs, join a study group, attend our Charlotte 49er's sporting events, and take advantage of the many resources available to you.

Your involvement not only enriches your own experience but also strengthens our community as a whole.

As we begin this new chapter, let us support and uplift one another. Together, we can create a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and empowered to succeed. If you ever have any questions, ideas, or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us or any member of the student government. We are here to represent you and ensure your voice is heard.

Let's make this year unforgettable by embracing every opportunity, supporting one another, and striving for excellence. Here's to a fantastic year ahead filled with growth, success, and unforgettable experiences.

Welcome back, and let's make this year extraordinary!

ABOUT THE GRAYSON-CITRIN ADMINISTRATION

Grayson is a graduate student from Hendersonville, North Carolina, pursuing his master's in public administration. He completed his bachelor's at UNC Charlotte in May 2024 in political science and history. Citrin is a seventh-year from Wilmington, North Carolina, double majoring in business management and political science with a minor in economics.

Grayson was previously the vice president of the Student Government Association (SGA) in the 2023-2024 academic year. Previously, he was a College of Liberal Arts & Sciences senator, parliamentarian and speaker pro tempore. Grayson was also the 2023-2024 president of Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity, UNC Association of Student Governments' (ASG) secretary for the Select Committee on Internal Operations and one of the students selected for the

Niner 9 homecoming court.

Citrin serves as president of UNC Charlotte's Interfraternity Council. He was also the president of Omicron Delta Kappa and Pi Sigma Alpha honor societies. Within the SGA, Citrin's has served as upperclassman at-large senator, internal affairs vice chair and junior class council member. Citrin has also been an orientation counselor, UNC Charlotte's ASG liaison and the director of finance for Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity.

Grayson and Citrin's "Charlotte Over Everything" platform focuses on three key pillars: build, unite and grow. They hope to create a more robust and supportive academic and professional infrastructure by expanding student career opportunities, promoting accessibility, collaboration and ensuring academic flexibility for mental health.



Letter from CHANCELLOR GABER



Chancellor Sharon L. Gaber | Courtesy of University Communications

Welcome to the 2024-25 academic year, Niner Nation! I'm looking forward to another exciting year.

There are truly amazing things happening here at Charlotte and experiences you won't get anywhere else. The connections we have to this vibrant international city create great opportunities for you: jobs and internships, networking, culture, sports and entertainment. The light rail connects you to everything Charlotte has to offer.

You may have heard that we are among the fastest rising in the U.S. News & World Report rankings and now rank among the top 100 public universities in the U.S., at No. 96.

Also of significance is our ascent toward top-tier research status. The University is projected to earn the nation's highest research classification, Carnegie R1, early next year. This creates even more opportunities for you as a student and only increases the value of your Charlotte degree.

For these reasons and many more, you'll often hear us say, "Only at Charlotte."

Charlotte is a great University, and we're only getting better. You made the right choice.

At Charlotte, we have the best professors, mentors, researchers and advisors around. Interact with them, whether it's in class, during office hours, or by email. We all want to see you succeed. There are many resources on campus to assist you. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

This year, show your Niner pride by attending athletics games and cheering on your classmates. We have 19 Division I athletic teams, including our newest, women's lacrosse. Also, get your gear ready for #WearGreenWednesday, and get ready for events throughout the semester, including Niner Nation Week, Nov. 10-17.

It is truly a privilege to serve as your chancellor. As your chancellor, my primary goal is to see you succeed.

I can't wait to see all you will accomplish this year. Go Niners!

Chancellor Sharon L. Gaber

WHAT'S NEW ON CAMPUS

Kelli Blackburn
Asst. Sports Editor

As the new school year begins to accelerate, excitement buzzes across campus with a host of new features and faces to enhance every student's experience at Charlotte.

From the state-of-the-art facilities to new programs and coaches, here is a sneak peek at what is new and noteworthy for the 49ers in the 2024-2025 school year.

Athletics

Many new faces are making their way around the athletics programs, specifically coaching hires to bring change for the 49ers.

Head Coach Courtney Breault, a notable piece to the Clemson University Tigers softball team for five seasons, was announced to lead Charlotte softball for the upcoming season on June 26.

Men's basketball named Ben Johnson as the newest assistant coach on staff for the 49ers on May 16. Johnson is credited with helping develop NBA champion Klay Thompson during his time in Pullman, Washington. He comes with over 30 years of coaching experience to help serve Charlotte.

On the women's basketball side, Tomekia Reed was announced as the ninth head coach in program history on May 1 to take over for the 49ers. Reed is a three-time HBCU National Coach of the Year and has recruited a few familiar faces from her previous coaching stint at Jackson State University for the 2024 season.

Sherisa Livingston, formerly the head coach of Radford University's women's volleyball team, joins the coaching staff for Charlotte's women's volleyball team after Head Coach Karen Weath-

erington's statement on April 1.

A few adjustments with each team, in addition to recruitments, are hoped to improve aspects of athletics for the 2024-2025 season.

Administration and staff

Denise Balfour Simpson has been named the associate vice chancellor and dean of students for Charlotte. She formerly served as associate dean of students in the Division of Student Life at Davidson College.

From Northern Arizona University, Christopher R. Boyer has joined Charlotte this school year to become the founding dean of the College of Humanities & Earth and Social Sciences.

Stephanie Norander, a professor in the Communications Studies Department at Charlotte who has held numerous positions, is now the inaugural associate faculty director for the Levine Scholars Program on campus.

A new dean of the Belk College of Business, Richard J. Buttimer, will be joining the 49ers. Buttimer is known for his work in finance and real estate studies. He previously worked with the University of North Florida at Jacksonville to extend interdisciplinary research, along with labs and fields of study.

Christopher Gonyar steps up this year as vice chancellor of security after John Bogdan's retirement on May 21. Gonyar is a 49er alumnus, originally being the University's director of emergency management for 10 years and created Charlotte's NinerAlerts program and critical response protocol.

Many new leaders are stepping up for Char-

lotte, bringing fresh perspectives and expertise that continue to drive the University's mission forward.

Academic programs

The UNC Board of Governors has approved a request to establish a Doctor of Philosophy in Data Science program at Charlotte. The request was approved in May and is now pending approval of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Its first cohort will be for fall 2025.

Charlotte is also looking to expand its School of Nursing with an Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program that will accommodate up to 32 students with previous undergraduate or associate degrees each fall. There will also be five faculty members and an academic support advisor to assist students with their educational needs.

Facilities and services

The Atkins Tower, floors five through 10 of the J. Murrey Atkins Library, have been closed since July 1 for renovations. Upgrades will include replacing tower elevators and changes to study rooms, fire alarms and smoke control systems. These updates are expected to take 18 months and will require students and staff to use other facilities in the library.

The UNC Board of Governors approved a \$60 million Phase 1 expansion of Jerry Richardson Stadium on April 18. The expansion will add a tower and increase the stadium's capacity

to 18,170. Up to seven luxury suites, club seats, lounge boxes, additional general seating, ledge seats and updates to the club level will help it serve as a bigger meeting and dining area for the football team.

The UNC Charlotte Niner Esports game and lounge space is also planning new renovations for the school year. The location will remain the same, in Room M101 in the Popp Martin Student Union, also known as 'Norm's Loft.' It is looking to add 24 open PlayStations, a five-versus-five competition arena, a video-on-demand (VOD) area and a casting station.

Available under the awning at Colvard, an Auntie Anne's portable cart is coming to one of the busiest places on campus for students who stay on the go.

Student organizations

If you want to find your niche, look no further than Charlotte's student organizations. Charlotte features over 400 student organizations to support your interests and offers the opportunity to start your own organization.

Over the summer, Charlotte introduced over a dozen clubs, including 'Leetcode,' a student-run coding and interview prep club, and '17th Shard at UNC Charlotte,' a book club for Brandon Sanderson novels.

With new student organizations popping up every day on campus, they are always looking for new members to join. If you are interested in joining a club on campus, make sure to check out Niner Engage.



(Left to right) new softball Head Coach Courtney Breault, Atkins Library Tower, Auntie Anne's portable cart at Colvard and the annual fall Student Org Showcase. | Sunnya Hadavi, Megan Bentley, Jade Suszek/Niner Times File and courtesy of UNC Charlotte

A guide to GOLD RUSH 2024

Sofia DiStefano
News Editor

With the fall semester starting and summer coming to an end, UNC Charlotte's welcome program hosts the annual Gold Rush to welcome new and returning students on campus.

The 2024 Gold Rush will be held from Aug. 17 to Sep. 1. It will include various games, activities and opportunities for students to show their Niner Pride and gain exposure to all that UNC Charlotte offers.

With Gold Rush being one of the first major opportunities incoming students have to branch out into Niner Nation, here are some unmissable events and tips for navigating the busy first week of school.

Aug. 17

Gold Rush starts with a Blockbuster Bash at the Hauser Alumni Pavilion from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 17. The event, hosted by the Campus Activity Board (CAB), is a Hollywood-themed party that will include games, free snacks and tokens. Students can RSVP through Niner Engage.

Aug. 18

On Sunday, Aug. 18, events will be hosted all over campus throughout the day. There will be an opening worship with free lunch from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Fretwell, room 100, with the Niner United group.

Students are invited to attend two events from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.: the Student Orgs Show-

case at the CHHS Plaza and RecFest at the University Recreational Center (UREC).

These two events are something students will want to attend. Both showcase the different ways students can get involved. Charlotte has over 400 student organizations that provide an outlet for students in various fields, whether that be through sports clubs, arts, media, culture and more.

Students can get free snacks and UNC Charlotte gear, such as t-shirts, at both.

Aug. 19

The fall semester begins with the first day of classes on Monday, Aug. 19. That evening, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., there will be a South Village cookout at the Levine field. Niner United will host the event and will have free food and games available. Attending events such as the cookout is a great way to connect with other students who live in your dorm building or surrounding buildings. A key aspect of starting college is branching out and connecting with people outside of roommates.

Aug. 20

On Tuesday, Aug. 20, there are Gold Rush events from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Two worth attending are the postcards to home and financial wellness events.

Two time slots are available for students to send postcards to home: 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. in Lower Prospector. This event

allows students to understand how the mailroom on campus works and make a handmade postcard to send to their loved ones. For out-of-state students, this is something to take advantage of.

The financial wellness event will occur from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. at table one in the CHHS/COED plaza. There will be crosswords and word searches at the table, and students can learn more about Charlotte's history and increase their financial knowledge. The table is hosted by Niner Finances.

Aug. 21

On Wednesday, Aug. 21, many Gold Rush events will be held for students curious about on-campus connections.

From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. there will be a Gold Rush Plaza Party located in the North Main Quad, where students can informally connect with employers and campus partners.

Simultaneously, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., the University Career Center will host an on-campus job fair at the J. Murry Atkins library walkway. Students will have the opportunity to speak to all the different departments on campus that are looking to hire.

For students looking to get involved in Greek life at Charlotte, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life will host a meeting that students can attend to learn about Greek life and ask any questions they may have in the Popp Martin Student Union. With over 40 chapters here at Charlotte, many students find their forever home during the fall and spring

semesters, and if you want to learn more about Charlotte's Greek life, this is worth attending.

Aug. 22

On Thursday, Aug. 22, the Charlotte Botanical Gardens will host a nature therapy walk at the McMillan Greenhouse from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Registration for the walk is required, and there are 16 available spots per time slot.

Charlotte's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) will host an event at the Health and Wellbeing Courtyard from 2 to 4 p.m., during which students can create self-care kits.

Aug. 23

On Friday, Aug. 23, from 2 to 4 p.m., the Office of International Programs will host a Candy Trivia contest. Students can answer trivia questions to win candy from all over the world.

From 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., Charlottes Transition & Success Initiatives will host Norm's Quest, a campus-wide scavenger hunt that students can participate in. The winners will be those in the top three teams and can choose their prize basket.

To conclude the first week of Gold Rush, the UREC indoor pool will host an Aqua-Cinema from 8 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. This will be the second annual movie night at UREC, giving students the chance to end the first week of school in a fun way.

For a complete Gold Rush event list and more information, visit tsi.charlotte.edu/goldrush.



Student Government Association (SGA) and Campus Activities Board (CAB) at the Fall Student Orgs Showcase. | Jade Suszek/Niner Times File

UNC Charlotte sees closings and realignments

of DEI programs and offices

Davis Cuffe, Sofia DiStefano & Clare Grealey
Editor-in-Chief, News Editor & Copy Editor

In response to a new policy passed in May 2024 by the UNC system Board of Governors, UNC Charlotte has implemented changes to its diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs and offices, including many closings and realignments.

While these changes were formally announced on Aug. 8, action to implement them began early in the summer and is ongoing.

One such change not formally announced until Aug. 8 was the dissolution of Charlotte's Identity, Equity and Engagement offices (IEE) in compliance with the new policy. The office was announced as closed in a July 30 email. In the office's place is now an expanded Leadership, Community and Engagement office (LCE) with Ysatis Piñero as its new director. The LCE office was expanded in an effort to "support and expand student belonging, community and competency development through experimental learning," as read in the July 30 email sent to Charlotte staff from Karen Shaffer, associate vice chancellor for student affairs.

The expanded LCE office is expected to draw a portion of funding previously used for DEI at Charlotte.

In addition, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Office of Academic Diversity and Inclusion were closed. Most staff positions in these offices were reassigned to LCE and undergraduate education positions, and upwards of 10 Charlotte employees were reassigned.

Programs under these departments have been either closed or moved in realignment with student success initiatives, with the SAFE (Students Achieving First-Year Excellence) as an example of a moved program.

"Student success" is given as a primary recipient of funds previously used for DEI programs, but no clear definition is provided in the Aug. 8 email or Q&A.

"Student success is a combination of positive intellectual, personal, and social development

facilitated by a high-quality university education. It includes the development of competencies such as critical and creative thinking, lifelong learning, technology proficiency, resilience, effective communication, flexibility and collaboration, among others. It also pertains to the timely acquisition of a degree," reads the UNC System Strategic Plan. It is unclear if UNC Charlotte has a separate interpretation of the term.

Alterations to student organization procedures and programming are very minimal.

While student organizations can still pursue social and political advocacy, this advocacy cannot be carried out on behalf of UNC

group connections as his former position was removed.

Federally protected programs such as nondiscrimination, Title IX, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, free expression and affirmative action remain unchanged.

No academic material will be altered in an effort to preserve academic freedom, and programs serving international students will not be affected.

Affirming spaces such as the Lavender Lounge, Peace Haven and gender-affirming bathrooms will not be altered or closed.

New programming is expected to be unveiled in the future to replace those that were closed

chancellor for student affairs, in an interview. "I think sometimes there's concern that this policy, legislation, or whatever impacts those commitments [to student belonging], and it doesn't. The policy itself is very clear that we're to create a culture of belonging in this institution for everybody from every background and every identity. We're going to figure out how to do that from a day-to-day perspective."

"Students aren't going to be feeling the impact of this policy in terms of how they are allowed to conduct themselves or how student organizations are run," said Bailey. "It's up to the institution to figure out how this policy is an opportunity to reinvest in students."

Charlotte administration did not have a hand in creating or passing the new policy.

According to the Equality Policy Q&A, the new system policy contains three new legal requirements that the University must apply to the offices and roles.

The first requirement is maintaining institutional neutrality, which mandates that all UNC System institution organizations do not operate on the matter of political debate or social action.

The second requirement is the prohibition of compelled speech. The policy states that no office or role may express opinions on beliefs, affiliations or ideals on political debate or social action.

The third requirement is the prohibition of promoting certain concepts. The policy states that no office or role may be organized to promote a list of concepts.

According to General Statute Article 126-14.6, which ensures dignity and nondiscrimination in State government workplaces, "promote" is defined as compelling State employees to affirm or profess belief in these concepts.

According to Article VIII of the revised policy, UNC system institutions must certify that they are adhering to the guidelines by Sept. 1, 2024.

"I think sometimes there's concern that this policy, legislation, or whatever impacts those commitments [to student belonging], and it doesn't. The policy itself is very clear that we're to create a culture of belonging in this institution for everybody from every background and every identity."

- Kevin Bailey, vice chancellor for student affairs

Charlotte. Identity-based student organization programs, mentoring and support are permitted so long as they align with student success initiatives. Student organization funding is not affected.

Brandon Wolfe, Charlotte's associate vice chancellor for diversity and inclusion and chief diversity officer from 2021-2024, was reassigned as executive director for campus and alumni

and reallocate past DEI funds.

Other specific alterations as a result of the policy change are yet unclear.

Despite closing many offices and programs related to diversity and inclusion, Charlotte's administration maintains that it wants its students to feel that they belong.

"I would affirm that all of our students belong here," said Kevin Bailey, Charlotte's vice



LEAD. SERVE. LIVE.

*Learn to lead and serve
on campus and
in the community!*

Popp Martin Student Union

LEADERSHIP.CHARLOTTE.EDU





OUR HWB Promise

We are committed to fostering the holistic wellbeing of students by providing collaborative care and support.

HWB IN Action

We empower and engage the campus community through services, programs, and other opportunities that promote healthy living.

HWB DEPARTMENTS



CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services)

OUR FOCUS IS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

We are here to provide short-term individual and group counseling, crisis management, consultation, referral services, and educational and preventive initiatives related to promoting positive mental health for the campus community.



STUDENT HEALTH

OUR FOCUS IS HEALTH CARE

We are here to provide comprehensive medical care, disease prevention, health education, and various specialty services to all registered UNC Charlotte students, regardless of the type of health insurance they carry. Student Health also has a full service pharmacy on-site



CIC (Center for Integrated Care)

OUR FOCUS IS REFERRING STUDENTS TO RESOURCES

We are here to link students to wellbeing resources both on and off campus. We are also a resource for faculty and staff to refer students who may not be experiencing crisis but instead may need guidance on how to support a student with needs in multiple areas.



UREC (University Recreation)

OUR FOCUS IS PHYSICAL WELLNESS

Our team develops and implements recreational programs that align with our core values - student development, balance, fun, inclusion, quality, and safety - in order to achieve wellbeing.



CWP (Center for Wellness Promotion)

OUR FOCUS IS WELLNESS EDUCATION

Our team offers programs and services to address many topics including general wellness, sexual health, mental health, suicide prevention, interpersonal violence prevention, substance use prevention, and recovery from substance misuse.



To learn more about the HWB Unit and all department services visit wellbeing.charlotte.edu



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Looking back at the 2023-2024 academic year

Niner Times Editorial Board

As Niner Nation heads into a new academic year, the Niner Times looks back at the significant changes, events, movements and meetings from the 2023-2024 academic year.

Charlotte campus and administration

In September 2023, UNC Charlotte's College of Liberal Arts split into the College of Humanities & Earth and Social Sciences and the College of Science.

Christine Davis, former dean of students and associate vice chancellor for student affairs, stepped down in December.

On June 10, 2024, Denise Balfour Simpson was appointed Charlotte's associate vice chancellor for student affairs and dean of students. Simpson brings nearly 20 years working in student affairs in higher education to the role at Charlotte and is set to make an impact.

Alicia Bertone stepped down from her role as provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs in May 2023. Jennifer Troyer, dean of the Belk College of Business, was appointed in the interim.

In June 2023, the Dean of The College of Arts + Architecture (CoA+A), Dean Muller, departed from UNC Charlotte. José Gámez is currently the interim dean of CoAA.

The 2023 Charlotte football season was the first under new Head Coach Biff Poggi. Charlotte ended their season with a 3-9 (2-6 in American Athletic Conference) record.

In June 2023, Aaron Fearne became interim men's basketball head coach after the previous head coach, Ron Sanchez, stepped down. In February 2024, Director of Athletics Mike Hill appointed Fearne head coach.

On Feb. 1, 2024, a falsely reported active

shooter was on Charlotte's campus. At approximately 12:25 p.m., an "all clear" was issued to the students after the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) responded to the call. The call to CMPD was made after students reportedly heard banging noises in Mebane Hall at 11:51 a.m., and students received the first Niner Alert at 12:12 p.m., 21 minutes later.

This raised concern from the campus community, and many were frustrated over how long it took the school to communicate with the students, faculty and staff. Since then, Chancellor Sharon L. Gaber has announced that Charlotte has undergone security upgrades, such as active shooter training (ALICE), which aims to improve communication and preparedness for events such as this.

On April 18, 2024, the UNC System Board of Governors approved the budgeted \$60 million renovation plan for the Jerry Richardson Stadium. Charlotte's athletic director, Mike Hill, expressed that this expansion is part of Phase One of the EverGreen expansion plan and that other Charlotte athletic facilities will undergo similar renovations.

On April 25, 2024, the Board of Trustees (BoT) met in the Popp Martin Student Union. During the BoT meeting, various student groups and faculty attended and protested against the Diversity Equity and Inclusion policy (DEI) changes that were expected to be discussed.

In May 2024, Charlotte's associate vice chancellor for security and safety, John Bogdan, announced his retirement. Bogdan's retirement became effective June 30, and Christopher Gonyar, Charlotte's director of emergency management, has now taken on the interim role.

Student organizations

The 60th Assembly of the Student Government Association (SGA), the Organizational Ways & Means Committee and the Senate approved 86 new student organizations. The SGA also claims to have allocated the most organizational grant money to student organizations in one year compared to the last five years.

These allocations led to budget and funding struggles. Adjustments were made to find more funding for student organization events during the spring. Student organizations continued to participate in campus events to help with member recruitment.

Over 125 student organizations attended the Winter Student Organization Showcase, with even more attending the Fall Showcase. The University Student Involvement Office also launched the NinerEngage+ app to promote campus life engagement.

Student advocacy

During the 2023-24 academic year, Charlotte students participated in numerous rallies, marches, encampments and other protests.

Students have been demanding Charlotte's divestment from Israel in the pro-Palestine movement since October 2023. They also called for transparency in all finances allocated to the State of Israel and any organizations within it.

The pro-Palestine showed their support to Palestine throughout the year by staging encampments, die-ins and also holding rallies and marches. The group's encampment outside of the Fretwell/Cato Quad lasted 14 days until dispersed by CMPD and campus police on May 7.

During the April 25 UNC Charlotte BoT

meeting at the Student Union, protestors held signs supporting the existing DEI policy in and out of the meeting. Pro-Palestine protestors and Black Student Union members, were also present and did the same, advocating for their cause. After the meeting concluded at 3:15 p.m., protestors from all groups gathered and chanted at the front entrance to the Student Union and at the Union Deck to face BoT members as they left the meeting.

60th assembly of SGA

The SGA completed its 60th Assembly during the 2023-2024 academic year under Student Body President Tife Olusesi and Vice President Isaiah Grayson.

During the Olusesi administration, the SGA created the Presidential Advisory Board, held a town hall and established the SGA Month of Giving.

On March 21, 2024, Isaiah Grayson and his running mate James Citrin were announced as the student body class president and vice president for the 2024-2025 academic year.

The two secured their spots with a 56% to 44% win—the 2024 SGA election brought 1,797 voters, the highest number since the 2020 SGA election.

The 60th Assembly ended on April 4, 2024, when Grayson and Citrin were officially inaugurated into their positions.

The duo's slogan, "Charlotte. Over. Everything," was chosen to promote creating a stronger academic and professional environment for Charlotte's student population.



(Left to right) Men's basketball Head Coach Aaron Fearne, the "Self-Made Man" statue with signs from the UNC Charlotte Palestine Encampment and the Grayson-Citrin administration upon winning the vote for Student Body President and Vice President. | Chris Crews, Sunnya Hadavi & Sofia DiStefano/Niner Times File

NEWS to WATCH FOR

in the 2024-2025 academic year

Sofia DiStefano & Davis Cuffe
News Editor & Editor-in-Chief

Following a busy year of news, Charlotte is expected to follow up in the upcoming academic year with a major election year on the horizon, action from student groups and more.

SGA to vote on divestment resolution

In conjunction with pro-Palestine student activism on campus was the Student Government Association's (SGA) divestment resolution. The resolution came in response to a March petition by student groups Social Justice for North Africa and Southwest Asia (SJSWANA) and the Revolutionary Student Front (RSF), titled "SGA: Endorse the UNCC Board of Trustees Divestment From Israel."

The petition earned over 500 signatures within the first week of its creation. It sought to drive the SGA to push Charlotte to condemn Israel's genocide of Palestinians and push for Charlotte's total divestment from Israel.

Following its introduction, the resolution was condemned by the Charlotte administration and discarded by the SGA. Despite early pushback, it was reintroduced with no changes at the last SGA meeting of the 2023-2024 academic year and pushed into limbo over the summer due to the SGA's lack of action.

The SGA's Leadership Committee will vote on the resolution in the upcoming semester.

Election action

With election season around the corner, students are encouraged to participate in voting.

Early voting is available to students in the Cone building on campus. Students also have the option to vote by mail. To do so, there is a North Carolina absentee ballot portal that students can visit to request an online ballot to fill out and mail.

If students are not registered to vote, they can register and vote on the same day during the early voting period. Students can use the NC Voter Lookup Tool to check if they are registered to vote in North Carolina.

Along with students taking action through voting, campus canvassing by student volunteers is expected and has been seen in the past. Whether they support either party or push for students to vote, students are sure to be seen getting involved politically in the fall.

North Carolina will be under the spotlight as a swing state or a state equally likely to be won by either candidate. This suggests a possibility

of heavy campaigning from both parties in the Charlotte area. Early voting in North Carolina runs from Oct. 17 to Nov. 2, and Election Day falls on Nov. 5.

Reaching R1 status

UNC Charlotte is predicted to reach R1 status in 2025 and is projected to become one of only four universities in North Carolina with the title. Currently, only 146 universities nationwide hold the title.

The Carnegie Classification of Higher Education awards R1 status to universities and research facilities representing the nation's leading research universities.

Obtaining an R1-level title involves several aspects. Universities must have at least 70 doctorates annually and spend \$50 million on external research projects.

UNC Charlotte met both criteria during the 2022-2023 academic year, awarding 176 doctoral degrees and reaching \$55.2 million in research funding.

According to the University, Charlotte has been working to reach R1 status since 2021. A majority of Charlotte's research work has been done through the new facilities on campus, such as the Battery Complexity, Autonomous Vehicle and Electrification Research Center (BATT CAVE), Charlotte AIR Institute and Computational Intelligence to Predict Health and Environmental Risks (CIPHER).

Reaching R1 status opens new opportunities for students and faculty by creating more research opportunities, funding increases and increased federal grants.

FAFSA updates

With the new academic year approaching, students should also be aware of FAFSA changes.

According to the University, changes to the FAFSA 2024-2025 form have included expanded eligibility and a more streamlined application process.

The Department of Education has introduced and continues to work on finalizing the FAFSA Simplification Act.

Four significant changes are included in the FAFSA Simplification Act, which will take effect during the 2024-25 academic year. According to the site, these changes are required by law.

The first major change will be replacing the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) with the Student Aid Index (SAI), which includes chang-



Protestors at the April 25 Board of Trustees meeting. | Sofia DiStefano/Niner Times File

ing the methodology used to determine aid.

The second major change will be modifying the family definitions in FAFSA formulas. This includes taking a different approach by looking at what was reported on the student or parent's tax returns, aligning with the size of the student's family.

The third will expand access to Federal Pell Grants, allowing more students to receive aid. It will also restore eligibility to students whose schools closed while they were enrolled or if a school is found to have misled students.

The fourth change will streamline the FAFSA form, removing questions regarding drug convictions or selective service registration and adding questions such as applicants' race, gender and ethnicity.

UNC Charlotte intends to communicate with students and families regarding any further changes with FAFSA.

Continued student activism

The 2024 spring semester saw a level of student activism across the country not witnessed since the 1970s in response to the Vietnam War. While protesting groups were not as large as those at other schools, Charlotte saw its own wave of student activism last year.

Students protested in support of existing DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) policies and in

solidarity with Palestine to push for Charlotte's divestment from Israel.

Charlotte's Gaza solidarity encampment was the largest and longest protest on campus grounds, lasting 14 days and at some points reaching over 100 protesters. The group protested in solidarity with Gaza and student encampments around the nation and in an effort to push Charlotte to divest from Israel.

The encampment was dispersed by campus police and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department on May 7, the 14th day of the protest. There has been no action over the summer, but organizing groups plan to make educational efforts in the future.

"Regarding the upcoming academic school year, the UNCC Students for Justice in Palestine will focus efforts on education and providing context for our peers and community regarding our pro-Palestinian, anti-imperialist stance," said UNCC Students for Justice in Palestine, a central organizing group in 2024's encampment protest.

Looking forward

With lots of campus activity expected in the coming year, keep an eye out for Niner Times prints across campus, articles on our website at nintertimes.com and posts on our Instagram at [@niner_times](https://www.instagram.com/niner_times) to stay informed about campus happenings.

Getting to know UNC Charlotte's new dean of students, **DENISE BALFOUR SIMPSON**

Brendan Mullen
Writing Managing Editor

As of July 29, 2024, Denise Balfour Simpson has begun her new role as vice chancellor of student affairs and dean of students. Since her first day, Simpson has been working hard, learning about and getting to know UNC Charlotte and its students. Of course, just as it is important for a dean to know their campus, it is crucial for a campus to know their dean. With this in mind, here is a closer look into Charlotte's new dean of students and what she has to offer.

Before coming to Charlotte, Simpson worked as the associate dean of students in the Division of Student Life at Davidson College. Her work there was similar to what she will do at Charlotte and involved conflict resolution.

"I had oversight of student conduct and case management," said Simpson. "So somewhat similar to student accountability and conflict resolution here in SASS (Student Assistance and Support Services)."

Charlotte's dean of students and vice chancellor of student affairs are predominantly responsible for general student well-being, such as resolving student conflicts and ensuring students receive the resources necessary for them to succeed academically, physically, mentally and more.

Simpson's work in Student Affairs began early in her undergraduate experience in Chicago when she was a resident assistant (RA) at DePaul University, and worked jobs within or aligned with student affairs and student resources.

"I was a student leader," said Simpson. "I became engaged in student affairs work as a student leader. I was an RA on campus. I volunteered in the city. I did a lot of student leadership things. I was a peer mentor."

At DePaul Simpson received a bachelor's degree in psychology and communications. Afterwards, Simpson earned her master's degree in educational leadership at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and a Ph.D. in Higher Education/Higher Education Administration.

Simpson's time working alongside students as an RA and peer mentor and the impact she made helped her create a passion for the work she does.

"For me, what was most impactful were those moments where students found themselves in a moment like where they needed care, conduct, or they were in a crisis," said Simpson. "Although those were really difficult moments for me, it became really rewarding to help students and be alongside them as they found their way out of that. So that was the work that got me here 20 years later."

In her 20 years of experience in student affairs, Simpson has worked across the country and internationally. She spent over two years in the city of Kunshan in the Jiangsu province of China as a director of academic initiatives at Duke Kunshan University, a joint venture campus

between Duke University and Wuhan University. The diversity of the students on that campus greatly affected Simpson's experience in higher education administration.

"60% of the students were Chinese. 40% of the students were literally from around the world.

So, when you talk about a climate for just global immersion and the diversity of ideas, people, cultures and language, how do you put all of that together in an institution of higher ed? In a culture that's completely different from what I'm used to? For me, that was transformative," said Simpson.

With just under half of its students representing a minority group and over 1,500 international students, Simpson's experiences at Duke Kunshan University will surely prove valuable.

Although Simpson has an abundance of experience in helping students in higher education, Charlotte still offers new opportunities for herself and her career.

"The bulk of my career has been either in or allied to the work that I'm doing now," said Simpson. "So it's an opportunity to do this work in a new and different way, in a different environment."

With Simpson still moving into her role at Charlotte, she is predominantly concerned with connecting and learning about the 49er student body before moving on to what needs to be done administratively.

"I'm ready to get in and engage with the students," said Simpson. "I'm here to serve, support and advocate for [Charlotte's students], so I'm curious to get to know [them], what [they're] about, what [they] need and what our services can do to support [their] success."

Now at Charlotte, Simpson wants students to know that she is here to talk to students, not talk at them.

"Folks come to the Dean of Students Office expecting that we are the experts," said Simpson. "We know exactly what needs to happen, what you need to do and where you need to go. Some of that is true, but that also doesn't mean that students can't teach us, too."

Outside of her work as an administrator in higher education, Simpson loves trying new things.

"I can talk to you all day about my experience. You can look at my bio, you can find my resume. You can look me up on LinkedIn and find out the details. But I'm a foodie; I also love experiencing new things. So if folks want to talk to me about food, if folks want to show me where new restaurants and fun experiences are in Charlotte, it doesn't matter; I would welcome that."



UNC Charlotte Dean of Students Denise Balfour Simpson | Courtesy of UNC Charlotte



Rachael Jan McLaughlin
Staff Writer

Blaise Uy/Niner Times

Beginning a new semester in college can be stressful. Luckily, there are various resources available for students, faculty and staff to take advantage of when attending UNC Charlotte.

J. Murrey Atkins Library

Atkins Library offers a variety of services to utilize on campus. Students can borrow technology such as laptops, iPads, camera equipment and hotspots. Students can also use a podcast recording studio in Area 49 for coursework or personal use. At the library, students can speak to librarians for help with research and essays and can access multiple databases of information online. Students can also participate in the peer mentoring program if they are experiencing academic difficulties or on academic probation. In addition, Atkins Library has study rooms that students can reserve to use over the semester.

Career Center

UNC Charlotte's Career Center provides career meetups in a small group setting with career-centered topics. They also offer interview prep, where students can practice before an interview. The career center has a professional clothing closet where students can try on and take professional clothes for interviews, jobs and internship opportunities.

Hire-A-Niner

Hire-A-Niner is a resource for students and alumni in full-time work, part-time work and

internships. Hire-A-Niner selects jobs on your feed based on your major, career interests and similar jobs to the ones you apply to. To use Hire-A-Niner, you must upload a resume that meets the Career Center's requirements for applying for jobs or internships. In addition, Hire-A-Niner includes employment events such as job fairs, which students can sign up to attend. Students can make appointments on Hire-A-Niner to speak with a career coach for resume, cover letter advice and mock interviews to prepare for an upcoming job interview.

University Center for Academic Excellence (UCAE)

Students can use the free tutoring center, which has access to 126 courses. UCAE offers drop-in tutoring services during the fall and spring semesters and appointment-only tutoring.

Students should become familiar with the site Connect as this is the service to schedule advising and tutoring appointments. To access Connect, you must log in with your Niner credentials and then select appointments to schedule a tutoring or advising session.

University Recreation (UREC)

Students can utilize the University Recreation Center to take group fitness classes, do personal training, join an intramural sport or work out using the five floors of equipment. The UREC includes an indoor & outdoor pool with an indoor track. The UREC has a demo kitchen where students can register for classes and learn new recipes and how to cook. Students can use

the gym for free throughout the fall and spring semesters.

Student Health Center

In the student health center, students can make doctor appointments and get necessary immunizations. There is a nutritionist that students can use to learn more about healthy eating habits. In addition, at the Student Health Center, there is a pharmacy located inside where students can get their prescriptions filled.

Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

CAPS offers group counseling, which typically includes a group of five to 10 students who meet once a week with CAPS counselors during the semester. They also offer drop-in and multi-session workshops on various topics to cover students' common concerns. There is individual counseling for students with ongoing concerns. There are also virtual resources, such as video modules on coping with anxiety, that students can access at their convenience, along with other mental health resources.

Jamil Niner Student Pantry

The Jamil Niner Student Pantry provides food assistance to UNC Charlotte students and employees experiencing food insecurity. Any undergraduate student, graduate student and employees can shop at Jamil Niner Student Pantry. To shop at the pantry, students and faculty can request appointments online on the pantry's website.

Anyone is welcome to make donations to the pantry; they accept non-perishable goods. Students can also volunteer at the pantry by signing up for a time slot on Niner Engage.

Office of Disability Services

The Office of Disabilities Services is for students with disabilities to receive accommodations. Students can fill out documentation on the disability services website for approval for accommodations and support.

Students, if eligible, can receive academic accommodations such as testing accommodations, class notes and assistive technology. Dining accommodations for students with disabilities can be flexible meal plans and are decided on an individualized basis. Housing accommodations are decided by a case-by-case determination. Students requesting housing and dining accommodations will need to fill out the Request Form and upload the form on the student portal.

Niner Paratransit is transportation available to students with mobility impairments who are registered for this service. To qualify for Niner Paratransit, students and faculty must submit the Niner Paratransit Medical Verification form to the Office of Disability Services.

There are a variety of different resources on campus that help students, faculty and staff have a better and safer experience at university by making use of what is available.

Niner Times survey helps understand LGBTQ+ STUDENT SAFETY

Sunnya Hadavi
Layout Editor



Blaise Uy/Niner Times

The Niner Times conducted a survey to gain insight into how comfortable and safe queer and LGBTQ+ students feel at UNC Charlotte following the passing of the DEI policy revisions. The results of the survey show that most respondents feel safe and comfortable expressing their queer/LGBTQ+ identity on campus.

The survey was open for 11 days, from June 18-29, and received 51 anonymous responses.

The survey consisted of 19 questions, one of which was an optional, open-ended question asking for statements. 21 out of 51 respondents (41.18%) provided a statement. All quotes in this story were submitted by respondents and may have been edited for correctness and clarity.

“Charlotte is one of the few ‘safe spaces’ I’ve found as a lesbian in the South,” said a second-year student respondent. “Most people don’t care, and I’ve made great connections with fellow LGBTQ+ students. They take great measures to include us and make campus as welcoming as possible.”

The responses showed that respondents mostly feel comfortable expressing their identity with other students (62.75%). Roughly the same number of respondents felt comfortable expressing themselves outwardly on campus (58.82%). Over half of respondents feel safe at UNC Charlotte (66.67%).

“UNC Charlotte has been an amazing, safe space for my queer friends and myself. I feel that I can be free here,” said a first-year student respondent. “That said, I worry about the future of our safe space; we’ve gotten caught in the crossfire of a culture war that we didn’t choose. The state hasn’t given me reason to believe it has our best interests at heart.”

Some respondents said they feel safe and comfortable on campus and attribute that to being private about their identity. One respondent said they would be comfortable at Charlotte if they came out.

“I think that UNC Charlotte would be a wonderful place to come out, as I have seen so much support and acceptance for the LGBTQ+ community here,” said the graduate student respondent. “Though I’m not currently in a place where I feel comfortable openly expressing my own queerness, the environment fostered here makes me feel better about being who I am. I could absolutely see myself eventually getting to a place where I do feel OK about sharing my sexuality here.”

Respondents were split on whether available University resources were adequate. 41.18% felt that they were sufficient, 31.37% felt neutral or unsure and 27.45% did not.

One initiative of the IEE Office has been the Lavender Lounge. According to the IEE webpage, before it was taken down on July 23, the Lavender Lounge was a “student-centered space that is open to LGBTQIA+ students and their allies.” When asked about the space, most respondents (60.78%) said they had not visited or used it, and a quarter (25.49%) did not know that it existed.

One respondent said that they prefer clubs and unofficial spaces on campus to the Lavender Lounge or other official spaces.

“A community is more than a shared identity. It is shared activities, relationships, music, food, etc. For this reason, I prefer to engage with UNCC’s queer community through unofficial venues, such as clubs and activity spaces popular with queer students,” said the fourth-year student respondent. “There are a lot of queer people in the computer science, gaming and writing spaces on campus, for example, so I seldom feel the need for places like Lavender Lounge or official campus LGBTQ+ social events.”

The University also offers “All Gender Restrooms” at multiple buildings around campus. More than half of respondents (56.86%) felt that the University’s “All Gender Restrooms” accommodated their needs as students. Of those who responded this way, most self-identified as non-binary or cisgender women.

UNC Charlotte has adjusted its diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs and positions following the passing of the UNC System’s revised policy in May. The changes raise concerns about how the University will support those whom DEI applies to, especially LGBTQ+ students.

“Being queer at UNCC was a love-hate relationship,” said an alumni respondent. “The queer community was loving and accepting, but so many other communities (clubs, student orgs, teachers, programs, etc.) weren’t. We had to create our own resources, and now that the new DEI legislature has passed, the spaces queer students and faculty have worked so hard to create will likely be defunded and eventually closed or changed.”

Even if the policy changes the resources and programs provided on campus, students said they will continue expressing their identity.

“I do worry about the new DEI [policy], but I do not plan on changing anything about me or my lifestyle due to it,” said a fourth-year student respondent. “I will live as myself in my community, and I will fight for the right to be queer. I love being queer and being in the UNCC community, and I feel safe being gay in my space.”

Charlotte football featured in COLLEGE FOOTBALL 25

Kelli Blackburn
Asst. Sports Editor

49er football enthusiasts can now bring college football to their living rooms with the release of “EA College Football 25” on July 19.

Charlotte was not featured in the 2014 installment of the game but is now featured as one of the game’s 134 playable teams.

EA Sports officially released “College Football 25” (CFB 25) to Deluxe and MVP Edition owners on July 16, whereas regular owners gained full access to the game on July 19.

First-time feature

Charlotte, a football program that officially began play during the 2013 NCAA Division I FCS season, wasn’t eligible for a feature on the last college football game, NCAA Football 14. The 49ers recently moved over to the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) in 2023 after joining the American Athletic Conference (AAC). FBS is the highest level of college football in the U.S., thus allowing Charlotte to be added to the newest edition of CFB 25.

Ratings

In CFB 25, the 49ers were set as a one-star school within the “Program Prestige” with a 78 overall rating. Offensively, Charlotte was given a rating of 77, while on the defensive side of the ball, they achieved a 79. In the AAC, they run toward the top of the pack in ratings, right between Rice and East Carolina Universities.

Program prestige plays a part in the “Dynasty” feature of CFB 25, where recruiting and the transfer portal play key roles. Out of the 134 schools to select from in gameplay, 46 teams received a one-star rating.

According to the College Football Network, Redshirt sophomore quarterback is rated 76 overall and has a No. 160 ranking among quarterbacks. His highest rating is a 92 from throw power and speed at an 83.

Redshirt junior tight end Colin Weber leads all 49er players with a rating of 84. Junior defensive back Dontae Balfour sits at an 83 for Charlotte.

A look at the details

The 49ers have realistic uniform concepts to match their home and away sets. The game allows users to switch between white, green and gold chrome helmets, green and white jerseys,

gold, white and green pants, and white or green cleats.

Jerry Richardson Stadium is also designed to view the Gold Mine for a fun and well-fitted atmosphere for Charlotte. Along with that, Grigg and Duke Centennial Halls are visible when looking toward the North Entry of the stadium. The graphics add detail to the white stands and Judy W. Rose Football Center when looking at the stadium’s surroundings.

CFB 25 gives players multiple options to choose from throughout the game, such as the “Dynasty” mode, “Ultimate Team,” “Road to the CFP” or a simple “Play Now” choice that will match users for online games.

Charlotte football players receive \$600 for participating in EA Sports College Football 25 in addition to their own copy of the game for personal use.

Redshirt sophomore running back Terron Kellman and redshirt senior linebacker Prince Bemah were two 49ers posted on Charlotte Football’s Instagram on July 15, playing in a Charlotte vs Charlotte matchup.

The 2024-2025 college football season will kick off with the 49ers playing their week one matchup against James Madison University at Jerry Richardson Stadium. Kickoff will take place on August 31 at 8 p.m.

Courtesy of UNC Charlotte football



UNC Charlotte names Larry Mellinger DIRECTOR OF UNIVERSITY RECREATION

Ronnie Taylor
Staff Writer

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte has named Larry Mellinger its new director of University Recreation (UREC) for the 2024-2025 academic year. His position as director went into effect on June 28.

Before Charlotte, Mellinger worked at Elon University as the director of Campus Recreation for nine years. The relatively short distance between the two schools allowed him to experience things such as the opening of UREC in 2019 and renovations at Belk.

"I was right up the road at Elon, so I had seen the program grow, but I was hesitant about returning to a larger institution because I didn't want to give up that relationship and student-centered approach," said Mellinger. "Throughout my interview process, though, it was obvious that Charlotte is an institution that puts our students first. It was this awesome marriage of what's important to me, so when the job offer came, it was an easy yes."

Mellinger has expressed his goals and plans as he enters his new position as director. He aims to enhance the campus recreation facilities and programs to serve the student body's needs better. His goals include promoting inclusive programming and fostering a community that values physical health and well-being.

"Our biggest priority is keeping the student

experience front and center. We're going to do some strategic planning. I think you're going to see some equipment refreshes and new and innovative programs, but really, it all comes back to keeping our students at the center of everything we do," said Mellinger.

Mellinger plans to increase engagement at UREC by making it more inclusive and accessi-

ble to all students. He intends to do this by utilizing usage data from UREC and asking students for feedback.

Mellinger also plans to initiate a collaborative approach to enhancing UREC and promoting physical fitness by working closely with the other four departments in the health and well-being unit.

By forming partnerships with Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), the Student Health Center, the Center for Wellness Promotion (CWP) and the Center for Integrated Care (CIC), Mellinger aims to integrate physical fitness into a holistic framework of student health.

"I think working with my colleagues in the other health and well-being departments is a great place to start. You have a right to health and well-being, and you need all five departments that are a part of our unit to get there; we're just a piece of the puzzle," said Mellinger. "I'm looking forward to further integrating and helping students see the connection between physical activity, mental health and physical health."

Mellinger has a bachelor's degree in recreation management and a master's degree in counseling, higher education and administration, making him well-suited and excited to guide UREC in an innovative new phase.

"I have had more than 20 years of career in higher education and collegiate recreation. I do this work because I firmly believe all students have the right to opportunities to be physically active and participate in fitness or sports, whatever gets them out and moving. That will help them make connections, have a better experience in and out of the classroom and hopefully live healthier lives," said Mellinger.

With plans to actively receive feedback from faculty, staff and students and work closely with colleagues, Mellinger is on his way to enhancing fitness opportunities, fostering inclusivity and increasing student engagement at UREC.

"I am honored and humbled to be the director of this department, but know that this is not about me. This is about UNC Charlotte students. This is about the community coming together, as it appears you always do, to keep this thing moving in the right direction, and I'm just excited to be a part of it," said Mellinger.

“Our biggest priority is keeping the student experience front and center. We’re going to do some strategic planning. I think you’re going to see some equipment refreshes and new and innovative programs.”

- Larry Mellinger, director of University Recreation



Larry Mellinger enters the new position with UREC. | Courtesy of UNC Charlotte & Curtis Cheung/Niner Times File

49ER'S DO'S AND DON'TS

Ronnie Taylor
Staff Writer

Ava Weaver/Niner Times

College is a life-changing experience that presents opportunities and challenges to all, whether you are a seasoned senior or an upcoming freshman. Many elements of your college experience are vital and influence your time here, from excelling academically to building meaningful relationships and being active on

campus while maintaining physical and mental well-being and managing your finances.

As the fall semester begins, developing good academic habits and breaking bad ones are very important.

College offers a unique blend of challenges and opportunities that mold your intellectual

and personal development. You can successfully navigate this transformative period by adhering to helpful advice on balancing academics, social life, campus involvement, health and finances. To make the most of your college experience, prioritize your well-being, embrace healthy habits and stay engaged.

The following are recommendations for succeeding in college, whether your goals are balancing academics and social life, maintaining a healthy lifestyle or being fiscally responsible.

DO take notes. Even if you have a good memory, finals will roll around, and you will wish to remember what your professor said in the first few weeks of class.

DO engage with professors and classmates. Ask and answer questions. You will later ask professors for recommendation letters and classmates for notes, and you want to make a good impression.

DO study. Even if you 'never studied in high school and did fine,' you should still study. A failing exam grade can mean a failing class grade.

DO try to befriend your roommates. They are the people closest to you when living on campus. Develop a friendship with them, and you will likely have a lifelong relationship.

DO attend campus events. Like the Gold Rush, many great opportunities exist on campus for meeting new people and having fun. Go out and attend. It is fun, and you can get free things.

DO join organizations and sports that interest you. There is something for everyone.

DO volunteer in the local commu-

nity and on campus. An option on campus is the food pantry. DO establish coping mechanisms. Healthy coping mechanisms are essential when you feel stressed or overwhelmed.

DO stay active and eat well. Physical health is as important as mental health. Go to the University Recreation Center (UREC), use the weight machines, or run laps. Do stretches and yoga, or take a twerk and tone class. Eat fruits and vegetables and drink water.

DO establish a sleep schedule. Eight to ten hours of sleep is recommended per night. If that is not possible with your schedule, aim for six or seven during the week and nine or 10 during the weekend.

DO apply for financial aid or scholarships. There are thousands of scholarships on the internet and many through the school. Even if you do not think you will receive them, apply.

DO make a budget and follow it. The most common budget plan is 50-30-20. Fifty percent of your money goes to savings, 30% to essentials like groceries and bills, and 20% to casual spending. This can be used for video games, treats or dates throughout the week.

DO NOT skip your classes. While they may be tedious, and you may think you can pass without attending, it is not worth it. Go to class.

DO NOT use class as a free nap period. Your professors are watching; they know, even if you do not think they do.

DO NOT rely on AI. While ChatGPT can be a helpful tool, it should only be used for certain things. Professors can tell, and your grades will reflect your effort.

DO NOT be afraid to meet new people. While new friendships can be scary, college is more fun with friends.

DO NOT ignore boundaries. Comfort is vital to being social. If everyone you are with is not comfortable, you will not enjoy yourself. Respect others' boundaries, and they will respect yours. While being social, aim to be involved on campus as well.

DO NOT overcommit. You may want to take six classes and be in four different clubs and a sport, but you may need more time for everything you need to do in the week.

DO NOT disregard leadership roles and opportunities for improvement. Take charge when you can. Create an image for yourself. When opportunities are presented, take them.

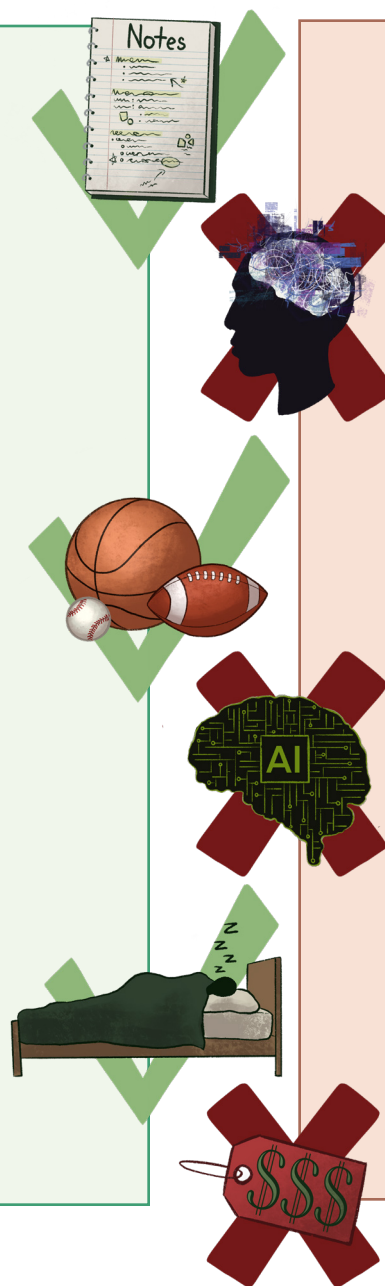
DO NOT ignore your health. If you do not feel well mentally or physically, tell someone. Utilize campus resources like Counseling And Psychological Services (CAPS) and the Student Health Center.

DO NOT frequently pull all-nighters. If you have an 8 a.m. class, you should not be partying the night before. Do not neglect your sleep.

DO NOT neglect your safety. Do not drink and drive or go out with people you have never met.

DO NOT overindulge. Avoid buying things you do not need, and limit the number of times you eat out a week. If you must have a quick lunch, use your declining balance at one of the eateries on campus, like Chick-fil-A or Panda Express.

DO NOT brush your finances to the side. If you have bills, pay them as soon as possible. Refrain from making them a problem for a future you.



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Information Center
Niner Central
Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life
Student Assistance and Support Services
University Scholarship Office

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Northeast Lounge with Nap Pods!
Peace Haven Meditation and Reflection Space
Student Employment Opportunities

Main Street Market Food Court:

Subway

- Check out our 3pm Happy Hour Specials!

Panda Express

All your favorites and...

- Introducing our Eggplant Tofu

Market at Cone

- Fresh Sushi at Market
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A college student's guide to the

LIGHT RAIL



UNC CHARLOTTE MAIN

Clare Grealey
Copy Editor

For students wanting to navigate Charlotte and Uptown without a car, the Lynx Blue Line is the perfect option. Running from UNC Charlotte's main campus to I-485/South Boulevard, the light rail is accessible and easy to use.

Running from 5:30 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. Monday through Saturday and 6:15 a.m. to midnight Sundays, the light rail is reliable and quick transportation. Trains arrive at a given station every 20-30 minutes and generally linger at stations for a minute or two. However, the trains stay at the UNC Charlotte Main Station for around 10 minutes to allow students to get on.

Following changes made to the CATS-pass, students must switch from using their Charlotte

IDs to the CATS-Pass app to use their All-Access Pass. To do so, sign in with your NinerNET email address and create an account, and you will be able to see your All-Access Pass in the app.

While the light rail serves 26 stations, here are a few notable ones for those new to Charlotte.

UNC Charlotte Main Station and JW Clay Station

These two stations serve the UNC Charlotte main campus: the Main Station just outside of North Village residence halls and the JW Clay Station near the engineering side of campus. On-campus students can board these stations to reach Uptown and the greater Charlotte area.

36th Street Station

This light rail stop covers the North Davidson (NoDa) neighborhood, an area brimming with cultural wealth. There are bakeries, restaurants, parks, live music venues and much more at this stop that are worth a trip out there.

9th Street Station

The 9th Street Station connects UNC Charlotte's main campus to the Dubois Center, an extension of the Charlotte campus. The Dubois Center offers 23 academic programs and is home to the School of Professional Studies.

Spectrum Center/Arena

This station is aptly named, as it lets out right

across from the Spectrum Center, home to the Charlotte Hornets and host to many musical artists, including Aerosmith, Nicki Minaj, Billie Eilish, Travis Scott and many more. On the other side of the station are shopping areas and restaurants such as the RedEye Diner and Insomnia Cookies.

East/West Boulevard Station

Leaving the skyscrapers of Uptown, the city continues to have much to offer along the light rail route. Many restaurants and retail options are available in South End, such as the Atherton Mill shopping mall and The Eagle, a cozy gastropub.

brat summer

NT PLAYLIST

Davis Cuffe
Editor-in-Chief

- | | |
|--|--|
|  360
Charli xcx |  Take A Bite
beabadoobee |
|  Apple
Charli xcx |  Vroom Vroom
Charli xcx |
|  Girl, so confusing
Charli xcx, Lorde |  Constant Repeat
Charli xcx |
|  Talk talk
Charli xcx |  exes
Tate McRae |
|  365
Charli xcx |  Club classics
Charli xcx |
|  Von dutch Charli xcx,
Addison Rae, A.G. Cook |  Hamptons
The Marías |
|  B2b
Charli xcx |  Turn it up
PinkPantheress |
|  Rush Troye Sivan,
PinkPantheress, Hyunjin |  Run Your Mouth
The Marías |
|  What's The Time Where
You Are? Troye Sivan |  Please Please Please
Sabrina Carpenter |
|  Femininomenon
Chappell Roan |  Everything is romantic
Charli xcx |
|  HOT TO GO!
Chappell Roan |  Toro
Remi Wolf |
|  Super Graphic Ultra
Modern Girl Chappell Roan |  Guess
Charli xcx, Billie Eilish |
|  Good Luck, Babe!
Chappell Roan |  Spring breakers
Charli xcx |
|  obsessed
Olivia Rodrigo |  Red Wine Supernova
Chappell Roan |
|  Espresso
Sabrina Carpenter |  Girls
The Dare |



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SEE HOW EXPERIENCE CAN
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EYES AND EARS FOR CAMPUS

UNC Charlotte's student ranger program provides hands-on experience and supports campus safety

Eve Goldman
Staff Writer

In the fall of 2023, UNC Charlotte launched the student ranger program to enhance campus safety, offer hands-on experiences in security roles and provide students with unique learning opportunities.

Jerry Lecomte, UNC Charlotte's community oriented policing sergeant, has led the program since its start in 2023.

"We were asked to set up a student security position to provide foot patrols, check parking lots and academic areas, essentially acting as eyes and ears for the campus. The goal was not to engage in enforcement but to be available and relay any issues to the police department," said Lecomte.

The program initially started with 12 student rangers, and despite some graduating, it retains a strong team, with eight of the original members returning.

The program is designed to be inclusive and welcome students from all majors. However, many of their students are criminal justice majors interested in law enforcement careers.

Training is a crucial component of the Ranger Challenge. Jaclyn Simmons, a fourth-year student ranger, highlights the comprehensive training process.

"Sergeant starts us off with training through PowerPoint, showing us what we can and can't do. We also get to do practical activities like jumpstarts and student escorts," said Simmons.

The rangers also benefit from a robust support system within the police department, which ensures they can always seek guidance if uncertain about a situation.

Chris Saari-Poulter, a fourth-year student ranger, emphasizes the importance of balancing helpfulness with staying within their bounds.

"We try to be as helpful as possible with-

out getting in the way. We are not trained or cleared to do certain jobs that law enforcement on campus does, so we definitely don't want to put ourselves in that position," said Saari-Poulter.

The rangers often find themselves in diverse situations, from assisting during campus events to helping faculty members feel safe.

As the Ranger Challenge program evolves, plans are to expand its scope and offer more training opportunities.

Sergeant Lecomte highlights the plans to expand the program as it evolves to offer more training opportunities for students.

"Things like Bystander Intervention Program, QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) for suicidal awareness, having that tough conversation, learn about CIT, crisis intervention, training and de-escalation. Learning how to recognize if somebody needs assistance from a medical standpoint or a mental health standpoint, as opposed to just law enforcement," said Lecomte.

Poulter also highlighted that rangers face daily challenges with maintaining authority while being students.

"Sometimes we have to help direct traffic, and while most people comply, there's always a small percentage that questions our authority. It's a learning experience in being assertive but polite," said Saari-Poulter.

As the program grows, it aims to become an integral part of the Charlotte community, offering safety, support and a pathway into law enforcement careers.

Students interested in more information about the Ranger group can look for announcements on Hire-A-Niner or contact the University's Police Department directly.



Student rangers train to help promote campus safety and security. | Courtesy of UNC Charlotte Police

Learn about UNC Charlotte's **HONORS COLLEGE AND SCHOLARSHIPS**

Ronnie Taylor
Staff Writer

High-achieving students who want to get the most out of their education might find an exciting atmosphere in UNC Charlotte's Honors College.

Charlotte's Honors College offers demanding coursework and research possibilities, a community that supports intellectual and personal development and abundant student scholarship opportunities.

"The Honors College at UNC Charlotte is a top choice destination for academically motivated undergraduate students who want to learn and grow within the rich environment of North Carolina's urban research university," states the Honors College website.

Dr. Malin Pereira, the Honors College dean, says the college has approximately 800 students across 30 different programs intending to provide robust academic and co-curricular experiences for students interested in community and curiosity in Charlotte.

Although the specific honors programs have different membership requirements, students

must generally demonstrate solid academic performance to join the Honors College.

"Criteria differ depending on which program you are joining, but students must have some level of academic achievement, usually reflected in a GPA," said Pereira. "For the four-year, interdisciplinary programs, we are interested in the whole person, so we ask for a list of different activities, letters of recommendation and an essay, but the discipline honors programs are more focused on academic achievement."

The benefits of joining the Honors College extend beyond the 'honor student' title. Honors students receive early registration, smaller classes, scholarship opportunities, research possibilities, honors housing and a close-knit community.

"If you ask students, they usually say the same things: they make their best friends in the college, they love having priority registration, they enjoy the ways honors encourages them to stretch and grow and they enjoy the scholarship opportunities," said Pereira.

The scholarship opportunities are among the

highest benefits of being in the Honors College. With award prices ranging from \$1,000 to full tuition coverage, the scholarships provide significant financial assistance to students in need. To apply for scholarships, visit the scholarship application portal.

The deadline to apply to the Honors College is December 1; however, scholarship deadlines vary.

"Incoming first-year students who are in the three or four-year programs receive a scholarship of \$2,000, which is renewable for a second year," said Pereira. "There's the Albert Scholars Program and the Martin Scholars Program, which are full-ride, and then there's tuition and tee scholarships, which you're automatically considered for if you have a certain level of financial need. That's the Freeman and Johnson. We also have endowed scholarships, which are the Al Maisto and Narron scholarships."

In addition to scholarships, students also benefit from honors housing in Levine Hall. Every honors student has the opportunity to live in

Levine with their classmates, fostering a strong sense of community. The building also houses many classrooms and professor offices, providing a convenient and integrated living and learning environment.

"Living in Levine Hall is an option, and we have the Honors College administrative wing in Levine Hall, so that is convenient," said Pereira. "It's a really good sense of community."

For those interested in learning more about the Honors College, personal tours can be scheduled to view the honors facilities and speak with faculty. Information about the program and scholarships is also available online.

"If you call our main number, (704)-687-7197, and talk to somebody at the front desk, you can arrange a personal tour of our facility. I encourage them first to go to our website, look at the 30 honors programs and decide which one they would be interested in," said Pereira.

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WELCOME BACK 2024 | 25

A GUIDE TO STUDY SPOTS ON CAMPUS

Guadalupe Aguilar Sosa
Arts & Culture Editor

It may be hectic to look for good study spots when preparing for the start of the semester. Finding that perfect spot will ease the transition into the school year and allow your academics to prosper.

Finding comfortable areas on campus to work can take some time, so here are a few cute spots to settle down and get work done so you do not have to look for them.

Popp Martin Student Union

The Student Union is the most notable place on campus; it is not easy to miss. From the couches on the first floor to the cubicles on the fourth floor, every level in this building allows you to choose the area of your interest. Students can choose the Mezzanine level, where Norm's Lounge is located, or the second floor, where the Student Involvement Center offers cubicle spaces and tables to sit at. There is also the first floor by the food court where students can sit at tables or booths to people-watch as they write notes.

Fretwell

This building offers a variety of choices for students to sit down and unwind. The Thoughtful Cup is an excellent option on the bottom floor. Here, tables and seating allow students to get that smell of coffee to start their day. Students can also find seating outside the cafe if they want a more natural landscape while studying. Feel free to explore all floors to find single couches to relax at before classes begin as well.

Denny

This building is excellent for students to people-watch while working. The ground floor of Denny allows you to turn on your headphones and sit in the lounge to get some work done before classes begin. The second-floor cubicles may be a better option if you want a more personal space. Here, you can watch the geese as there is a big window where the light shines.

Cone

This building offers a notable space students can visit during lunch or study hours. Cone After Hours, located on the second floor, has plenty of seating. Stop by to get that student lounge feel with a variety of food options, from Panda Express to Subway. Additionally, other floors have couches for students to use.

Botanical gardens

If students want a significant change of scenery from being inside all day, the Botanical gardens may be what they need. The green views while doing homework will allow you to clear your mind. As students take a lap, benches and tables will be found around the many paths.

Hammocks

Another place to study outside is the Hammocks scattered over campus. Students can find them by the pond behind the SoVi Pavilion, out-

side Fretwell's ground floor, outside Atkins Library and beside Wallis Hall. These places offer one or more hammocks to lay or sit down on to do homework.

Star Quad

This area outside the Atkins Library has a big lawn where students can bring a blanket for a picnic or do homework. People pass by often as it is in the heart of campus, so if you want a good view of campus, this may be for you. The giant steps are also a great way to soak up the sun and focus when the weather is right.

Choosing the right study spot is a crucial part of effective studying. It can help you concentrate better, retain information more effectively, and ultimately, perform better academically. So, as you prepare for the new semester, consider these study spots as your allies in achieving your academic goals.

How to navigate LIVING WITH ROOMMATES

Sofia DiStefano
News Editor

Coming to college is a major life transition, and living with roommates is part of that. For some students, this may be their first experience living with someone else. Some might even be from out of state and do not even know people on campus or may have gone to high school with them.

Either way, living with roommates is one of the biggest parts of college, and the way you go about it can make or break the overall experience. It is all about respect and creating a healthy and fun relationship so that there are people to go to during the hard times of college. These tips may only work for some; however, they can be used as a general guideline to keep in mind.

Communication is key

The best thing to do with roommates is to ensure constant communication, whether about your class schedule or the times you will be in or out of the dorm. This also involves establish-

ing boundaries and determining what works best for the room so everyone is comfortable. Before moving in, things to discuss are personal bed-times, allergies, cleanliness, hobbies, social habits and what utilities you're bringing to the room. It is best to figure these out early.

One thing to remember is that having different living styles as your roommate is entirely okay. If that is the case, setting boundaries and communicating expectations is critical and can still make for a good experience. Creating a strong bond with your roommate is something that will make the college experience much smoother. Having someone that you can go to or have as a safety contact is something everyone needs in college.

Remember, you and your roommate are in the same boat with starting college and experiencing things for the first time. Do not stress out about clicking automatically with your roommate(s); it takes time.

Personalize your area

Another part of making your room feel more comfortable is personalizing it to your liking. A good thing to do is find some mutual decorations that you and your roommate both want in your dorm, such as a tapestry or a snack cart. The more you agree on, the better. To make your dorm more personalized, I would recommend hanging up some posters and or photos based on how much room you have. The more fun you have with decorating your space, the more connected you will feel with it.

Personalizing your room is also a great time to bond with your roommate and determine what similarities you might have in things like music, movies or anything else. This is your space, and making it your own can give you a sense of control and comfort in your new environment.

Branch out and have fun

Your roommate doesn't have to be your only friend on campus. Try to put yourself out there by joining clubs or student organizations that spark your interest. It is a great way to expand your circle of friends. Try to attend as many University events as possible with your roommates, such as football games or late nights at the dining halls. These can make for some great memories and also help you get closer to your roommates and new friends.

Try your hardest to enter college with a positive mindset. The people you meet along the way can become your lifelong friends and people you can count on if you play your cards right. College is always scary at first, but a good bond with your roommate can last a lifetime and make all the difference to your college experience. Remember, college is a time of new beginnings and endless possibilities for friendships that can last a lifetime.

Guide to GAME DAY

Sofia DiStefano
News Editor

UNC Charlotte's sports season is coming up, and there are many things students should know before attending any Charlotte athletic events.

From tailgating at the 49th Acre before a football game to finding the student section at Halton Arena, here is what you need to know to tackle game days at Charlotte.

What to bring

One of the great perks of being a Charlotte student is not needing to worry about purchasing a ticket for any sporting event on campus. However, ensure you always have a digital or physical version of your student ID on you so staff can scan you in when you arrive. If you are bringing family, friends or any guests who are not Charlotte students, make sure that they have purchased a ticket before the game and downloaded it to their mobile device.

It is important to note that non-clear bags are

not allowed inside the venue. This is a standard security measure. If you bring a bag, ensure it is a small clutch purse, wallet or see-through.

Another thing to keep in mind is water bottles. Some game days can get hot, and staying hydrated is essential, even if you are just going to watch.

Only empty plastic water bottles of 32 ounces or less are allowed at the stadium. Various water fountains are available for students to refill water bottles.

When it's game day, it is always good to check the weather. Especially since the 49th Acre tailgating lot is on a grass field, it is best to dress based on the weather. The tailgating lot can get muddy if it rains, so be aware of this; footwear is a big part of it.

Fan code of conduct

The University has a fan code of conduct to ensure a safe and fun

environment on game day. To promote good sportsmanship, it is best if all students adhere to this guideline. The code covers campus/venue protocols and regulations, complying with venue personnel instructions, representing Niner Nation and following Noble Niner's "see something, say something."

Students should know that they are not permitted to play on the surface at any time and should remain in their assigned seating areas. This is a Charlotte and American Athletic Conference rule.

UNC Charlotte also encourages all students to represent Niner Nation with respect. The University does not tolerate the use of

threatening or harassing language, gestures or behavior. The University also reminds students and fans to report unusual behavior or suspicious activity.

Have fun and be safe

These events are designed to have fun and support Niner Nation. By following Charlotte's rules and safety guidelines, students should be able to have fun and enjoy yet another season of Charlotte athletics. These sporting events can make for some great memories at Charlotte, so attend as many as possible and take pride in the Niner green and white.



Chris Crews/Niner Times File

What to watch for in Charlotte Athletics in 2024-25

Davis Cuffe
Editor-in-Chief

With a new season for Charlotte Athletics on the horizon, expectations remain high. As several 49er teams look to build off historic seasons, Charlotte prepares for fresh challenges and new opportunities. Here is an inside look into what you must watch for in the upcoming athletic year.

Women's basketball in year one under Tomekia Reed

Tomekia Reed, a four-time Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) Coach of the Year, was appointed the new head coach for the Charlotte women's basketball team. Reed succeeds former Head Coach Cara Consuegra, who departed to take up the head coaching position at Marquette University.

Reed formerly coached at Jackson State University and posted a 125-54 overall record, leading them to three NCAA tournament appearances.

Now, at Charlotte, Reed takes over a roster with many unknowns. Their leading scorer, red-shirt junior guard Dazia Lawrence, left in the transfer portal along with key guard junior Aylesha Wade.

The 49ers started strong in the 2023-24 season but struggled down the stretch, losing six of their last nine games. Charlotte struggled especially to shoot from beyond the arc, shooting 29.2% on the season.

Considering Reed's past success, 49er fans can look forward to seeing how she manages this team in their upcoming season.

Football's new additions set to make a splash

Charlotte football went 3-9 in 2023 but is poised to break out in 2024 due to a strong recruiting class.

Despite their losing record, the 49ers made significant improvements defensively in 2023. Charlotte's defense ranked No. 59 in the NCAA at the end of the 2023 season, a 70-place jump from their 2022 performance.

New additions from the transfer portal to bolster this defense include 247Sports four-star recruits linebacker redshirt sophomore Xavier Simmons.

Offensively, the 49ers struggled in 2023, but key additions from the transfer portal could lead them to success in 2024. Redshirt sophomore quarterback Max Brown is expected to take over for Charlotte. In his limited playing time at the

University of Florida, former 247Sports three-star recruit Brown flashed arm talent and athleticism. When Florida's starting quarterback went down against No. 9 ranked University of Missouri, Brown nearly led a comeback.

Also coming in from the transfer portal is former Clemson University senior offensive lineman Mitchell Mayes. The former 247Sports three-star recruit will offer some top-notch protection for Brown in 2024.

Men's basketball looks to repeat 2023-24 success

Charlotte men's basketball had a standout season in 2023-24. The team brought new excitement to the Charlotte campus during their eight-game winning streak when fans camped outside Halton Arena before a game. During the win streak, Charlotte defeated then-ranked No. 17 Florida Atlantic University to record the first win over a ranked team since 2013.

The team now faces a significant challenge heading into the 2024-25 season. Charlotte lost four of their five starters to the transfer portal, leaving only junior guard Nik Graves as the last remaining previous starter.

Graves took a leap in his sophomore season, adding nine points to his scoring average and upping his assists per game from 0.5 to 3.1. Graves may have to take another jump in play to help the 49ers this upcoming season.

Replacing Charlotte's losses in the transfer portal are new veteran additions. Second-year 49er men's basketball Head Coach Aaron Fearne has been busy in the portal and added four seniors to bolster Charlotte's roster. Among them are top additions Kylan Blackmon and Jeremiah Oden.

Former Coastal Carolina University guard redshirt senior Blackmon is expected to start at the point guard position in the upcoming season. Blackmon led Coastal Carolina in three-pointers made in 2023-24 and averaged 11.4 points per game.

University of DePaul redshirt senior transfer Oden will add athleticism and scoring to the 49ers. The high-flying forward averaged 10.8 points and 4.5 rebounds for DePaul in the 2023-24 season.

Joyasia Smith set to dominate in year three

As just a sophomore, sprint star Joyasia Smith has already made her mark on Charlotte track



Sophomore Charlotte guard Nick Graves goes up for a layup against Wichita State University. | Megan Bentley/Niner Times File

and field and is set to dominate in her next season.

Smith was named athlete of the week six times and has four top-two times in Charlotte track and field history, including the school record in the 100m.

At the 2024 American Athletic Conference Indoor Track and Field Championship, Smith took home first place in the 200m. She defeated the

second-place competitor, a senior runner from East Carolina University, by over a 10th of a second in the race.

Smith is 0.71 seconds away from breaking Charlotte's women's indoor 200m record, which has stood since 2007. She said she's looking to break that record in her time at Charlotte.

"I want to put my name up on the [record] board; I like to break records," said Smith.



A GUIDE t° UNC CHARLOTTE'S ATHLETIC CLUBS



Davis Cuffe
Editor-in-Chief

If you were an athlete in high school or want to stay active during the academic year, joining a sports club is the perfect way to do that and more.

These recreational sports programs at UNC Charlotte provide competitive, instructional and recreational groups to help students have fun and stay fit.

Intramural leagues

This program offers three divisions: recreational, intermediate and competitive. The recreational division focuses on beginner-level skills, typically with a four or six-game season. Intermediate gears towards moderate-level skills that compete in a single-elimination playoff season. The competitive design is the highest skill level that follows a regular season along with playoffs that crown a championship team.

Some examples of intramural leagues include:

- Outdoor and indoor basketball
- Outdoor and indoor volleyball
- Outdoor and indoor soccer

Sports clubs

This program features competitive and instructional teams. The competitive sports clubs compete in a regional league with other universities, while the recreational teams are not governed by any governing body. To be eligible for sports clubs, students must be in good academic standing and pay the annual or semester-based Student Activity Fees that vary with each club.

Some examples of sports clubs include:

- Men's and women's volleyball
- Men's and women's lacrosse
- Men's and women's rugby

Personal interest sports clubs

This category within club sports includes sports not commonly played by most students. These clubs frequently are not under any governing body or league and are not instructional based but more for fun. That being said these clubs often compete against each other or in tournaments like any other team. Equipment costs and availability for sports within this category of club varies based on the specific club.

Some examples of personal interest clubs include:

- Quidditch
- Laser Tag Corps
- Ski & Snowboard

Do not see a club that interests you?

Students are encouraged to start their own

clubs to meet personal interests!

Meeting with the assistant director of sports clubs and the associate director of student organizations is one of two steps required to create your own club.

For further information on how to start your own club, visit urec.charlotte.edu/sport-clubs/about-sports-clubs.

To join an intramural league, visit charlotte.dserec.com/online/intramurals and log in with your Niner Net credentials. Any further questions and concerns can be emailed to imsports@charlotte.edu.

To join a club, visit charlotte.dserec.com/online/clubsports by logging in with your Niner Net credentials. Registrations, rosters, events and team websites are available for further contact with club officers.

WELCOME HOME

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HEAD COACH BIFF POGGI

TALKS ALL THINGS CHARLOTTE FOOTBALL

Chris Crews/Niner Times File

Davis Cuffe
Editor-in-Chief

Following a 2023 season in which the UNC Charlotte football team went 3-9 and did not make a bowl game, Head Coach Biff Poggi and the 49ers are ready to make big improvements in 2024.

In the 2023 offseason, Poggi could not be fully involved with recruiting as the University of Michigan, where Poggi last coached as associate head coach, was in the College Football Playoff. This extended Michigan's season and cut Poggi's time to recruit for Charlotte.

Heading into next season, Charlotte has an almost completely revamped roster with new key additions in each position group. One of them is redshirt sophomore quarterback Max Brown, a transfer from the University of Florida. Brown is projected to be Charlotte's quarterback starter in 2024.

Poggi sat down with the Niner Times to discuss the upcoming season and his experience coaching at Charlotte.

What are you looking for from this group of players?

Poggi: Cohesiveness in the locker room. I want them to be single-minded in their goals and work ethic, and I want them to respect and enjoy each other and being at Charlotte.

What can you tell us about new sophomore quarterback Max Brown?

Poggi: Max is a great leader first. Everyone follows him around. He's the guy that does the talking. He's a really good person. He is selfless; he is all for the team. He's one of the very hardest workers on the team. He takes care of all the business off the field, his school, his behavior, his attitude and he pushes guys to be really good. If you saw the spring game, I mean, he can make all the throws and he's athletic.

What do you expect the offense and passing attack to look like under Max Brown?

Poggi: I think it's gonna be dangerous. We're gonna be very hard to defend — completely [the] opposite of last year. Max has great poise and great confidence. He understands the offense. He can make

something happen with his legs.

How are you selling this team to prospective players?

Poggi: We're selling an opportunity to play. We're selling an excellent university in Charlotte, now a tier-one research university, and we're selling the fact that we're the only college football team in the country representing a city with 18 Fortune 500 companies headquartered here. A city that's vibrant, that's new, that's safe, that's bustling, that's dying for a winner. Come here, help us build this, and you'll never leave Charlotte. When your playing career is over, whatever level that is, you will come back here and work in one of these companies because we're doing internship programs.

What level of improvement do you expect to see in year two under you as head coach?

Poggi: I have a five-year plan to put this program in a place where Charlotte will be a perennial bowl team, and this is a big step this year. But I want to manage expectations, and I want to be fair to our players, our fans and our school. But we should take a step forward.

What is the identity or theme of this team heading into year two?

Poggi: Unity. Period. It's all about Charlotte. It's about the guys in the locker room, the 100 staff people in this building, the Charlotte football team and our fans, starting with our students, who are absolutely wonderful. They're just the best.

How do you connect with the players? Is that something that comes easy to you?

Poggi: Yeah, I love kids. And I love people generally. My life has been around kids and coaching them. When I approach a youngster, I try to think of it like I'm coaching a mother's son. This child is the most precious child in the world to this woman, and I have a responsibility. So, I try to spend a lot of time with things outside of football. You know, how is your schoolwork? How are you doing emotionally? How's your mental health? How are you physically? What's going on at home? How are you getting on with kids in school? Those kinds of things.

“I had a coach in high school who really helped me find my way. He was very important to me. I hope to have a smidgen of an impact on my players that he had on me.”



Chris Crews/Niner Times File

What is it that drives you every day to coach?

Poggi: For me, it's a ministry; it's what God has called me to do. When I was a youngster, I was a very troubled kid. I had good parents and a good family, but I was just a very troubled kid, and I was lost. I had a coach in high school who really helped me find my way. He was very important to me. I hope to have a smidgen of an impact on my players that he had on me.

You quickly gained the favor of the student body last year for the gameday cut-off look. Why do you choose to wear those?

Poggi: I've always worn cut-off shirts as a coach. It's hot, right? And it's football. It's not like brain surgery. I'm not giving a debate or a speech; I'm coaching a bunch of guys on a football field.

It's hot and sweaty. I look at college football coaches, and they're all dolled up. They're wearing Lululemon pants, some cool belts, fancy Nike shirts and cool haircuts, and I'm like, what the hell is this? You're a football coach, you know. So I just feel that it's just kind of my style.

What are your thoughts on all the attention coming your way due to the cut-offs?

Poggi: I really don't care, actually. But, it's good for the University. With that kind of publicity, we went on college game day, week one. That's worth millions of dollars in publicity for our school. We had this ESPN show, those things money just can't buy.

What's the locker room like right now?

Poggi: Teams have a feel, this team has a complete feel, and it's a good feel. And they're bud-

dies. They do stuff together, they like each other, they work their butts off, you know. They're doing really well in school; they're doing well on the field and the locker room's good. It's good.

Why does this group feel complete?

Poggi: I think we recruited the right guys. Talent with character is the best, and character is the next best. That's what we recruited. We talked to guidance counselors, teachers, high school coaches and opposing coaches. Just really drilling down on who these guys were.

Is there a player or position group you think is going under the radar heading into next year?

Poggi: There's a bunch of positions that I think are going under the radar. Our whole program's going under the radar, and that's just fine with me.

What should Charlotte fans be most excited about for this upcoming season?

Poggi: You should be excited about this as your team. This isn't my team. This is your team. We've built this team for you guys, and trust me, there's nothing our players want more than to please and honor you all with success.

Is there anything about this team that the public should know?

Poggi: So these guys have a relationship with senior living facilities, and they go, and they will do field days. They had such a great time that they asked if they could go back, and we're going to go every two weeks. I think the bottom takeaway is that they're a really good group of kids.

Get involved with Charlotte's **STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

Emily Brown
Staff Writer

Blaise Uy/Niner Times

Academic/pre-professional

Charlotte's academic/pre-professional clubs provide opportunities to create a community inside your major and desired career field. These clubs offer many benefits such as resume building, learning career skills and networking. They also provide the space to explore other fields of interest. With clubs covering pre-law, marketing and game development, there is a club to fulfill everyone's interests.

Examples: Black Women in Medicine and The Association of Data Science



International

Charlotte's international clubs are the perfect way to learn more about other cultures and languages. These clubs appreciate the diverse community that we have on campus and strive to educate others about cultures that they might not know a lot about. They also provide a space for people from similar cultures to connect.

Examples: Arab Student Organization, Ghanaian Student Association, Nihon Club and the Native American Student Association



Greek life

Charlotte has 44 sororities and fraternities. Whether you would be a legacy in a sorority or fraternity or want to add to your college experience, Greek life may be for you.

There are five Greek councils. The Independent Greek Council governs the independent fraternities and sororities on campus and assists in communication between them and the University. The Interfraternity Council governs and regulates fraternities. The Diversified Greek Council encourages collaboration between organizations from different backgrounds. The National Panhellenic Council oversees and fosters collaboration between the divine nine sororities and fraternities, the historically black Greek life organizations. The Panhellenic Council includes seven sororities that engage in philanthropy, community and social events.

Examples: Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., Alpha Chi Omega, Delta Phi Lambda and Delta Sigma Phi



Club sports

Club sports are the perfect place for students who wish to continue or get involved in a sport they are passionate about. No matter what sport you play, basketball, volleyball, swimming or any other sport, club sports might be for you.

Examples: 49er Running Club and Charlotte Lifters



Religious/spiritual

The religious and spiritual clubs are a space for people whose faith is important to them. These clubs provide a community that is centered on religion or spirituality.

Examples: Impact Charlotte, Muslim Student Association and Young Life



Media

Media organizations make an impact on their members and the campus community. The overarching organization, Student Niner Media comprises of five departments: Niner Times, Nova Literary-Arts Magazine, Midas Magazine, Charlotte Current and Marketing.

There are also media organizations outside of Student Niner Media.

Examples: Axe & Quill Writing Society and the Charlotte Film Community



Honor societies

The honor societies on campus allow you to meet and connect with like-minded people. Our honor societies cover a variety of majors and work on developing leadership skills while providing other opportunities, such as networking and scholarships. Some honor societies are discipline-specific, while others are not tied to a major.

Examples: Beta Beta Beta (biology), Latinx Honor Society, Psi Chi (psychology) and Phi Beta Kappa (liberal arts and sciences)



Multicultural

Charlotte's multicultural clubs center on various nationalities, ethnicities and orientations that create our community. These clubs focus on connecting people from similar backgrounds and identities. They also provide a space for people from specific backgrounds to communicate with each other.

Examples: Black Student Union, Disability Culture Club and Curl Conversations



Political

Charlotte's political clubs provide a space for students who are passionate about politics or are interested in learning more. If you want somewhere to discuss and debate the issues that impact our world daily, these clubs might be for you.

Examples: Government and Politics Debate Club, Mock Trial and NextGen UNC Charlotte



Performance

If you like to sing, dance, act, give speeches or maybe all four, our performance clubs are the perfect place for you. Regardless of your performance experience, our various clubs will allow you to grow and develop your skills.

Examples: Freestyle 101, Cheer, Improv Club and Speech Team



Service

Service clubs allow you to give back and assist your community on campus and beyond. These clubs provide various acts of service, including collecting and distributing hygiene necessities, and cleaning up public places.

Examples: 100 Black Women, Best Buddies and Reproductive Justice Collective



Interest

No matter your passions, interest clubs on campus are a great way to get involved and meet people. These clubs are ways to relax from the stress of classes. Check out these clubs if you want to have fun while discovering your passions.

Examples: Niner Esports, 3 Stars and Japanese Reading Club



Greek Life

What you need to know about going Greek at Charlotte

Jenny Kase
Staff Writer

Greek life is one of the many communities you can participate in at UNC Charlotte. Charlotte is home to over 40 sororities and fraternities, and Greek life is an integral aspect of campus culture, offering a range of social and philanthropic opportunities that pave the way for personal growth and making life-long connections. Charlotte presents a diverse range of Greek life chapters that recruit new members every year, many even semesterly.

Recruitment for the Interfraternity Council (IFC) and Panhellenic Association (PHA) are open now for both men and women to sign up. For the fall 2024 semester, formal Panhellenic recruitment is expected to start early September, and IFC Recruitment is later in the month. Students interested in joining National Panhellenic Council (NPHC), Diversified Greek Council (DGC) or Independent Greek Council (IGC) should follow their different chapters on Instagram to learn more information about their recruitment for the fall.

Interfraternity Council (IFC)

The Interfraternity Council is the coordinating and governing board of Charlotte's fraternities. The council's primary goal is to lead the Greek community in the right direction, and they do so by partaking in philanthropy events, community service initiatives, educational seminars and so-

cial interactions with fellow students.

IFC fraternities: Alpha Epsilon Pi, Alpha Sigma Phi, Alpha Tau Omega, Chi Phi, Delta Sigma Phi, Kappa Alpha Order, Phi Delta Theta, Pi Kappa Alpha, Pi Kappa Phi, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Sigma Tau Gamma, Zeta Beta Tau

Panhellenic Association (PHA)

Similarly to IFC recruitment, panhellenic organizations begin Formal Recruitment in the fall. During Formal Recruitment, prospective members meet with and have the opportunity to learn about Charlotte's sororities through speaking with members of various chapters. You can learn about each sorority, meet new people and tour Greek Village. Each sorority partakes in philanthropy, community and social events. Follow each chapter's social media to keep up with updates and chapter-specific recruitment information.

PHA Sororities: Alpha Delta Pi, Alpha Chi Omega, Chi Omega, Delta Zeta, Kappa Alpha Theta, Kappa Delta, Zeta Tau Alpha

National Panhellenic Council (NPHC)

NPHC sororities and fraternities recruit new members through Membership Intake, a process that brings in members several times throughout the year. Each chapter has different requirements to become a member, so it is critical to be in-

formed of your chapter of interest. NPHC hosts an event in the fall semester called "Meet the Greeks," which shares general information and answers questions about the Diving Nine organizations at Charlotte for interested students.

NPHC Sororities: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.

NPHC Fraternities: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

Diversified Greek Council (DGC)

The mission of the Diversified Greek Council at Charlotte is to "promote collaboration for the purpose of uniting Greek organizations under the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NALFO), National Asian Pacific Islander American Panhellenic Association (NAPA), and National Multicultural Greek Council (NMGC) on campus."

Similar to the NPHC, each chapter has its schedule and regulations, so it is essential to contact your specific chapter for information and updates regarding recruitment.

DGC Sororities: Delta Phi Lambda Sorority, Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Chi Upsilon Sigma National Latin Sorority, Kappa Phi Lamb-

da Sorority, Inc., Omega Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

DGC Fraternities: Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity, Lambda Upsilon Lambda Fraternity

Independent Greek Council (IGC)

The Independent Greek Council at Charlotte is the governing council for independent sororities and fraternities on campus. Chapters are governed by the IGC as long as the University registers them and other panels do not already govern them. They cooperate with member organizations, the sorority and fraternity community and the University.

IGC Organizations: Alpha Omega Epsilon Sorority, Sigma Alpha Omega Christian Sorority, Inc., Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity

All students looking to join any sorority or fraternity must have a cumulative GPA of 2.60, community service experience and involvement with clubs and the community. Interested students must register before recruitment. This registration can be found at greeklife.charlotte.edu.

If you have any other questions regarding Greek life or fall recruitment, contact the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life (OFSL). They are located in Cone Center, Room 382-A, and can also be reached by phone at 704-687-0360 and by email at greeklife@charlotte.edu.



(Left to right) Delta Sigma Theta Sorority at the 2023 NPHC Yardshow, Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity at the 2024 Greek Games, Alpha Delta Pi Sorority at the fall 2023 PHA Bid Day and Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity at the 2023 DGC Picnic. | Cairo Smith, Dan Rice, Justyn Ramseur and Jade Suszek/Niner Times File

Jalen London's journey from SOCCER to BIOMECHANICS

Davis Cuffe
Editor-in-Chief

While most people consider the summer months a time of rest, fourth-year nursing student Jalen London has remained busy pursuing his passion as Charlotte's first Amgen scholar.

A soccer star at West Forsyth High School in Clemmons, North Carolina, London turned down scholarships to play soccer at the next level to study at Charlotte.

Charlotte's Martin scholarship and the community it offered were major draws in bringing London to Charlotte.

"It's just cool having the Martin sponsor cohort to talk to and network," said London. "It's all similar people who are minorities or just lower socio-economically talking about their struggles and how they want to succeed."

London has solidified himself as one of Charlotte's more decorated nursing students. He is a member of the Honors College, a Martin Scholar and an Amgen Scholar. Still, his path was not always as clear as it is now.

"For a while, I was thinking, 'I'm gonna play soccer, no question.' Then, last minute, I was like, 'Let's switch it up,'" said London. "My freshman year, when I was taking chemistry, I started talking to the chemistry professor. And he was like, 'Yeah, start hitting up different professors and see what you're interested in.' From there, I just kind of went along with it. I had no plans or anything. I just did it."

While London downplays his journey into biomechanics, he shared with Niner Insider that working in Charlotte professor Dr. Kirill Afonin's lab ignited his passion in his first year at Charlotte.

In his time at Charlotte, London has grown a collection of awards and has participated in numerous prestigious programs.

A member of the Harvard-Amgen Scholars Program, he spent much of his last two summers working with Suzanne Walker, the Microbiology and Molecular Genetics professor at Harvard University. The Amgen program specializes in undergrad students working in biotechnology and related biomedical sciences. The work is as complicated as it sounds.

"It's a biochemical approach to microbiology," said London. "So looking at bacterial cell membranes, and looking at the specific biochemical mechanisms that are happening with the proteins or whatever."

With the Amgen program, London participat-

ed in professional development events and the Amgen Scholars Symposium at the University of California, Los Angeles. London is one of 10 students selected nationwide and the first-ever Charlotte student Amgen scholar.

His mother's work as a nurse inspired him to pursue nursing. Her pitch to London was predicated largely on the versatility of a nursing degree:

"She just told me about how there's so many different things you can do with a nursing degree," said London.

After his mother drew him to nursing, the exact nature of its related research kept him interested.

"I love detail. I'm not a person who likes to overgeneralize. I want to know specifically how something's going to work," said London. "You have to know every single part of your research to get it right."

A main challenge for young researchers is imposter syndrome, and London is no different. Working with a lot of biochemical research, London said he sometimes feels underprepared as a nursing major.

"I constantly feel like 'I wish I just did a class on this,' and that I would do it so easily if I did," said London. "But I always tell myself it doesn't matter and to make yourself good enough."

London aims to bridge the language gap and provide high-quality care by pairing his Spanish minor with his nursing skills and experience.

"When I came to Charlotte and started working in the hospitals as a CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant), I realized how many patients could only speak Spanish," said London. "So, I want to connect with them on a deeper level than a translator machine."

London experienced part of this dream last year when he could connect with Spanish-speaking Puerto Rican students by speaking Spanish with them.

"It was very heartfelt; just talking can build a lot of community and connectivity," said London.

Growing up close with immigrant parents from the Caribbean, much of London's drive stems from relationships with them. London said his dream is to be able to spoil them after all the work they put in to provide an equal opportunity for him growing up.

His father's words were a major motivator even before seeing success in college.

"My dad always told me, 'If you're gonna do

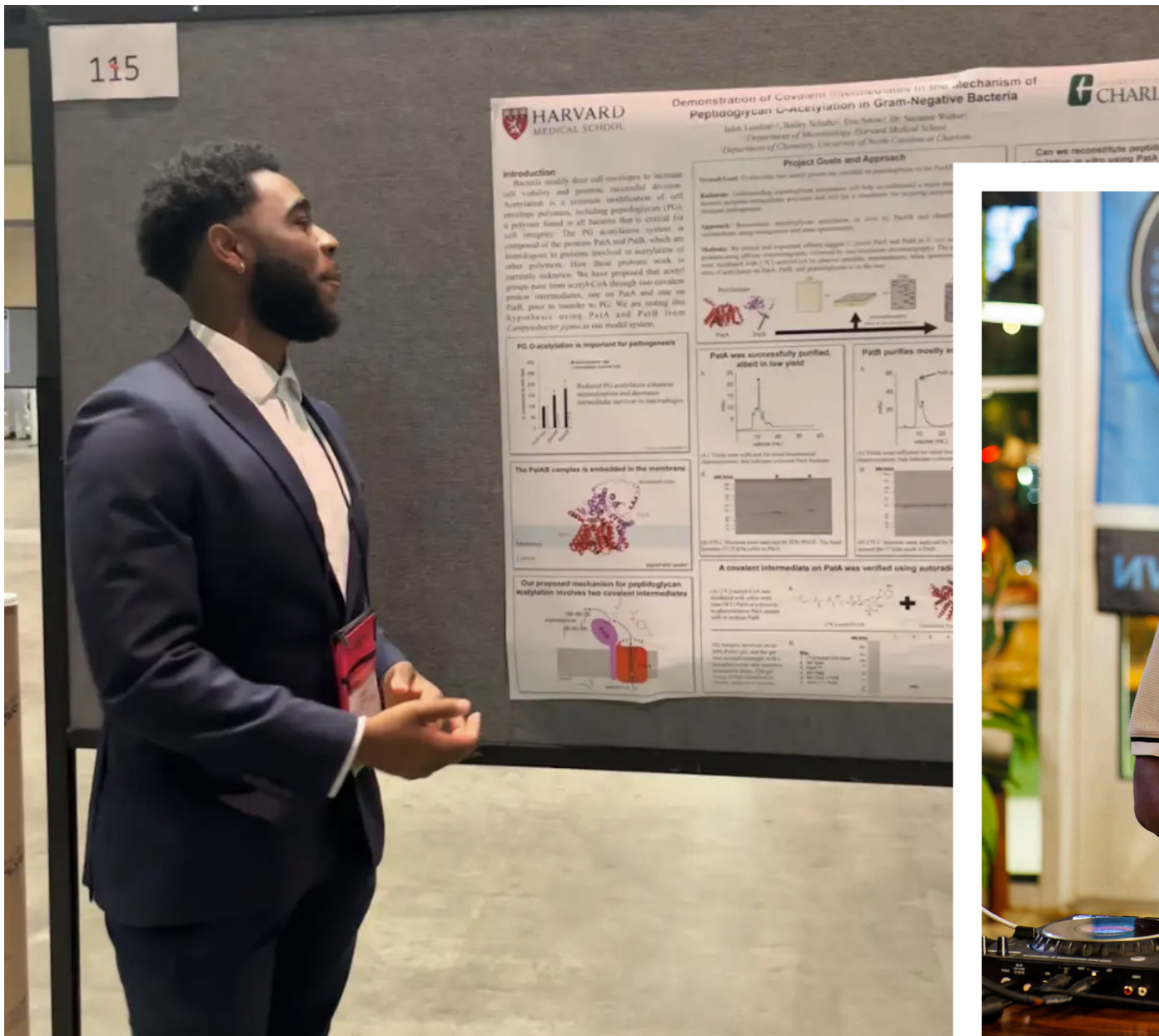
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"Everything will work out, life will be good, and just keep moving forward. Do not stay stagnant. Just keep moving forward in some way."

- Jalen London, fourth-year



Jalen London shows off some of his work to professionals in the field. | Courtesy of Jalen London



(Left) London presents his research representing UNC Charlotte for the Amgen program. | Courtesy of Jalen London

(Bottom) While London began his DJing working at fraternity events, London now DJs for his own company, Catalyst and events in Charlotte. | Courtesy of Jalen London



something, do it well,” said London. “So, in the past, school wasn’t necessarily a passion, but it was something I wanted to do well.”

Further connecting to his Caribbean roots, London is the founder and CEO of Catalyst, a nonprofit organization that promotes Caribbean culture and local artists through events and promotion.

Although much of London’s work with Catalyst involves planning and organizing events with his media team, he sometimes DJs events himself.

Jalen London by day and DJ London by night; he started with DJing at fraternities in his early years at Charlotte but has now moved into DJing at larger venues and creating some of his own music.

Growing up, London said he was always excited by the energy he heard in the Caribbean music played in his household. His time playing the saxophone and clarinet in school started his passion for creating his own music. DJing is the

“**“If you truly have a bunch of fun things you’re doing that you love, you don’t need to decompress anymore. My decompression always has to be productive in a sense.”**

- Jalen London, fourth-year

perfect mix of the two components for London. “I just feel like right now DJing is the best way to still get that energy and that love for music,” said London.

On a different tone than the music typically played while DJing, London likes to listen to the artist Macabre Plaza when researching biome-

chanics.

With such a busy schedule, London’s time to relax or decompress is finite, and he is okay with that.

“If you truly have a bunch of fun things you’re doing that you love, you don’t need to decompress anymore,” said London. “I feel like it’s very

toxic to say, but my decompression always has to be productive in a sense. If I’m mentally tired, I’ll work out my body and become physically tired; if I’m physically tired, I’ll work on my mind.”

While London’s relaxation schedule or lack thereof may be ill-advised, he shared advice that any Charlotte student can follow: “Keep going.”

“Everything will work out, life will be good, and just keep moving forward. Do not stay stagnant. Just keep moving forward in some way,” said London.

“My first summer, I didn’t even know what summer internships were. Until my PI (principal investigator) said, ‘Hey, Jalen, do you want to stay here during the summer and work for an internship?’ I was like, ‘Dang, yes, sir, I’ll do it,’” said London. “After that, I applied to the SHURP (Summer Honors Undergraduate Research Project) with Harvard, and after that, I got the Amgen. It never was like a big goal. Keep working hard and keep moving, and eventually, stuff will just come your way.”

BUDGET-FRIENDLY THINGS TO DO AROUND CHARLOTTE

Emsley Jackson
Asst. Opinion Editor

College students are always on the prowl for fun ways to spend their time and not necessarily their money. Charlotte students are no different, and big-city living can be pricey, with everything seemingly costing more than you can bear.

So, for those interested in exploring campus and the Queen City, look no further. Below are various free and cheap ideas for both.

FREE 'N CAMPUS

Student Union Theatre

In the Popp Martin Student Union, there is a fully functioning movie theater that shows movies free of charge to students. Depending on the season, there are weekly showings of newer movies and older favorites. This is a great way to catch up on new movies or revisit classics without spending movie theater money. The monthly showings and their scheduled times are posted on the Student Union's Instagram account and at the theater entrance. Why watch that movie on your laptop when the real thing is just a short walk away?

UREC

Many students do not take advantage of the abundant amenities available at the University Recreation Center (UREC), of which admission price is included with tuition. Some of these forgotten treasures include workout classes, cooking classes, workshops in the demo kitchen and an outdoor pool complete with in-water lounging chairs. Using your UREC membership to the fullest extent can be beneficial to your health and your wallet. The first week back to school, UREC is hosting RecFest and their take on Gold Rush, Glow Rush, starting August 21st. Some of the listed events include capture the flag, a group fitness sampler and a movie night by the pool. According to the UREC website, the week is "filled with activities, events, giveaways, and awareness for all the on-campus Recreation and Fitness Facilities."

Campus events

Keep yourself updated on the school calendar as fun and free campus events occur practically

every day. Sports events, club-hosted events and community gatherings such as the International Festival are great ways to expand your horizons and stay busy. Of course, do not forget about tabling events like the Student Org Showcase; orgs always hand out freebies and spread the word about more social opportunities. There is no rhyme or season to any of these events; free things are happening all year, so it pays off to keep an eye out.

CHEAP 'N CAMPUS

Art department performances

The College of Arts + Architecture (CoA+A) always has exhibitions, concerts, performances and cool displays of talent within the student body and the area. Tickets are cheap for all students and free for those in the CoA+A. The performances are always well done and allow you to support fellow students in their passions. A great example of this was the production of Legally Blonde back in April, a classic musical brought to life on the Charlotte stage by students. For more information on what comes next, visit the CoA+A's website calendar.

Grabbing a bite to eat

With the dozen options for non-dining hall food all across campus, there are so many possible combinations of fun and food. Grabbing a coffee or chai at Thoughtful Cup for a serene visit to the botanical gardens, picking up some sushi to fuel a study session in the Prospector dining room or getting some pretzel bites at Auntie Anne's after that never-ending lab in the Science Building. Using the Niner Dinners mobile app with on-campus restaurants helps you rack up points that can be used for free rewards later on.

FREE IN CHARLOTTE

Transport Uptown

With the CATS-pass app, use of the light rail is completely free for UNC Charlotte students, and with a stop on campus, it is easy, too. Take advantage of this free transport by going uptown and stopping in cool neighborhoods like

NoDa, South End or the four wards in the heart of Uptown. Each ward boasts a unique park, one of which happens to be directly in front of the Charlotte DuBois Center right next to the light rail stop. There is so much to see in the city, and money does not always have to be spent on it.

Window shopping at Concord Mills

As silly as this option may sound, Concord Mills is a great mall that can provide plenty of entertainment free of cost. The mall is shaped like an oval, allowing visitors to walk laps as they observe all it has to offer. Concord Mills has countless stores to peruse, plenty of restaurants with wonderful wafting smells and even a themed Bass Pro Shop with a 23,000-gallon freshwater aquarium, which, according to their website, "has been voted the No. 1 tourist destination in North Carolina." If not for anything else, malls are prime spots for people-watching.

CHEAP IN CHARLOTTE

Museums

The Queen City has an abundance of great museums displaying the area's history, culture, community and creativity. Luckily, many of these places have reduced ticket prices for college students. Some of these places include the Harvey B. Gantt Center of African-American Arts + Culture, The Mint Museum of Art and the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art. The Mint and the Bechtler have free admissions every Wednesday from 5 to 9 p.m. In addition to these, the Hendrick Motorsports Museum and the Levine Museum of the New South are always free admission.

Doing your research

The best way to find things to do is to access the many resources of the internet and see what others have to say. Charlotte's Got a Lot is a website with a treasure trove of information on Charlotte. The website can be your top spot for resources and information to help you navigate Charlotte with new helpful articles posted daily. Other great options for being wallet-savvy are checking Groupon for discounts, asking Charlotte natives and even scouring Reddit for any insider knowledge.

(Top to bottom) International Festival, CoA+A orchestra concert and Uptown Charlotte | Megan Bentley, Miguel Sanchez-Nuñez and Emma Toney/Niner Times File



FALL 2024 ATHLETICS SCOUTING REPORT

Kelli Blackburn
Asst. Sports Editor

Charlotte Athletics is entering its second year in the American Athletic Conference (AAC) after an eventful 2023 season.

The 2024 fall season kicks off with the women's soccer team competing against the University of North Carolina at Wilmington (UNCW) on Aug. 15 at home at Transamerica Field.

Five athletics programs are currently active, and this guide will highlight them all for their upcoming season.

Football

The 49ers are looking to bounce back this season after a tough 2023 season under first-year Head Coach Biff Poggi. They finished their opening year in the AAC with a 2-6 conference record and an overall record of 3-9.

Charlotte lost a few notable players, including graduate student defensive lineman Eyabi Okie-Anoma, senior quarterback Jalon Jones, freshman defensive back Kameron Howard and redshirt sophomore wide receiver Jack Hestera.

Hestera, the 49ers leader in receptions and TD catches, transferred to Utah State University on May 12.

The 49ers are looking to redshirt sophomore Max Brown, who transferred from the University of Florida this offseason. They also added 39 other signees to the roster.

They will begin their 2024 season against the James Madison University Dukes on Aug. 31 at 8 p.m. at Jerry Richardson Stadium at home.

Women's volleyball

Charlotte women's volleyball returns to Halton Arena to play Emory & Henry College on Aug. 24. They closed out last season with an overall record of 11-20, finishing 4-15 in AAC play.

On July 17, the 49ers were named a recipient of the 2024 American Volleyball Coaches Association Team Academic Award, boasting a 3.68 GPA for the year.

Head Coach Karen Weatherington announced the hiring of Assistant Head Coach Sherisa Livingston from Radford University on April 1.

Senior libero Miyu Tsurumaki returns to Charlotte, along with redshirt senior outside hitter Jessica Ricks and graduate student middle blockers Millai Madison and Lara Kretschmer.

Men's soccer

In 2023, the 49ers had a successful season, going 13-4-1 overall and 6-2 in the AAC.

They made their 17th appearance in the NCAA Men's Soccer Championship Tournament, winning in the first round 1-0 against High Point University but falling to No. 9 Clemson in the second round 3-0.

Charlotte gained 14 signees to their 2024 roster, retaining 2023 All-East Region performers senior midfielder Riyon Tori, senior forward Brigham Larsen and senior defender Ian Pilcher.

They welcome Davidson College back to Transamerica Field on Aug. 24 to open the 2024 regular season.

Women's soccer

The Charlotte women's soccer team had a winning record in their 2023 season, finishing 9-7-4 overall and 4-3-2 in the American.

15 players signed to join the 2024 roster, including five transfers and 10 freshmen. The 2023 team MVP, graduate student goalkeeper Emma Wakeman, is staying with the 49ers for one more season, along with senior forward Macey Bader,

who was named to the 2023 AAC All-Tournament.

Charlotte did lose senior midfielder Braelynn Francher, a 49er who played and started all 20 matches.

Regular season play starts on Aug. 15 when the 49ers take on the UNCW Seahawks at home.

Cross country

On Feb. 2, the men's and women's cross country teams were both named to the USTFCCA All-Academic Team for the 2023 Division I cross country season.

Both teams came in second place at the AAC championships. Senior Nick Scudder, who will not be returning to Charlotte for a fifth year, closed out his collegiate career by winning the conference individual championship and was named an All-American.

Senior Lauren Johnston, a stellar athlete for the women's cross country and track & field teams, will not be returning to Charlotte. Johnston was named the 2024 AAC Women's Cross Country Scholar Athlete of the Year and an All-American for the AAC cross country.

10 TIPS AND TRICKS for life at Charlotte

Ruhshona Soledjonova
Opinion Editor

As the fall semester creeps up, having a list of tips in your back pocket is crucial for a productive semester. From study recommendations to lifestyle hacks, this list is curated for students to keep in mind when walking into their first day of classes and making a positive student-living experience.

1. The library is free, so use it to your advantage.

UNC Charlotte is proud to supply students with a long list of amenities, including the J. Murrey Atkins Library, between Cone and Colvard. Students can check out leisure books and find class readings for free. Remember to check the Charlotte library database before spending money on books.

2. Use your study senses.

When studying before an exam, be in tune with your senses. Chew on your favorite gum or

snack every time you study—you can also use scents. During the exam, chew that same gum or snack. This tactic will help you recall the study material better.

3. Sit closer to the front of the class.

While being seated close to the professor may be nerve-racking, sitting near the front of the class will help students pay attention and focus better. It can also open doors for peer conversations and familiarity with the professor.

4. Set your notes as your lock screen.

What better way to learn the material than constantly viewing it before unlocking your phone? Using your notes as your lock screen is a quick way to remind you of the material and quiz yourself throughout the day.

5. If there is a group chat, join it.

Students are encouraged to make class group

chats during the first weeks of school. These group chats are a great way to make friends, form study groups and ask questions if you miss a day. Especially in major courses and even resident halls, get to know the people you will likely see again.

6. Quizlet is your best friend.

Be the one to make a study Quizlet for the class or befriend somebody who is.

7. Reserve library space early.

Prioritizing and reserving study spaces ahead of time makes all the difference. Once you know your exam schedules, book a study room or try to do so at least a week or two in advance.

8. If you are not a morning person, do not get an 8 a.m.

Remember that you know yourself better than others; find what fits best in your comfort zone.

9. Campus life is music to the ears.

Sometimes, the best experiences and interactions happen right under our noses or outside our headphones. When walking to class, take your headphones off and be present in the environment. Spend that time between classes, work and extracurriculars to immerse yourself in the Charlotte campus culture.

10. Ask about student discounts.

One of the many advantages of being a student in a big college town is the various vendors that offer student discounts. It does not hurt to ask; it can save you a lot of money in the long run.

As students settle into their daily routine, they will find their own tricks and shortcuts to maximizing their time and finding balance.

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