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STUDYING ABROAD AMID COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

Details about what is needed to participate in study abroad programs

by Jessica Ceballos Asst. News Editor

At UNC Charlotte, students have the opportunity to study abroad with the assistance of the Office of Education Abroad. Director of Education Abroad, Brad Sekulich, spoke with the Niner Times about the program, what it offers students and how Covid-19 has influenced it.

"It's about the environment you're in," said Sekulich. "It's getting to see things from a very different perspective. When you are immersed in another culture, you think differently. You see things differently. You are different in the United States. You are someone's son or daughter. You're someone's husband, or wife, or boyfriend, or girlfriend, or brother or sister. You can be those things abroad, but in other cultures, those have different meanings in different ways to those things and the way different societies interact with different people."

The study abroad program has a variety of programs that will take students all over the world.

"It's getting to see things from a very different perspective. When you are immersed in another culture, you think differently. You see things differently."

-Brad Sekulich

"I think they need to think about why they're going, what they want to accomplish and how they're going to do that abroad," said Sekulich. "So that they make the right choices about where they go, how long they go and what they get out of going abroad. There is value in that, but I think students really need to think about why they want to do this because of the money involved, the timing and make it so that you get the most out of it for what you do and what you put into it."

Sekulich speaks about learning soft skills while abroad, such as thinking on your feet, dealing with ambiguity and a "stronger sense of self-reliance."

For student safety, the study abroad program has risk management precautions in place. According to the Office of Education Abroad website, "UNC Charlotte students cannot study or undertake University-sponsored activities abroad in any location that the U.S. Department of State identifies as Level 3 or Level 4 according to the established travel advisories."

The Office of Education Abroad website contains information about the policies to keep students safe in the pandemic. According to Sekulich, the department meets weekly to discuss the latest information about the countries in the programs by referencing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other resources.

The Office of Education Abroad website suggests that students develop academic, personal, and professional goals when studying abroad.

Fourth-year Austin DeCosta was supposed to study abroad in Rome and London in summer 2020 through a criminal justice and forensics program. In this program, he would have had the chance to do hands-on experience with professionals in a mock crime scene situation. However, the pandemic

canceled the program.

"I wanted to study abroad because I just wanted to explore new things, see different parts of the world and different cultures," said DeCosta. "I wanted to do it more for the personal experience of just trying new things."

Study Abroad 101 is an introductory program to get students started when applying to study abroad. According to the Office of Education Abroad website, the course is "a free, non-credit course hosted in Canvas that outlines program options, financial aid and scholarships, academic credit processes and more." Students must complete this to move forward in their program.

Students who wish to study abroad are suggested to start in their first or second year, according to Sekulich. Students

need this time to plan and prepare for the

Photo of study abroad bulletin board

by Matt Lower

upcoming trip.

Sekulich suggests that students write a letter to themselves about what they hope to accomplish by studying abroad and work with an advisor in their office to figure out how to meet those goals.

Many scholarship opportunities are available for students interested in studying abroad but are wary because of the price tag. UNC Charlotte offers scholarships of all kinds, including types of financial aid. Scholarships allow students to study abroad with financial support if they cannot afford it out of pocket. Scholarships are available to all students. Please see the Financial Aid and Scholarships website for more scholarship opportunities.





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UNC CHARLOTTE PROFESSOR RESEARCHES INDIGENOUS MASCOTTING

Dr. Jason Edward Black, a UNC Charlotte professor, discusses facets of his research on indigenous mascotting

by Kathryn Caudill Staff Writer

Dr. Jason Edward Black giving a lecture on Indigenous mascotting courtesy of Dr. Black

Dr. Jason Edward Black, a professor of communication studies at UNC Charlotte, is working on his second mascot book titled "Mascotting Indigenous Canada: Colonial and Decolonial Representations in Sport Culture." Unfortunately, the pandemic interrupted this venture and is now rescheduled for 2022.

Black centered his research on the rhetoric used to eliminate Indigenous mascotting, why it should be maintained, and how this rhetoric relates to colonial and decolonial representation. Mascotting relates to the name, logo and any performative aspect as a symbol. Black was able to speak with the Niner Times in regards to his current research.

Black says that Indigenous mascotting is a "long-standing practice with ties to colonialism." Examples include the Washington football team's former branding as the Washington "Redskins" or the Kansas City Chiefs.

When investigating rhetoric, Black looks to both material forms as well as the symbolic. The branding of such teams, which Black includes in his definition of mascotting, uses symbols such as feathers, warpaint, and "tomahawk chops." Black examines the use of these symbols as a part of his research. He has seen a trend of religious meanings behind using symbols in mascotting, like the feather, to be "white-washing a history of violence, assimilaton and genocide."

Black found that these images replicate colonialism and allow people to take symbols that are not their own and allow them to be played with.

"Mascots are cheerleaders. They can be funny or stoic. Mascots are typically animals, natural phenomena, villains, criminals, or dead cultures like the trojans. And then there are Indigenous peoples," said Black. Felicia Warriax, secretary of the Native American Student Association at UNC Charlotte, and a member of the Lumbee Tribe, also spoke to the Niner Times on this matter.

"When you see a native wearing a feather, they're highly honored. In most native cultures, a feather signifies a connection between the creator and the owner and the bird. A feather symbolizes wisdom, strength, trust, power, and freedom," added Warriax.

Black's research has found that using these images replicates colonialism as Indigenous mascotting and "allows for people to take symbols that are not their own and allow them to be played with." Black's research has also found that rhetoric of decolonialism includes recent efforts such as Indigenous People's Day, Orange T-Shirt day and efforts of protest.

"2020 was the summer of racial reckoning in North America," said Black, "with Covid-19 and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, activism was pulled to the forefront with examples of policing and symbols such as Uncle Ben or Aunt Jemima."

Black also looks to rhetoric supporting Indigenous mascotting, with many saying that these mascots are honoring culture. Black's research has found that supporters typically state that it draws attention to Indigenous cultures and reflects the past.

Black's research has also found that this imagery can lead to many issues for Indigenous peoples, including mental health.

Black says that Indigenous mascotting also affects non-Indigenous people. He says that they learn to believe that Indigenous peoples do not matter as they reconfirm colonialism. He also looks to instances of de-colonialism efforts such as Indigenous Peoples Day, arguments



against Indigenous mascotting, activism and Indigenous people and allies stripping down colonial ties.

Black says his research leads him to believe this imagery can cause issues for Indigenous people, such as mental health issues. "It's a self-fulfilling prophecy. You see yourself in the performance of others, less than or a joke, you begin to feel uncivilized or unworthy of care and respect," said Black.

When asked about whether these images affect Warriax, she stated that, "I feel disrespected. It's as if we're being overlooked, and our voices are being shushed constantly. It's as if people refuse to care about how their actions affect a group of people."

Black and his research have found that "listening to Indigenous activists, TedTalks, and content creators is a great way to learn how to honor a culture."

Black's research on Indigenous mascotting for his second book will resume in 2022.



Why Charlotte needs suburban renewal

by Isaac Naylor Asst. Opinion Editor

Some people might drive through the suburbs and think that they are in a utopia. Good schools, clean roads and rows of McMansions might seem like the results of successful planning. That is until there is the inevitable realization that none of these places are accessible without a car. Most modern suburban neighborhoods are poorly designed. Winding and curvilinear streets decorated with random cul-desacs provide a confusing experience for motorists and pedestrians alike.

For a place advertised as the ideal location for families, the suburbs are remarkably unsafe for children because of unreliable sidewalks. Sometimes, there is no sidewalk at all. There are two reasons for this: sidewalks are an after-thought because car-ownership is over-prioritized, and suburbs are too expensive and spread out to maintain. If Charlotte is not required to build sidewalks, then they won't. However, if suburbs are costly to maintain, then why doesn't the city redesign them?

Suburban renewal or redevelopment is a concept that might seem foreign at first. However, when the city has built an unorganized sprawl of houses since the 1950s, urban utilities such as water and electricity had to be carried out to them, too. All of that infrastructure is aging and decaying for a city that does not handle

its growth. Density is how cities like Washington, New York and Boston deal with growth; that's why public transit is functional in those cities. Nevertheless, here in the Queen City, the car is king.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), automobile accidents are still the leading cause of death for young Americans between 18 and 24. Most of those accidents happen on highways, but highways are how suburbanites get from their unorganized jumble of houses to the organized urban core where they work. However, the rise of remote work due largely to the Covid-19 pandemic has reduced the need to commute uptown, but that doesn't eliminate the problem.

While suburban neighborhoods grew along highways, urban neighborhoods were destroyed to make way for the traffic caravan. According to the Charlotte Redevelopment Commission Records, the city council approved a "slums razing" project in 1960 that targeted Second Ward, then called Brooklyn, the heart of the thriving black middle class in postwar Charlotte. However, under urban renewal, the neighborhood was leveled for the extension of the Independence Expressway, now part of I-277. This classic example of cruelty is symbolic of how often white progress is founded on black erasure. As Joni Mitchell cried

out in her song "Big Yellow Taxi," "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot."

Apparently, bulldozing black neighborhoods was not enough for Charlotte. Public transportation was also curtailed to keep the poor out of the wealthy suburbs. A 2015 Harvard University study by Raj Chetty and Nathaniel Hendren found that access to reliable public transportation is the defining factor in a person's ability to escape poverty. The report also observed that "the greater price of access to high-opportunity neighborhoods could potentially explain why more segregated, sprawling cities tend to generate worse outcomes for children in low-income families." In addition, cars offer a high-priced premium for entry into the suburbs that only exacerbate racial and class-based exclusion.

What Charlotte should do is fund the parts of the city that have equality of mobility between those who walk and those who drive. This would mean withholding city tax dollars from suburban neighborhoods that often receive subsidies (money taxed from dense urban communities) to fund their unsustainable sprawl. Car-dependent suburbia would be forced to reform itself with sidewalks, bus routes, bicycle lanes and neighborhood overhauls. However, unlike urban renewal, suburban renewal

Photo of Charlotte skyline by Jade Suszek

would not displace people. It would just upgrade their neighborhoods to include higher density, more pedestrians and good schools.

Suburban renewal would undoubtedly improve life in the city, too. Most people can agree that empty parking lots are an ugly blight for any city, including Charlotte. However, urban parking is primarily used by suburban commuters. In her 1961 book, "The Death and Life of Great American Cities," Jane Jacobs called urban parking lots "border vacuums" that serve as barren, dead zones.

Traffic congestion is a common complaint in Charlotte, but if the supply of surface parking were limited, then more people would use public transportation, meaning fewer cars on the roads. This is an urbanism phenomenon called induced demand, which refers to supply increases (for parking or highway lanes, for example) that inspire subsequent demand increases (traffic congestion). However, the opposite is true: reducing parking will reduce traffic.

I offer a challenge for the suburbanites who are not convinced that their neighborhoods were haphazardly designed: Don't drive to work or class tomorrow. Take the bus or walk and let's see if you make it on time.

NT SPORTS

REFLECTING ON THE PAST by Gabie Starfield Staff Wifter Charlotte goalkeeper Abby Stapleton reflects on career

Abby Stapleton has spent the past five years as a goalkeeper for the Charlotte women's soccer team and has managed to leave an everlasting impact on the team as a whole.

Stapleton graduated in May of 2021 with an undergraduate degree in communication studies and a minor in journalism. With her taking a fifth year, she was able to have one last full season on the field after coming off of last year's covid-impacted season. After maintaining her role within the sport of soccer for most of her life, there's a lot for her to be proud of when it comes to her development.

"I'm really proud of myself for sticking with it from the start. I wasn't too sure what soccer was going to be to me coming in as a freshman," said Stapleton. "Coming in and seeing some successes at [that] young age and being able to just continue from that stage and improve each year

and hold that place that I held on the team is something that I'm pretty proud of."

In her time with the 49ers, she played in 82 games at a total of 7,157 minutes. She has a career record of 42-34-5 and a save percentage average of 0.772 over the previous four seasons. This season, her save percentage stands at 0.694 with only 19 goals allowed.

"Don't take it for granted. It's super easy to kind of get a little bit tired of it or not enjoy it at times but looking back and being in the position I am now, it's definitely a privilege to be able to play on a team like this and have teammates who play at such a high level."

- Abby Stableton

Stapleton began playing soccer from a young age, but didn't truly

fall in love with the sport until she began her career at Charlotte.

"I definitely didn't realize how much I actually cared for soccer because it's something that I just kind of always did," said Stapleton. "Moving into college and having it be something that I was able to really excel at and kind of see myself be a bigger part of, really made me realize how much I really do care about the sport."

When it comes to this next season of life for Stapleton, there's a lot to take from her time here at Charlotte with her into the real world. Many lessons have been learned over the years for her and responsibility is a big one.

"Something I think soccer and playing for the university has taught me is a bigger sense of responsibility," said Stapleton.

"Not just for myself, but for anyone you're kind of with or around and just holding myself to a standard. Being

a part of a university team, you kind of do have to look out for stuff you're doing outside of soccer because you are representing the school, so I think being responsible is something that I've gained."

Remaining positive and knowing not to take things too personal have also been notable advice Stapleton has learned. She highlights that keeping your focus on yourself and on your team is key, and consuming that positive attitude and looking at things from a different perspective is important.

Learning is a big part of being an athlete, and Stapleton didn't stop at just learning how to better herself skill wise as a goalie. She was also able to learn a lot of important advice when it comes to sticking to certain mindsets. As a veteran on the team, she has also been able to be that leader and role model for the younger players on the team.

"I think to an extent [I'm a leader]

by just kind of being there for people and making sure that everyone is kind of enjoying themselves as well as being there for soccer and for the team," said Stapleton. "I do think it's important [for me as a leader] that everyone else is in a good spot and headspace."

Stapleton's leadership on the team can be traced back to the impact her previous teammates and current coaches have had on her. Creating those relationships with her teammates is a big part of what makes the sport so enjoyable, and having these role models around wher has contributed to her development greatly.

"I would say that playing with Martha Thomas was kind of an awesome experience," said Stapleton. "She was such a good soccer player and it inspired me to want to be on a team with really good soccer players and kind of keep going. Abby Coffey was a goalkeeper my freshman year and she made the transition into college a lot easier than it could've been...She always had such a positive attitude and was so caring for me as a freshman regardless of the fact of if I was playing and I thought that was so important and was something I wanted to continue in the team even after she left."

Her teammates have had tremendous effects on her, but her coaches have also contributed to her development and success as well.

Her teammates have had tremendous impacts on her, but her relationship with her coaches has impacted her game and development as a player as well. She credits a lot of her success on the team to her coaches and appreciates the effort they invested in her to make her the best player she could be.

"[Coaches] Cullen and Kim have been there from the start..I think you could ask anyone on the team and they would agree that without Kim it would be a completely different experience," said Stapleton. "She just does so much behind the scenes that I think everyone really appreciates. Cullen [and I] have been through so much just in my time here and there's been so many ups and downs so I think we both just have a respect for each other now and he has helped me out through a lot of moments, so I'm really close with them."

When it comes to specific goaltender training and development, Coach Omar is someone Stapleton gives a lot of credit to.

"He's had a huge impact on my development as a goalkeeper and on the

team as well," said Stapleton. "I haven't had a coach that shows so much care for a team outside of the sport and for your mental health as well. He's very focused on that side of the game. It was definitely a big step for my development when he came in and he did a lot of work there."

After being on the team for five years, there are a lot of challenges capable of being faced. Stapleton highlights a few of the challenges that she faced during her soccer career.

"I think it's easy to get caught up in the sport and to lose yourself within the sport," said Stapleton. "Finding your people in what it is you like to do outside of the sport as well is important as well and kind of finding that balance that suits you...Leaning on the people around you and leaning on your teammates and being able to open up in that sense if you are struggling is really important."

The competitive nature of the sport and the loss of the routine within the everyday life of a student athlete is something Stapleton will miss the most, next to her teammates. She has had her time to say her goodbyes to her fellow players and to the competitive side of the sport that she loves, but when it comes to her advice for them, she has something more to say.

Besides her teammates, the competitive nature of the sport and the loss of the routine within the everyday life of a student athlete is something Stapleton will miss the most. This season and Stapleton's collegiate soccer career may have come to an end, but she still has a final piece of advice for her teammates.

"Don't take it for granted," said Stapleton.
"It's super easy to kind of get a little bit
tired of it or not enjoy it at times but
looking back and being in the position
I am now, it's definitely a privilege to be
able to play on a team like this and have
teammates who play at such a high level."

"It's something that you're going to miss regardless, so just take advantage of the opportunity that's in front of you and try to overlook anything that brings you down in that sense and try to remember why you started playing and use that to move forward."

Stapelon and the Charlotte women's soccer team finished the season 7-5-4 this season and dropped their first-round Conference USA against Florida Atlantic in a shootout.



SEEING DOUBLE ---

Get to know Charlotte volleyball's duo of Annikas

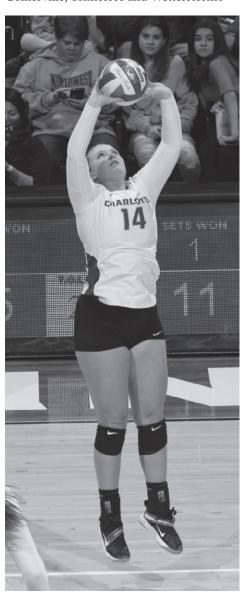
Get to know Charlotte volleyball's duo of Annikas

SEEING DONBIE

by Kameron Roach Staff Writer

To most, Annika is not a name you hear often. However, Charlotte's volleyball team happens to have two players with the name Annika on the team. Annika Thompson and Annika Wetterstorm are both setters, and both stand at five feet and ten inches tall.

There is a sixteen-and-a-half-hour drive between Thompson's hometown Collierville, Tennessee and Wetterstorm's



hometown of Longmont, Colorado. A fun fact about the two is even though Wetterstrom is a third-year, Thompson, a second-year, is the oldest of the two.

Both players find it weird to call each other by their own names, so they came up with nicknames to go by and make it easier on their teammates and coaches. Thompson either goes by "Nik" or "Tommy." Wetterstrom's nickname is "Ani."

"We're similar and different in a lot of ways," says Thompson.

The two have a great relationship on and off the volleyball court. According to Thompson, not only do they share the same name, but they also happen to share the same sense of humor.

The two 49ers seem to be like fire and ice. Wetterstrom describes Thomspon as fiery, and Thompson emphasizes how well Wetterstrom remains calm. They both are a great balance for the 49ers between the energy Thompson brings and the veteran poise Wetterstrom consistently displays.

The two are always looking to feed off each other.

"It is nice to be able to talk to someone who can relate to what you want to do better," says Wetterstorm.

Wetterstrom adds that they both do a good job of communicating and giving each other constructive criticism during games and practices.

Being on different sides of the net in practice gives them a chance to make each other better and see where they can grow.

Thompson recalls looking up to
Wetterstrom as a freshman and seeking
to learn from her early on. Wetterstrom
set the standard for Thompson and
served as a role model from the jump.
Thompson shares that Wetterstrom
has a way of bringing her teammates
together and getting her teammates to
feel comfortable playing around her.

"She knew the system and she knew what

was expected of her and so I kind of looked up to her in that way," says Thompson.

Thomson describes Wetterstrom as even-keeled and says that she doesn't get rattled. Thompson hopes to continue to learn from Wetterstrom on how to remain poised in the midst of adversity.

Both setters have been a major asset to the team throughout the 2021 season, where Charlotte went 12-12 this season and just missed the Conference USA (C-USA) tournament.

"ANI"

Wetterstorm started her career with Charlotte in 2019. The third-year setter played in all 68 sets, starting 14 of the 18 matches and leading the team with 400 assists in the 6-2 offense, averaging 5.88 assists per set and earning double-digit assists in each of the 18 games. She had back-to-back 27-assist games against Marshall in the C-USA opener. She led the offense to C-USA weekend sweeps over FIU, Middle Tennessee, Florida Atlantic and Old Dominion.

She also had a season-high 30 assists against Florida Atlantic on March 7, followed by another 31 in the 49ers' 3-2 C-USA Tournament Quarterfinal win against UAB on April 1. Wetterstorm finished the season with 106 digs, 14 aces and 400 assists.

"NIK"

Thompson joined Charlotte shortly after Wetterstrom in 2020. Last season, the second-year setter started four times and appeared in all 18 matches and 68 sets. She made an immediate impression with 20 assists and seven digs in a 3-0 season-opening sweep against Davidson.

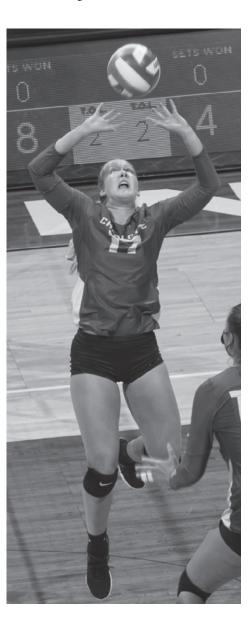
She began her career with 13 double-digit assist games, eventually totaling 16 for the year. Not to mention, she set a new careerhigh with 25 assists and 11 digs against Clemson last season, recording her first career double-double with 23 assists and

Photos of Annika Wetterstorm (14) and Annika Thompson Courtesy of Charlotte athletics

> 11 digs in the match two, 3-1 triumph. Then, in a win over FIU on Feb. 15, she set a new career-high with 26 assists

she set a new career-high with 26 assists and 11 additional digs. Thompson also contributed 22 assists in the 49ers' 3-2 triumph against UAB in the semifinals.

Even though the season has found its season, the duo of Annika's have been a driving force for the 49ers.



TAKE A BITE OF THE GOLDEN OWL TAVERN

Spotlight on local restaurant's brunch menu

by Emily Kottak Arts & Culture Editor

Recently, I had my second dining experience at the Golden Owl Tavern, located in the Marriott hotel right on campus. When the restaurant opened in early 2021, I attended a wonderful VIP tasting. The food and staff were amazing, and I had a great experience. This brings me to fall of 2021, when I received an email asking if I would be interested in returning to the Golden Owl Tavern to try the brunch menu. I didn't need to think twice before accepting this invitation.

If you haven't been to this restaurant, I would suggest you attend. As soon as you enter, there is an instant feeling of warmth and welcoming. You will be greeted with a kind smile, a freshly brewed cup of coffee and a menu where you will have no idea what to choose because everything looks delectable. When I went for brunch, I was immensely impressed by the staff once again. The Golden Owl knows a thing or two about customer service, and it really can make a difference when choosing where to go. I especially love how proud the restaurant is to be a part of the UNC Charlotte community. They love when students come in and are the first to strike up a conversation and ask how you are doing.

Back to brunch, similar to the first time, I was overwhelmed by how delicious everything on the menu sounded and had no idea what to order—so many good choices. Our waitress was very helpful in offering suggestions, and we ended up starting with coffee and two appetizers: the deviled eggs and cornbread. The waitress explained to us that these appetizers are favorites and, as soon as I bit into them,

I understood why. Now, I will say that I tried these appetizers the last time I went to Golden Owl. I remembered them being amazing, but I wanted to try them again since it had been a while, and I was so glad I did. The deviled eggs offer that southern kick and spice, and the cornbread is like a hug from grandma and is served with sweet butter on the top, further enhancing each bite. We could have eaten these appetizers all day long, but we knew an important choice remained: what to order for brunch.

Again, our waitress was most helpful in steering us in the right direction, and we ended up choosing three brunch entrees: egg white omelet, buttermilk fried chicken and waffles and the house-smoked bacon benedict. Starting with the omelet, while this may seem like a simple brunch item, it really needs to be perfect. The Golden Owl omelet is made with egg whites and

includes grape tomatoes, goat cheese and basil—the perfect combination. Served on the side of this dish is toast and Carolina home fries. I will say that if you are looking for something airy and light for your brunch, this is a great choice. I have never been a huge fan of omelets, but it is so fresh and delicious that I would get it again.

Next was another classic, the buttermilk fried chicken and waffles. Like the appetizers we ordered, this entree is another Golden Owl staple. It includes fried chicken thighs on top of a buckwheat waffle topped with peach chili chutney and honey. The combination of these flavors compliments each other perfectly and creates the best crispy bite you could imagine. The chutney and honey are placed on the side so you can choose how much you would like to top your chicken and waffle. I was hesitant about the chutney as it seemed like an



Golden Owl Tavern's cornbread offered during brunch Photo by of Emily Kottak

interesting topping for chicken and waffles, but it was wonderful and really added to the dish as a whole. What I love about the Golden Owl is how thoughtful they are in their ingredients and menu choices, and I think this dish is a prime example of that. They took chicken and waffles, a seemingly basic dish, and managed to make it unique, special and even more delicious.

Finally was the house-smoked bacon benedict. Long-smoked hickory bacon and poached eggs with creamy hollandaise find themselves atop a fluffy biscuit. This dish is also served with Carolina home fries which I might add are not your typical home fries but are outstanding with the right amount of crisp. We were able to speak to executive chef Benjamin Lacy who described the process of smoking the bacon, and it was quite fascinating. The chefs take time and care with each meal, even when it comes to smoking bacon. The bacon we had was hickory-smoked, but the flavor of smoke can change seasonally, Lacy indicated to us.

Though I have gone to the Golden Owl Tavern aside from the two occasions I have gone for the Niner Times, I was once again thoroughly impressed by the staff, restaurant itself and the food. You can tell that this local restaurant truly cares about their customers and generates a positive experience for all. The thought and consideration that goes into each dish show what separates the Golden Owl from other places. To UNC Charlotte students, if you have not dipped a fork into a dish at the Golden Owl, what are you waiting for? Don't walk, run to Golden Owl, and you are sure to have a golden experience.

ART SHUDENT ART SHUDENT ART SHUDENT

My art process and experience

by Jade Suszek Staff Writer

I submitted digital artwork for the Student Art Show. A digital artwork, meaning I created it within photoshop, and I did not physically paint, sculpt or manipulate a tangible object.

The Campus Activities Board (CAB) hosted the art gallery located in Popp Martin Student Union during October.

The showcase allowed students to use all mediums, including paintings, collages, photography, sculptures and more. In addition, there were over 50 works of art that hung throughout the art gallery.

I have been practicing photography

since 2016. I have always had a knack for it. However, I have been honing my photoshopping skills to give my photos a new life in the last couple of years.

My latest project, which hung in the art gallery, took approximately 120 hours to collect images and strategically edit each layer. By the end of the project, I had over 20 layers of images and effects.

The piece I submitted was titled "Swinging Life Away." It shows a girl swinging on a golden picture frame. She gradually fades to black and white. Surrounding her are newspaper clippings

of letters that grandparents wrote to their grandchildren for Christmas.

I take images with the intent of them being stand-alone images, and then later on, I get a spark of what they could become in a photoshop project. A piece of my creative process for "Swinging Life Away" was that I merged ten photos that I took over several months into the project.

I added warping effects to the newspaper clippings as words are easily manipulated into different stories. Then there is a glitch over the girl's face as no individual has one clear outward persona. With every effect used and photo placement, there was a thought process as it was done.

Everything in my creation is there for a reason. The piece's theme is that we become characters in other peoples' stories. As individuals, we have sole control over our thoughts and actions. No one else has control over our story. We are the only people who can tell our stories. We are the main characters of our own stories and the sidekicks in everyone else's

The interesting portion of art is that another individual can look at my creation and place a whole separate meaning behind each piece than I had intended. Likewise, people can use their own stories to create meaning behind my artwork and all the other pieces in the gallery. "It was really cool to see the art and get an idea of the other students on campus," said UNC Charlotte student Alexa Bowen.

I honestly did not know what to expect by submitting my work to the showcase. CFLODU GLOS

All photos by Jade Suszek

Suszek showing her artwork from the Student Art Show and other surrounding pieces

I walked by the gallery to see my work on the wall. I felt ecstatic. Everything I had worked towards, the story in my head, my thoughts and actions came to fruition. I left thinking this was the first but not the last gallery to showcase my artwork.

I had done it. I am on my way to impacting people with my art, which I could truly ask for.

CAB created a space for students' creative art pieces to be shown to the rest of the UNC Charlotte community.



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by Bryanna Bowles Staff Writer

Imara Menifee is the president of the Black Student Union, vice president of Survivors United Accepted and Heard and a peer mentor at University Center for Academic Excellence here at UNC Charlotte. She is currently a fourthyear business and management major.

Photo of Menifee in front of the Student Union Photo by Bryanna Bowles

She acquired her position as president of BSU by being the publicist her first year. BSU made a way for her to meet some amazing people that she felt connected to and explore opportunities on campus. She loves UNC Charlotte and thinks the campus is beautiful.







