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# THE BLOOD ON BOGDAN'S HANDS

Opinion Editor questions UNC Charlotte's decision to hire accused war criminal, pg 5



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# UREC PROJECTED TO OPEN IN SPRING 2020

*New facility to offer exciting opportunities for students*

by Emily Kottak  
Intern

In October 2014, the idea of a new recreation center was presented to the Board of Trustees at the Chancellor's retreat. After numerous meetings, contracts and blueprints, construction began in July 2017. The projected completion date for this new center is spring 2020.

Originally, this facility was called the Health And Wellness Center (HAWC) but between August and September of 2017, students were able to vote on what the new name should be. Among the options were University Recreation Center (UREC), Center of Recreational Engagement (CORE), and Niner Fitness Center (NFC).

Based on the results of student voting, in October 2017, the name was updated from HAWC to the University Recreation Center, or UREC.

"The new facility will be a great opportunity for more students to participate in fitness," sophomore and avid fitness guru Rachel Goldman said. "Because of the hype this facility has gotten, it is a huge encouragement for fitness and will provide more opportunities for students to take classes more conveniently with their schedules."

The original projection date for the end of this construction was fall 2019. However, now the projected date is spring 2020. Construction is 60% completed, but there is still much to complete including administrative items such as training staff in new operations and moving many administrative offices into the new facility.

UREC is a 148,000 square foot space intended for fitness and student recreation. Some of UREC's

features include an indoor pool, an outdoor pool, 4 multi-purpose courts, 5 multi-purpose studios, outdoor basketball and volleyball courts as well as outdoor space for yoga.

There will also be over 80 group fitness classes offered each week and there is cardio and strength training equipment spread over four levels.

"I am super excited for the group fitness classes as I have already enjoyed so many of the classes this semester," Goldman said. "I definitely will be attending the new facility often as the location is especially convenient to my home in Lynch Hall."

To some students, it may feel like construction of UREC has been going on for a long time, making

it hard to discern the progress.

On the UREC web page though, a time lapse video is included, showing the tremendous progress which has been made thus far.

Also for those who are visual people, the UREC web page contains a video that simulates what the facility has been designed to look like. This video is very detailed and gives a very accurate portrayal.

Yet another proponent of UREC is that it offers multiple employment opportunities for students. From being a group fitness instructor to a lifeguard to a field monitor, there are many opportunities.

"Part of the reason I got into group fitness here at UNC Charlotte was with the hopes to potentially be an

instructor for one of the classes," Goldman said. "I would like to pursue either being an instructor or working there in some other capacity."

As spring approaches, students excitedly await the grand opening of UREC. This \$66 million project is being funded by university debt and student fees. It is filled with opportunities of fitness, a healthy lifestyle and employment opportunities.

Tremendous time and effort have been put into this project and the result will be nothing short of remarkable. For more information on the status of the construction and to learn more about UREC, visit [urec.uncc.edu](http://urec.uncc.edu).



## NEWS



Photo courtesy of UNC Charlotte



# (G)LITTER IN THE GARDENS

Director of UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens discusses environmental impact of using glitter in the gardens

UNC Charlotte students using glitter effects in pictures has become an environmental and financial burden on the campus botanical gardens.

"It's always going to be there, we pick up as much as we can, but unless we physically remove it, it does not disappear," said Jeff Gillman, director of the UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens.

The glitter is often used by students who want to capture a visual effect in a photo.

Gillman said that people will celebrate anything with glitter. He said that the most popular glitter photo involves someone putting glitter in their hands and blowing it to create a brief sparkling cloud.. However, most students use glitter for their graduation or birthday pictures.

"Do it at home! Anyone who wants to get a glitter picture can do this

anywhere else," Gillman said. "It makes a cool picture, but it's a close up that you could literally do in the street... there is no reason for it to be in the gardens. We [the garden staff] have to clean it up."

The glitter blankets the soil and walkways of the garden, Gillman said. This causes the garden staff to spend hundreds and even thousands of dollars and many hours to manually clean up the glitter.

Not only does glitter cause an inconvenience to the garden staff, but it leads to many issues in the makeup of the gardens, said Gillman. He explained that the toxins in the glitter, such as aluminum, can slow the growth in some plants.

"[Metallic glitter] dissolves into the soil, and the aluminum is a plant toxin," he said. "Plants utilize a tiny amount of aluminum and when it gets above that amount it can become

toxic." He added that there are parts of the garden where plants are not growing as easily due to the glitter.

The glitter must be cleaned up by hand. "We can't blow it, because it makes a different part of the garden toxic," Gillman said. "So we have to pick it up."

Gillman said the UNC Charlotte university administration is not doing anything to help with the issue. "No, it's all us; we clean it."

"The glitter will impact the gardens for years," said Gillman. He hopes that glitter photographers will remember the gardens are for everyone to enjoy.

"What you do today is going to have an impact for years. This garden is here for everyone to enjoy. If you want to throw something in the garden, throw dry leaves," he said. "We don't mind cleaning up dry leaves."

## POLICE BLOTTER: OCT 12 – 18

### Suspicious Vehicle/Arrest

OCTOBER 12

- Officers responded to a parking lot in reference to a suspicious vehicle.
- One subject was transported to Mecklenburg County Intake for driving while intoxicated.

### Damage to Property

OCTOBER 14

- Officer responded to the parking lot of Center City in reference to damage to a vehicle.

### Injured/Ill Subject

OCTOBER 15

- Officers responded to a building in reference to a subject that fell the prior week.

### Larceny

OCTOBER 15

- Officers responded to the Police Lobby in reference to a missing wallet.

### Larceny

OCTOBER 16

- Officer responded to a building in reference to missing airpods.

### Damage to Property

OCTOBER 16

- Officer responded to the Police Lobby in reference to damage to property

### Vandalism/Damage to Property

OCTOBER 17

- Officers responded to a building reference to vandalism/damage to property

**Traffic accidents have been excluded from this week's Police Blotter due to space.**

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# THE PRICE OF PRESTIGE



*What drove the UNC Charlotte administration to hire an accused war criminal?*

by Nikolai Mather  
Opinion Editor

In my junior year of high school, the University of Chicago invited me to participate in one of its summer sessions for gifted high schoolers. This three-week legal studies course gave me and my family a case of Ivy League fever. My uncle took me on tours of Stanford and Berkeley. My aunt sent me photos of UChicago's campus. My neighbors, who bleed Carolina blue, wished me luck on my alumni interview for Duke. They expected that I would settle with a "good" school: hopefully with some Nobel Prize-winning professors, probably with a great football team, certainly with gobs of privilege. At the very least, I'd end up at UNC.

Neither of those things happened. To their surprise, I chose UNC Charlotte. For a long time, I struggled to explain why I turned down the other, more renowned schools. I couldn't place exactly why these "good" schools felt so wrong for me. It wasn't until I actually started college that I could put it into words.

I grew up in Pittsboro, a very small town about 15 miles south of Chapel Hill and Carrboro. I spent my teen years trolling record shops, bookstores and art co-ops off Rosemary Street and Franklin Street. These progressive bubbles were situated among the most hideous and longstanding forms of white supremacy and hatred. In order to get to the Morehead Planetarium, I had to walk past Silent Sam. I regularly spotted people sitting and standing on a monument to enslaved workers. Lecture halls and dorms are named after antisemitic demagogues, slave owners and terrorists who spearheaded mass lynchings. Sure, by the time I reached college age, I had already gotten to know the area better than most UNC Chapel Hill students, which made the prospect of four more years pretty boring. But I had also learned what many hadn't until they had already matriculated: UNC Chapel Hill will never, ever change. It is what it is, forever. Unless a bunch of extremely courageous individuals are very, very lucky and somehow force the entire world to see it for what it is, on the whole, UNC Chapel Hill will remain as prestigious and hateful as it wants to be.

As it's always been.

If the prestige of attending a flagship school with a kickass basketball team required the daily affront of its disgusting history, then I didn't want it. UNC Charlotte seemed different. Its campus culture certainly wasn't as strong, it wasn't as well known and its mascot had a sort of uncanny look in its eyes, but the student body felt special. My classmates weren't just honors kids: they were single mothers, nontraditional students, first-generation college students, immigrants, working class folks, people of color, queer and transgender scholars, disabled and neurodivergent individuals. And it didn't feel like we were in a promo video about campus diversity. Because our school was so young, because we -- and by extension it -- were so often underdogs, it felt like we were able to write

our University's history. We had the potential to create a campus culture we could be proud of. One that wouldn't rob marginalized people of their right to learn without fear. One that opposed business as usual, and fought for what was just.

We were, in short, naive. Because I quickly learned that to the Chancellor, the Provost and other high-ranking university officials, we were and always had been "customers." Unlike our student body, our administration did not share the fire of reinventing education as we know it. Instead, they sought to replicate the worst aspects of the typical UNC System experience. They raised their own salaries but neglected to pay adjuncts and service employees. They touted student leadership but refused to allow meaningful student representation on the Board of Trustees.

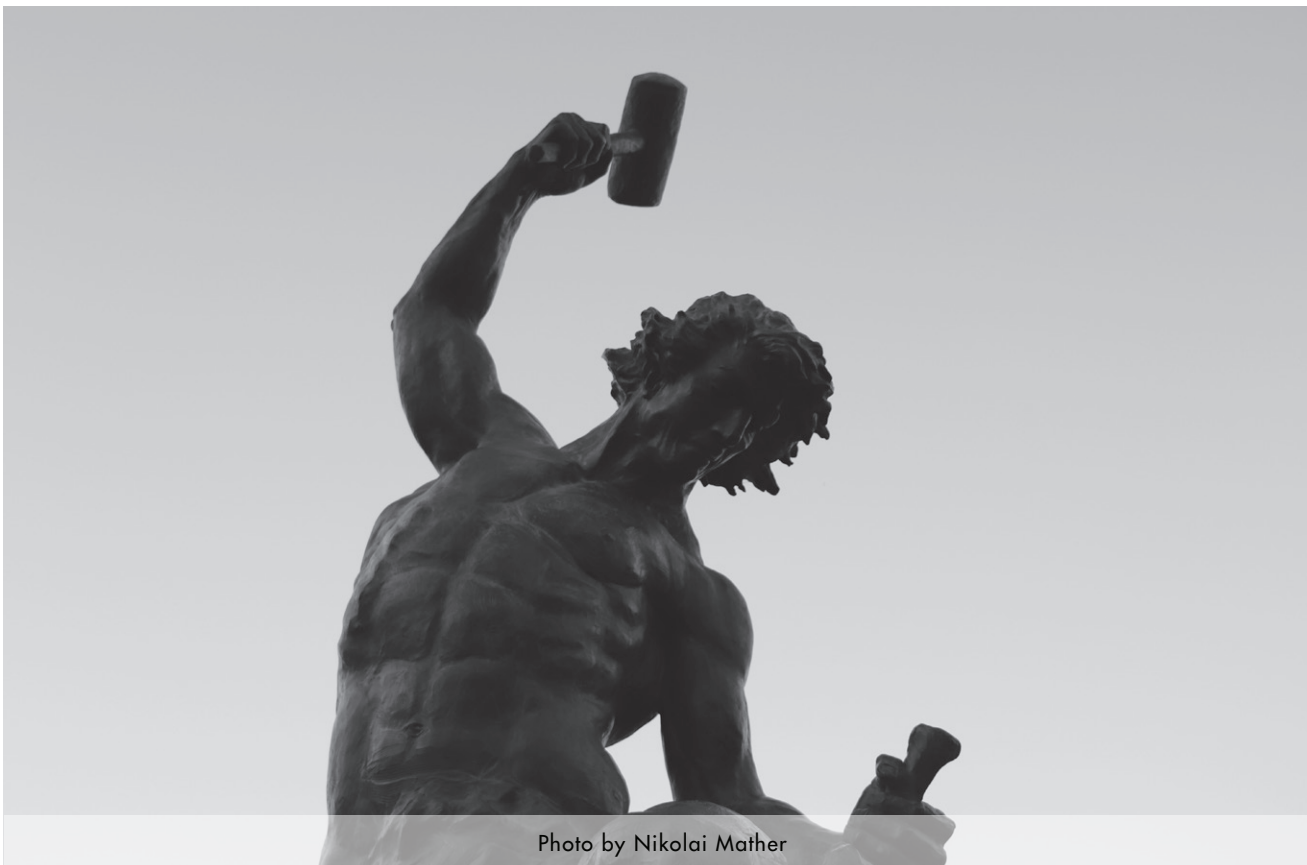


Photo by Nikolai Mather





Photo courtesy of UNC Charlotte

We have to ask ourselves what we value more: the shallow aesthetics of prestige, or an administration that won't shake evil by the hand and offer him an associate vice chancellorship.



Photo by Shane McCoy via Wikimedia Commons

#### THE PRICE OF PRESTIGE, cont.

They brayed about diversity but looked the other way when marginalized students suffered due to campus policies.

And now, they've hired John Bogdan. The former warden of Guantanamo Bay. A man who oversaw the surveillance of privileged client-attorney discussions, abusive genital searches, IV force-feeding of detainees on hunger strike and a host of other human rights violations. Bogdan shot rubber bullets at inmates peacefully protesting living conditions. He confiscated all mementos and personal belongings and forced inmates into isolation cells, taking special care to keep the lights on and the prison freezing cold at all times. His job was to ensure the constant torment of detainees. In an interview with News editor Megan Bird, Bogdan said that release was "not a decision of innocence or guilt." But it's clear that the 86 prisoners cleared for release from Guantanamo Bay -- indeed, everyone who landed in that Kafkaesque hellhole of a prison -- were nothing but guilty in his eyes. He knowingly and intentionally did everything in his power to drain the personhood out of human beings -- a significant portion of whom had never committed a crime in the first place.

John Bogdan is the reason I turned my back on the Ivy Leagues and the flagship schools. I read about hateful policies at UChicago, heard horror

stories about the administration from my friends at UNC Chapel Hill, became intimately familiar with how foul the most "prestigious" schools really were. So I chose UNC Charlotte. And even after I learned of how foul this school can really be, my conscience was somewhat buoyed by the fact that most of its sh\*\*\*y aspects are not singularly, uniquely awful. If you thought about it, it wasn't nearly as bad as everybody else.

This is singularly, uniquely awful. And UNC Charlotte is unrepentant. They know damn well that they're the only UNC System school with a cold-blooded war criminal on its payroll. Bogdan made sure of that: he put Guantanamo Bay on his LinkedIn profile. His conspicuous cruelty is the point. Whatever tired myth the Chancellor trots out about Bonnie Cone, no matter how many times he plasters "We Are All Niners" on a train, our administration is only interested in becoming what "distinguished universities" always have been: the godd\*mn worst.

With all that being said, I didn't write this article to be a downer. I wrote this article because I am angry. Righteously, furiously, endlessly angry. I am burning up with rage because the vast majority of our student body has taken the bait. Instead of fighting tooth and nail to get John Bogdan off our campus, here we are squabbling about all the cues

of "distinguished universities" that we lack. Should we change the name? Should we fix our sports program? Should we rethink our branding?

To an extent, I can't really blame any of us. The UNC Charlotte experience was always going to be a process of invention. We don't have the privilege of inheriting a strong campus culture -- like the Self-Made Man by Fretwell, we are constantly building and rebuilding ourselves from the ground up. But the obsession with the surface-level cues of a renowned university is really just that: surface-level. The key to creating a university unlike any other is not through improving the football program. We have to dig deeper. We have to ask ourselves what we value more: the shallow aesthetics of prestige, or an administration that won't shake evil by the hand and offer him an associate vice chancellorship.

With that in mind, I say this: prestige won't save you. When John Bogdan goes home at night, when he takes off the green tie and the veneer of congeniality, when he's lying in the dark with only his soul to answer to, prestige won't wash the blood off his hands. Prestige won't save us from another tuition and fees hike; it won't pay our professors or our janitors; it won't do anything except morally bankrupt the place we call home.



# INTERVIEW: RUEBEN FLEISCHER

## Behind the scenes of “Zombieland Double Tap”



by Will Ingersoll  
Intern

The cult classic 2009 film “Zombieland” finally got a sequel after nearly 10 years on Oct. 18, 2019. The film was a character driven comedy that happened to take place during a zombie apocalypse, and was a breakout film for actors like Jesse Eisenberg, and Emma Stone. It was also the first large budget movie directed by Ruben Fleischer, who has since gone on to direct movies like “Venom,” and “Gangster Squad.” The Niner Times along with several other college newspapers were given the opportunity to interview him about his process of making the perfect sequel to such a beloved movie.

### Q (Niner Times):

**Hello. All right. So one of the big things I was wondering is that zombie genre has honestly quite a lot of competition. So I was wondering what steps you take to make your movie stick out during the production process?**

Great question. I kind of operated like an Ostrich and just buried my head in the sand as it pertains to other zombie content. I felt like the best path for “Zombieland Two” was to really just try and harness the spirit of the first one as much as possible because it has such a distinctive talent and style. And I think that for fans of the first one, you know, they would expect us to maintain that same tone and style. And so I really kind of just kept my head down as it pertains to other zombie offerings and just tried to focus on capturing that



Photo courtesy of FAN THE FIRE Magazine via Flickr

### Q (“Daily Californian” UC Berkley) :

**So I know that in the first one many iconic lines were improvised, what kind of environment did you want to create for the actors to feel comfortable and did you want the second film to adhere strictly to the script or have the freedom to improvise as well?**

I love improvisation and one of the joys of being a director is getting to cast these incredibly talented comedians to collaborate with. And so when you have, you know, some of the world’s funniest people at your disposal, I think you’d be a fool not to take advantage of all that they bring to the table. So with Jessie and Emma and Woody and especially Thomas Middleditch, Zoe Deutch, like everybody, Luke Wilson just brought so much to the table as far as improvisation. And have you guys seen the movie or no?

### Q (“Daily Bruin” UCLA):

**So it seems like “Zombieland” is one of these classic like cult scandals, films like “Donnie Darko” or “Scott Pilgrim”. What makes you guys kind of want to risk that legacy by making a sequel for the film?**

It was born from a desire to work with those guys again, just cause “Zombieland” was my first ever movie. And so after doing a few others, I realized just how amazing that experience was. Like this cast is just truly wonderful human beings and so collaborative and so fun. And you know, the first “Zombieland” was big for all of us. I mean, I think it really changed my life and I think you could argue Jesse and to a lesser degree Woody’s lives. But we all had a lot of respect for the original and we didn’t want to do anything to tarnish the reputation of the first film. So that’s kind of why it took 10 years to get the second one out, because we want to make sure that the script was really great and that we all felt confident entering into the sequel. Knowing that we had a great starting place, which was the script. And it just took a while to get that script to a place. But when you see the film, I hope you’ll just feel like this is at least as good as the first. Some of them even told me that it’s better, but I’ll leave that for you guys.

### Q (“The Technique” Georgia Tech):

**One thing that I’ve kind of struck by doing research was how much change between Two has been made. Jessie and Emma are stars now. You’ve a few more films under your belt and Rhett and Paul as writers also have had a lot more experience. So I wanted to know if any of these outside-the-film narratives have influenced your approach to tone and the story, either through your own experience or what others are contributing?**

That’s a great question. I mean, it’s funny. It kind of touches on a bit of what I said to the last one, but I think we all just had an appreciation for how special the experience of making the first movie was. And you know,

certainly the cast has gone on to do some pretty incredible things. But for example, for Emma, she's one of the funniest people you'll ever meet, but she's been doing much more dramatic work recently. And I think she was excited just to go through a comedy and have fun and be with people that she likes and have a really positive experience working. You know, Jessie and I both became fathers off in the 10 years since the first one. So I don't know that that necessarily is informed or if it has real bearing on the film, but it definitely affects how I approached everything I do in terms of thinking about my family and I'm sure the same is true for Jesse and Jesse's family, and was with him when we're filming, which was really great. I think maybe just all being a little older and wiser, and appreciating just how special the experience of this maybe was.

**Q (“The Cauldron” Cleveland State):**  
**Woody Harrelson stated that this was like a family reunion. How were you able to set the tone for this film? Is there something specific you do as a director to sort of build that camaraderie?**

Well luckily it didn't have to build it on this one because it existed from the first. It was like a family reunion in a real way. But I think when you're trying to make a comedy, I think it's really important to have a loose set environment where people feel comfortable to be able to do things like improvise or do whatever it takes for a joke. But one thing I think I can say safely that I did was to make sure that any new cast members that we brought into the fold would fit well with the rest of the gang. Because we do have such good chemistry already that we wanted to make sure that anyone who was coming to play a role in the film could kind of feel like they belong in “Zombieland”. But also be the cool people to work with on set. And so we got lucky because of all these additional cast members. Luke, Thomas, Zoe, Avan, were all just really terrific, and only added to that great experience we were having, and the chemistry that existed among all the casts.

**Q (“The Observer”):**  
**I was kind of branching off from the film. I was wondering if you had any input in the mobile game or video game that's coming out.**

I was shown versions of it, but they were making those long before we started up the sequel, or at least they were pretty far along once I got shown them. So, I offered up a few thoughts, but I can take zero credit for what they are. They are definitely things that Sonny did independent of the filmmakers. Great.


**Q (“The Emory Wheel” Emory University):**  
**I was just wondering, what are some of the biggest challenges that you've made while filming such a large scale action be like “Zombieland” as compared to say like a more indie movie or a short.**

**Read the full article at [ninertimes.com](http://ninertimes.com).**

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24 - 27

MOVIES

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20 Golf tournament kickoff  
21 Clairvoyant  
22 B-ball  
24 Spanish "month"  
25 Money in the middle of a poker table  
27 Smoke for Sherlock  
28 "... for the remainder of my days"  
34 No-holds-\_\_\_\_  
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13 Burden  
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34 Yacht or ferry  
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42 Dime's 10: Abbr.  
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52 Yoga posture  
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55 Takes to court  
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UPDATED EVERY DAY!

8 OCT 22, 2019 NINERTIMES



# Ashley Fowler: a born competitor

by Ben Walton  
Intern



Before becoming the second woman to join Charlotte's Women's Golf team and earning the Conference USA Women's Golfer of the Week twice, Ashley Fowler was once 4,000 miles away in her hometown of Heidelberg, Germany picking up a golf club for the first time.

"I grew up [playing golf] with my brother and my only goal was to beat him," said Fowler, "Everything I did was beating my brother."

Though she got a late start playing golf at the age of 13, Fowler sought out the thrill of competition which started catching the attention of her coaches. Not long after she started playing, she traveled to the U.S. to play in a tournament for the German national golf team. It didn't take long for Coach Holly Clark to take notice of Fowler's game while she was the assistant coach of the women's golf team at Vanderbilt.

"I kept in touch with one of the German national coaches, and he told me I needed to keep an eye on her," said Coach Clark. "I really believed she had the talent and ability to be good and if she has the ability to be patient, she can be really good."

From that point on Fowler was on the radar of Coach Clark and when she came to Charlotte in 2015 to start up the women's golf team, she knew Fowler was one of the first people she needed to recruit for their first season in 2017.

"[Getting recruited to come to America] was completely new to me since I'm from Germany and we don't have college golf," explains Fowler.

Growing up in a bilingual house made the language barrier non-existent for Fowler coming to the U.S., but her biggest challenge was adjusting to the American lifestyle and being 4,000 miles away from home.

"It's very stressful at times not living in your parent's house anymore," said Fowler. "Some people live a couple of hours down the road and if they really wanted to see [their parents] they could, but it's hard having to get on a plane for eight hours to see them."

As many students know, having a good support system is crucial when transitioning to college. But Fowler and the five other women on the initial women's golf team didn't have the experience of upperclassmen to lean on. That's a role that Fowler has begun to take in her junior year at Charlotte, especially with five of the nine players on the team being international students.

"I think we learned how important it is to teach [the international students] about the culture and certain things we do," states Fowler. "I think it's good they have people they can look up to and ask questions."

With Fowler's leadership, Charlotte has been able to secure five top tens, along with a tournament victory in the Yale Invitational earlier this month. She has three top-five finishes, three top-10 finishes, the best score of 66, and an average shot of 71.25.

"[Ashley] has the heart of a teddy bear. She is just a caring person, a leader by example and not afraid to be vocal when she needs to be," said Coach Clark.

The Niners next tournament tees off Nov. 4 in Macon, Ga. for the Idle Hour Collegiate where they finished second last year. Fowler and her fellow teammates seek to find their second tournament victory of the year and build upon an already solid season.



Photo courtesy of Charlotte 49ers Athletics

# St. Olaf College Professor Mark Allister takes a swing at softball

Mark Allister dives into 2018 college softball season to start a conversation about performing gender

by Sam Palian  
Sports Editor

Typically, when a longtime college professor has written books about the environment, an indie rock band and masculinity, a narrative about DI college softball isn't the next step. For Mark Allister, an english, environmental studies and American studies professor at St. Olaf College Minnesota, it was.

Allister published "Women's College Softball On the Rise: A Season Inside the Game" in March 2019 and has since found a few opportunities to speak at colleges about his work and the topic at hand. One of his recent stops was Charlotte on Oct. 14, 2019 after communicating with Jananka Lewis, the director of the women's and gender studies program.

While on its face, the transition for the professor in his 34th year doesn't seem logical, it wasn't that far of a stretch.

"Some people (professors) like to specialize and keep learning deeper and deeper and deeper. I am the opposite of that," said Allister. "I've used my teaching as a method to learn things. I get interested in a subject and think 'oh, I'd like to teach something about that,' so I can learn a lot more. Sports and gender is just my latest endeavour."

The book was written about the 2018 D1 college softball season and in order to really get exposure and find opportunities to dive into this new topic, Allister wrote for Fastpitch News over the course of season. An athlete growing up, Allister really didn't know much of sports beyond the world of men's sports.

"That was all I knew, because there was really just no coverage of women's sports, aside from maybe the Olympics. I got a little bit disenchanted with men's sports because of various academic scandals and things like that and then kind of discovered women's sports," said Allister.

Softball in particular though, Allister does have a connection to. Jessica Lynne Allister, Mark's niece, is in her third season as the softball head coach at Stanford and was the head coach at Minnesota from 2011 to 2017 where she helped to turn around a program. Jessica was an All-American player in her college playing career at Stanford and also previously served as an assistant coach at Georgia (2005-2006), Stanford (2007-2009) and Oregon

(2010). With another niece who also played college softball at Missouri, Mark never saw either of them play and to this day can't believe he didn't make it to any games.

"I never knew what softball was like. So, Jessica's first year, I went to a game and kind of liked it and then went to a few more her second year and then I just started liking it a lot," said Allister. "I just loved the culture of it, the vibe of it. I liked watching the players, it was so much fun to be there. And then I started just admiring the tremendous athleticism."

With a career that is largely academic, Allister wanted this book to be different and wrote it as more of a narrative.

"I didn't want to write an academic book. The mode is sort of that you advance a position or an argument and then you try to prove it. I just don't want to be doing that much anymore, I wanted to tell a story," said Allister. "I talk about Title IX, a lot of cultural issues and female athlete's performing gender and what that might mean and I go into issues about media coverage."

Allister hopes to educate younger people who approach the book about what has had to happen in softball for them to have what they have now such as facilities, opportunities, etc. He discusses the SEC tournament he attended, new stadiums involved and the millions of dollars that go into things like a brand new stadium for top tier softball programs. Also touched on in the book is how the softball calendar affects different programs such as teams that play in colder settings and can't always hit their fields as soon as other teams and how players often have to adjust to that. The narrative covers a wide range of softball conversation from the improvement of the stadiums to particular players and teams.

Allister previously attended St. Cloud State in Minnesota to give a presentation in regard to his book and the following day of his talk at Charlotte, went to South Carolina to speak there as well.

"This is lovely for me, it couldn't have worked out better. Sometimes when you do a book that doesn't quite fit a niche, people aren't going to necessarily

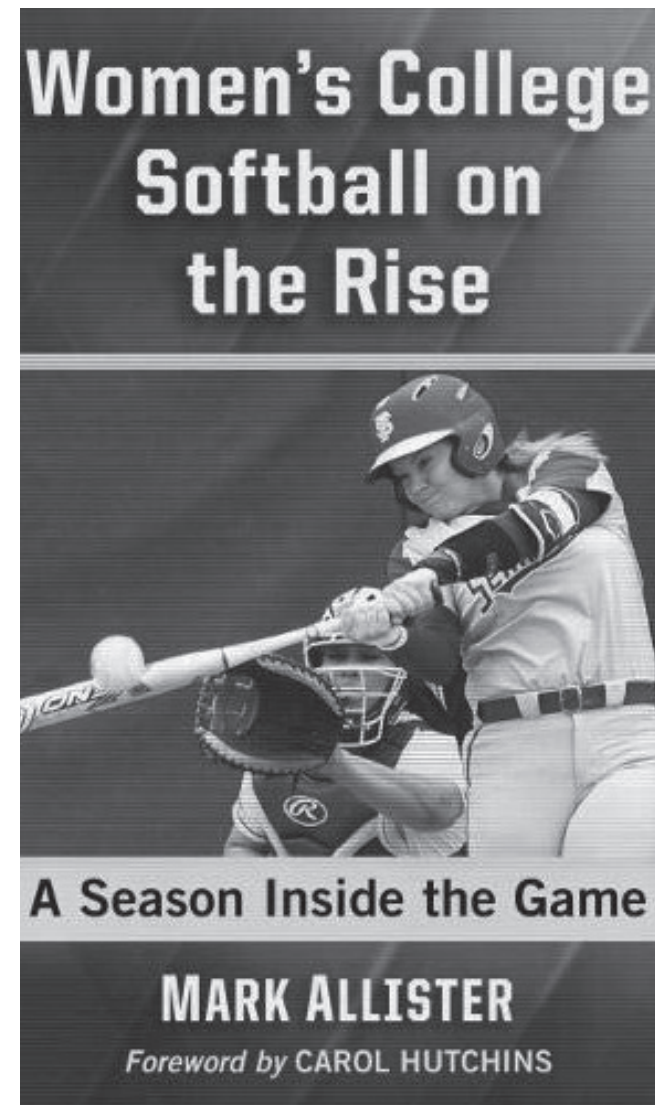


Photo courtesy of Brendan Maloney/Florida State Athletics

have you come and do something with that," said Allister. "My dream would actually be that there's a wide variety of people in the room to hear these talks, if I do any more of these. I think that's what the book can potentially do, is bring people together around this topic that normally might not be in the room together and get them thinking."



# The skincare scam

How modern beauty standards pressure you into unhealthy habits

by Larimar Lexine  
Intern

Smooth, glowing and poreless skin all seem to be “in trend.” Countless people are doing whatever it takes to achieve that look, whether it be through filters on apps, booking expensive facials, gathering skincare opinions online, or going broke ordering skin products to look the glazed donut of everyone’s dreams. This look has become cemented into society’s beauty standards as the ultimate achievement, with people constantly comparing their skin with someone else’s. Of course, too much of a good thing is bad, so it’s obvious that the obsession with “perfect” skin comes with as many faults as it does benefits.

Skin issues are things that people “struggle” through and learn to live with. Large pores, acne, facial lines, and oiliness are all things that are extremely natural and often genetic. For years, acne was regarded as being a juvenile condition even though people of all ages can be visited by a pimple. People with facial wrinkles are bombarded with ways to smooth out their face as if they were a shirt. These examples show society’s issues with things that stray from perfection and how easy it is to just shove a product suggestion down someone’s throat without dealing with the truth of being human.

Skincare has come a long way from the bottles of scented, stripping, and pore-clogging goo of beauty’s past. Clearasil was all the rage, and people didn’t find an issue in tearing their skin with abrasive physical exfoliants. Then there was a cultural shift. Western skincare brands adopted trends from overseas by making hydrating toners, cleansing balms, sheet masks, and micellar water more accessible to everyday customers. It became a phenomenon of people posting pictures of their vanity shelves and showing off their collection as if it was an online show-and-tell.

Of course, it didn’t take long for these “shelfies” to take over. Buying products that could easily break the bank is the norm to this day because people find spending \$100 on a serum easier than accepting their porous skin. This thinking is fueled by the cosmetic industry. The use of photoshopped and airbrushed models is a custom that is slowly dying down, but it’s still prevalent. Brand owners like Kylie Jenner are seen “using” their products while having a filter on the videos, as if computer generated butterflies showed the effectiveness of a foaming face wash.

Filters, airbrushing and photoshopping are all spawns of societal beauty standards. It seems that Barbie dolls are the goals that people are attempting to achieve, and it has become a standard that is inherently unhealthy. Acne, facial lines, pores, oily and textured skin are all normal, human qualities. Society seems to think otherwise, leaving many people to believe that shelling out thousands of dollars is sensible as long as they’re able to achieve the impossible. This causes people to potentially damage their skin. People are ignoring what their skin wants from the incessant pushing of perfection by brands.

Times are changing though. Companies like Glossier and Fenty are letting true beauty shine in adverts by taking a stance to not photoshop models. Slowly, people are waking up to the idea that all skin is good skin regardless of how many “issues” one’s face may have. Perfection is a myth, but beauty is free and true.



LIFESTYLE

## Book Review: Darius the Great is Not Okay

by Sam San Jose  
Intern

Darius the Great Is Not Okay and neither am I.

That sounds misleading, but the intention is quite the opposite. I usually can’t relate to many characters this well; however, that is not the case with Darius the Great Is Not Okay. The ability to relate and empathize with characters is a very personal matter because it not only builds a connection with the audience but also highlights aspects of our own lives that makes the story even more intriguing. This book covers a lot of topics concerning mental health, family, friendship, bullying, and identity; all from the perception of a high school sophomore.

This 2018 debut novel by Adib Khorram follows the life of Darius Kellner and his first trip to Iran. Darius is a self-described “Fractional Persian” (half on his mother’s side); he is bullied by his peers in school, takes medication for clinical depression and has a strained relationship with his father, the “Urbemensch.” Throughout his life his only relationship with his Persian grandparents is through a computer screen. Then the Kellner family decides to visit them in Yazd, Iran.

Darius has trouble fitting in at home, and he’s sure things are going to be the same or even harder in Iran. That is the case until Darius meets Sohrab, the boy next door. Then everything changes. Their friendship becomes one of the few saving graces of the visit. Sohrab calls him Darioush—the original Farsi version of his name—and Darius has never felt more like himself than he does now that he’s Darioush to Sohrab.

The struggles Darius faces are authentic and accurate. His depression and anxiety are prevalent throughout the book and this is the only book I have witnessed where the depiction of depression/anxiety isn’t automatically cured at the end and where the medication treatment isn’t always right. Proper mental health representation is a big thing for me so to see a young character dealing with depression and anxiety, struggling with self-acceptance, identity, cultural/societal norms and etc, is riveting to read.

At the end of the book, there is a section containing a printed interview with Khorram. There is one answer that I want to share:

“What do you hope that readers take away from Darius the Great Is Not Okay?”

Khorram replied: “I hope non-Iranian readers will come away with an understanding of the humanity of Iranians. So much of the news coming out of Iran these days, especially what’s filtered through American media, tends to vilify them. And I hope Iranian readers come away with a little warmth in their heart from seeing themselves on the page.”

This beautiful, cross-cultural coming-of age story delivers a profound message to those struggling to make it to the next day. Sometimes all you need is one person to believe in you, and if you can’t find that person, be that person for someone else.

**Rating: 4/5**

**Genre: YA, Contemporary Fiction**

# FALL FUN FOR EVERY OCCASION

Whether you need a drink or just some arts and crafts

by Julianna Peres  
Intern

## Painting Pumpkins (Less mess than carving)

What are the best paints? Surprisingly, spray paint is the most effective as it keeps the design from cracking. Acrylic, however, has less of a chance of spraying everywhere and is easier to control for the more delicate designs. Paint something scary or something cute, but try to keep it appropriate. I get that it's hilarious to draw phallic symbols on everything, but keep in mind that if children may be walking by your house, they won't get quite the laugh out of it that you and your friends do. An idea that's always nice is to paint a scene from your favorite film or your favorite sports team, maybe even an inside joke. I've even met a couple who came about from a pumpkin painting. So, if you're looking to ask a boy or a girl to be your boo, maybe try asking in pastel bubble letters; you never know.

## Making Drinks

Please note that I am not encouraging underage drinking, so if you are not at least 21, all of these drinks can be made without alcohol. Now, what flavors make you think of fall? For me, it's pumpkin, cinnamon, apple, and, sometimes, butterscotch.



Photo courtesy of cookingwithcurls.com

## "Butter Beer Cocktail" (makes 1 serving)

1 ounce vanilla vodka  
1 ounce butterscotch schnapps  
1/2 ounce dark beer\* I used Guinness - 1/2 to 1 ounce  
10 ounces Jones cream soda  
whipped cream  
<https://cookingwithcurls.com/2014/10/06/butter-beer-cocktail/#wprm-recipe-container-80871>

## "Another Glorious Morning" (makes 2 servings)

1 bottle Sparkling Ice Black Raspberry  
2 ounces Vodka  
Ice  
<https://www.champagneandcoconuts.com/another-glorious-morning-hocus-pocus-halloween-drink/#wprm-recipe-container-3179>



Photo courtesy of 3yummytummies.com

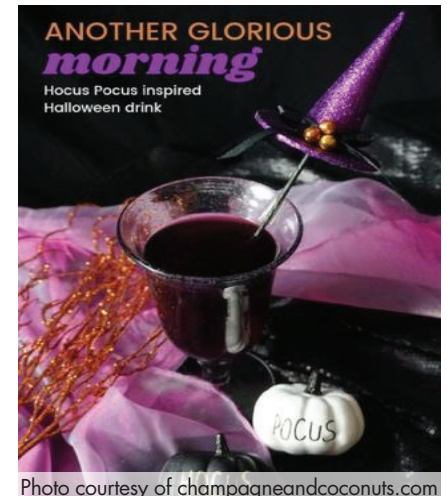


Photo courtesy of champagneandcoconuts.com

## "Melted Witch Martini" (makes 1 serving)

1.5 oz vodka  
.75 oz blue curacao  
1.5 oz pineapple juice  
1.5 oz orange juice  
<https://www.3yummytummies.com/melted-witch-martini/>

## Candles

I have always had a tremendous respect for fire, and in turn, candles. Candles are a living thing: use with caution. Not only are they beautiful to look at, but they smell incredible (if you know which ones to pick). The ones I recommend are from Bath and Body Works; they're just expensive enough that they have a strong and long-lasting effect, but they're still affordable. Although I sometimes buy dollar store candles, those are more for a trial run. Don't get me wrong, I love a good bargain. It's just that sometimes price does equal quality, and I just can't get the same results from my 99 cent Cinnamon Apple Pie candle. My advice: go to your nearest home goods store, whether it be Walmart or CVS and sniff as many candles as you can. That way you can learn which scents calm you and which ones make you gag. But remember that no matter the person or the season, "Clean Laundry" by Yankee Candles always has a relaxing effect on strung-out college students.

## Movie Marathon

As someone partial to Disney/Disney Channel Original Halloween movies, my favorite "spooky season" films are Halloweentown, Hocus Pocus, Twitches, and the Nightmare Before Christmas. But that doesn't mean I don't also enjoy a good scare now and then. Some of my favorite horror movies are Oculus, The Boy, I Know What You Did Last Summer, Psycho, Carrie, and The Conjuring. Whether you want to laugh or scream, Halloween movies are always a good idea. So, if IT Chapter 2 isn't your cup of tea—or in this case, apple cider—go treat yourself to the new animated Addams Family film. Because honestly, Halloween is about indulging your inner child and there is absolutely no room for embarrassment when it comes to having a bit of fall fun.