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TALKS EXPECTATIONS FOR UPCOMING FOOTBALL SEASON

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Ashley Legassie, James Kmosko, Haywood Hayes, Olivia Fey, Benjamin Greenzaid, Amna Noyal, Natalie Monson, Veda Bireddy, E. Alexander Zimmerman, Cedric Baker, Juwan Watson, Cairo Smith

COVER

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NEWS

UNC CHARLOTTE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION PASSES RESOLUTION DISCOURAGING PROCTORING PROGRAMS, P. 3

UNC CHARLOTTE STUDENTS HOLD A VIGIL FOR KHALIL AZAD, P. 3

CHARLOTTE HOUSING MARKET PREDICTED TO BE THE BIGGEST OF 2023, P. 4

UNC CHARLOTTE HOSTS CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR Q&A SESSION MARCH 24, P. 4

A MOMENT OF MAGIC WELCOMES VOLUNTEERS AT UNC CHARLOTTE, P. 5

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION ELECTION VOTING ON MARCH 21-22, P. 5

OPINION

THE WILLOW PROJECT WILL DAMAGE THE WESTERN ARCTIC AND GLOBAL CLIMATE, P. 6

THE POPULARITY OF WEIGHT LOSS INJECTIONS RAISES CONCERNS OVER ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES, P. 6

GAP YEARS SERVE AS VALUABLE TIME TO RECHARGE, P. 7

EMPLOYERS SHOULD OVERHAUL WORK CULTURE AND IMPLEMENT A FOUR-DAY WORKWEEK, P. 7

SPORTS

A NEW ERA: BIFF POGGI TALKS ALL THINGS CHARLOTTE FOOTBALL AND EXPECTATIONS FOR UPCOMING SEASON, P. 8-9

CHARLOTTE TRACK AND FIELD SPRINTER TA-HALIA FAIRMAN PUSHES HERSELF TO FURTHER SUCCEED, P. 10

CHARLOTTE MEN'S BASKETBALL GREAT BYRON DINKINS REMAINS AT UNIVERSITY AS DIRECTOR OF PLAYER DEVELOPMENT, P. 11

GAMES, P. 12

ARTS & CULTURE

HUMANS OF UNC CHARLOTTE: SYDNEY CARMER CREATES AND CURATES ART ON CAMPUS, P. 13

CHARLOTTE'S DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE PUTS ON 'SWEAT' PLAY, P. 14

DNT: WHAT ARE SOME WAYS THAT I CAN SUCCEED IN CLASS? P. 14

DREAMVILLE FESTIVAL RETURNS TO RALEIGH, P. 15

TV REVIEW: 'YOU' SEASON 4, P. 15

PHOTOS

CHARLOTTE CELEBRATES ST. PATRICK'S DAY, P. 16

UNC Charlotte Student Government Association passes resolution discouraging proctoring programs

by James Kmosko
Staff Writer

UNC Charlotte's Student Government Association (SGA) passed a resolution in February discouraging the usage of Respondus LockDown Browser and other proctoring browsers.

The Proctoring Program Discouragement Act was principally sponsored by fourth-year student Jeremy Yagoda, chair of the SGA's Organizational Ways and Means Committee, and backed by several other SGA members.

"I started after I heard about the court case that was happening in Ohio," said Yagoda. "I had heard complaints about issues involving [LockDown], its practices and its implications, how it affects disabled students, and how many students just don't feel comfortable with it for privacy reasons."

Yagoda began speaking to University administration to determine whether Charlotte was already working on the issue.

"I had emailed Jace Humphrey, [former] head of legal affairs, and asked him if there have been any inquiries about it at all," said Yagoda. "He had said that [the administration] talked about it internally, especially after that court case happened, but there's not a lot of official discussion about it."

Yagoda secured a meeting with Humphrey and a variety of faculty such as UNC Charlotte's Office of Academic Affairs and OneIT.

"They were all in agreement that they discourage it to every staff member that asked about it, but that's not any official university statement or anything like that," said Yagoda.

Despite nearly unanimous disapproval, Charlotte administration does not intend to ban proctoring browsers, according to Yagoda.

"They said they don't believe that the University is at a point where they would outright ban it," said Yagoda. "They said when we first went online, most teachers were using it, and they said now we're down to less than 100 staff members still using it. So they believe that it will naturally phase out. I was hoping for something more immediate, so we still wrote the legislation."

The SGA does not have the authority to place a ban on LockDown Browser, but the Proctoring Program Discouragement Act will be sent to every professor at Charlotte.

> "...Now we're down to less than 100 staff members still using it. So they believe that it will naturally phase out. I was hoping for something more immediate, so we still wrote the legislation"
>
> Jeremy Yagoda
> *SGA Organizational Ways and Means Committee Chair*

"It was pretty unprecedented for legislation to go out to all university professors like that," said Yagoda. "[Our hope was] if every single teacher on campus is getting this email saying that, hey, the students don't believe you should be using this, maybe it can have more of an effect."

Despite the resolution being passed in early February, as of March 11, many UNC Charlotte professors have not received notice of its existence.

"They've been giving us the runaround about actually getting that sent out to all University professors," said Yagoda. "We've been emailing and emailing like, 'Can we send this out?' We have to get approval apparently for the master list of all the teachers' emails.."

Student concerns with LockDown Browser include privacy violations, the stress associated with being filmed while testing and the effect of LockDown on students with attention deficit disorders.

"There are some disabilities that students may have that may not necessarily require them to disclose that to the University," said Yagoda. "For example, ADHD is one of the most basic ones. A student may be able to not need extra resources for that normally, but taking the exams on LockDown, they may be flagged for certain activities. Then they would be required to disclose [their ADHD] to the University just because of the LockDown Browser, which I do not believe is fair."

UNC Charlotte students hold a vigil for Khalil Azad

by Haywood Hayes
Staff Writer

Omni Amo and Foster Change held a vigil for Khalil Azad and other victims of police brutality on March 13. The vigil was held in the Star Quad to commemorate Azad's life and other victims.

Foster Change streamed the vigil live on their Instagram page, @fosterchangeuncc.

"Since there wasn't a live crowd, we had to do it on social media. It was a way to connect with our audience on social media," said third-year Ja'Bria Farmer.

Azad's death, amongst others, is considered to be a result of police brutality. This vigil followed his passing in July 2022. Omni Amo and Foster Change sought to shed light on the issue at a local level alongside other Charlotte students.

"We definitely did this to bring awareness. There are countless names and cases. I think we were able to do a really good thing and bring awareness, even if it was online," said Gabriella Kurczek, president of Foster Change and fourth-year student.

Leaders and members of the organizations gave a presentation to commemorate the lives of Keith Lamont Scott, Jonathan Ferrell, Daunte Wright and Azad. Rodney King, who survived an encounter with the police, was also acknowledged.

The presentation helped educate viewers on the effects of police brutality. The students brought these matters forward to inform their peers and the community.

"It served as a way to educate people about the destruction of a Black body," said Farmer

"If the vigil wouldn't have happened, or if no one would have said anything, people would still be quiet," said Charlotte community member Myles Cleyton.

After the presentation, the leaders and members of the organizations spoke about their hope for support from UNC Charlotte. Their hope is for the University to do its part in helping them bring awareness to police brutality.

"If the school acknowledges it, we'll see more people coming out, and more people will know what's going on," said Farmer.

Kurczek spoke on the funding of clubs and organizations. She hopes UNC Charlotte will fund outside organizational events so they can receive a larger audience and bring more awareness to police brutality.

"If we are allowed to receive funding to have events off campus, there's a larger audience, and we'll have a larger scope to make more change," said Kurczek.

Along with funding, the leaders spoke on the need for solidarity to help the cause.

"As a predominantly white institution, to help prevent these acts of violence, I think it is important to stand in solidarity. Because most people on campus are white individuals, and these incidents are happening to Black and brown people, we need to stand in solidarity because Black and brown people cannot stop this on their own," said Farmer.

> "As a predominantly white institution, to help prevent these acts of violence, I think it is important to stand in solidarity."
>
> *Ja'Bria Farmer*
> *Third year student*

These organizations assembled to bring awareness to the lives lost to police brutality. In the future, these organizations hope to see more people in attendance to help further their cause.

Charlotte housing market predicted to be the biggest of 2023

by Olivia Fey
Staff Writer

Charlotte has been coined as "2023's Hottest Housing Market" by Zillow as the city continues to grow and attract new residents.

This new growth means "higher prices for Charlotte buyers," according to Director of Niner Finances Brad Yeckley.

Yeckley said this growth could be attributed to the post-pandemic.

"Major cities in the northeast have become buyers' markets because so many people are working remotely, they don't want to live in New York or Boston in the winter, so they're moving to Charlotte," said Yeckley.

The average home price in Charlotte is around $400,000, and the average apartment is over $100,000.

"Any graduating senior needs to know, understand and calculate that they shouldn't be spending more than 30-35% of their net income on housing costs."

"If I am offered $100,000 a year, I need to subtract 30% for taxes/deductions, retirement and employee benefits. That leaves me $70,000," Yeckley said. "Then, if I know I can only spend 30% of that on housing, I multiply $70,000 by .3, and that gives me $21,000 for the year, so I divide that by 12, and I know I should not spend more than $1,800-1,900 a month on housing."

Due to the increase in population in Charlotte, there is more of a demand for housing. With this demand, landlords can raise the rent.

"Rents are a little high here because there is a lack of housing. You have all these people moving to Charlotte, who would love to own homes but can't afford homes in the Charlotte area, so they have to rent," said Yeckley. "Right now, rental prices are far exceeding what they would pay for a mortgage."

Although there is a lack of housing, Charlotte's infrastructure is not overbuilt yet, and there is plenty of room for growth, according to Yeckley.

Some of this growth can be seen in areas such as NoDa, Plaza Midwood and Sugar Creek, as these areas are seeing gentrification.

"Gentrification means that there are people coming into neighborhoods that can afford the higher prices," said Yeckley. "Places get marked at higher prices because they know there are buyers, which then resets the tax base for those communities, which means more money comes into those communities but pushes individuals out who want to stay there because they can no longer afford property taxes."

As the Queen City continues to grow and offer opportunities to Charlotte students post-grad, students can stay informed about their options and learn more about financial literacy by visiting the Niner Finances website.



Gentrification in Charlotte | Photo by Jackson Martin

UNC Charlotte hosts Congressional Medal of Honor Q&A session March 24

by James Kmosko
Staff Writer

On Friday, March 24, UNC Charlotte's Veteran Services will host a Q&A session featuring the Congressional Medal of Honor recipients. The session will be held in the Student Union theater at 9 a.m. Check-in will begin at 8:30 a.m.

The Congressional Medal of Honor is the United States' highest military honor, awarded for exceptional bravery and heroic action at risk to the recipient's life.

"This is the most prestigious military award you can get," said Tyler Thomas, program manager of veteran services. "It's very uncommon for people to receive this award and live to tell the tale. It's something the president of the United States bestows directly upon these recipients, so they are well established in the military community for their acts and their service."

Panel members Salvatore Giunta and Kyle Carpenter were each awarded the Medal of Honor for their service in the war in Afghanistan. Giunta rushed into enemy fire to rescue his fallen comrades from death and capture. Carpenter threw himself in front of a grenade to save the life of a fellow marine.

The two will focus on subjects surrounding transitioning out of the military, leadership and mental health struggles that stem from military service.

"It is a very prestigious event," said Thomas. "They're a nationally recognized organization, the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. They're the ones that handle all of the living recipients, public affairs engagements and set up events like this one."

Though the event is not open to the general student population, UNC Charlotte student veterans and ROTC are encouraged to attend. Seating is limited, and preference will be given to military-affiliated students who RSVP.

"I'm a veteran myself and a former [Charlotte] student," said Thomas. "One of the biggest challenges was transitioning out of the military into the civilian world."

"These individuals who received the Medal of Honor have gone through significant challenges and significant setbacks. They've overcome so much in order to receive this recognition," said Thomas. "I think our student veterans stand to gain a lot from that insight and that perspective and have that motivation to take on the challenges they have before them."

A Moment of Magic welcomes volunteers at UNC Charlotte

by Benjamin Greenzaid
Staff Writer

A Moment of Magic (AMOM) is a non-profit organization working to give medically vulnerable children a safe space to engage in social wellness activities to improve their daily lives.

AMOM creates care packages that are delivered by college volunteers dressing in character costumes and visiting these children. Costumes can be popular media characters like superheroes or princesses or original characters that volunteers come up with themselves.

The founder and president of UNC Charlotte's AMOM chapter, Jada Sanchez, said, "There's truly a way for anyone to make a difference. We may just be a small drop in the kid's bucket, but for some kiddos, we may be that entire bucket. AMOM allows the kids to be just that, a kid."

Volunteers can do a variety of tasks within AMOM. If a volunteer does not want to interact with kids directly, they can help put together the bravery bags or fundraise for AMOM. If the volunteer is interested in helping directly with the kids, they can dress up and do either virtual or in-person visits with the children.

A Moment of Magic was founded in 2015 by Kylee McCrane and Margaret McAndrew. As of 2023, AMOM has 1100 student volunteers, with 90 character costumes available.

The Charlotte chapter was established on April 8, 2022, and currently has 25 members.

To become a volunteer, a current Charlotte student must complete an interest form and a membership form, pay a one-time new member fee of $35 that includes a chapter shirt, join the communication app included in an email sent after filling out the interest form and attend the required weekly training.

Members must also pay a $10 annual fee and complete at least 30 volunteer hours with children's hospitals and organizations focusing on children with medical vulnerabilities. They also need to receive their annual COVID vaccinations and flu shots.

All AMOM volunteer meetings occur on Tuesdays from 7 - 8 p.m. in Room 261 of the Popp Martin Student Union.

To help volunteers interact with children, AMOM provides training in Spanish and American Sign Language (ASL).

To learn more about the Charlotte chapter of AMOM, visit their website. To see more of what this chapter does, visit their Instagram page.



Student volunteers with A Moment of Magic | Courtesy of AMOM

Student Government Association election voting on March 21-22

by James Kmosko
Staff Writer


Sophie Tanker (left) & Madi Williams (right) | Courtesy of Williams and Tanker

The Madi Williams and Sophie Tanker ticket intends to improve accessibility for UNC Charlotte students.

Presidential candidate Williams is a third-year accounting and finance major with three years of experience in UNC Charlotte's Student Government Association (SGA). Her running mate is Tanker, a third-year computer science major currently serving as the SGA's parliamentarian.


Joe Wholey (left) & Heber Gamez (right) | Courtesy of Wholey and Gamez

Joe Whole and Heber Game are running for president and vice president on a platform of communication and expanding student resources, using the slogan "results, not rhetoric"

Presidential candidate Whole is a second-year meteorologv major and the SGA's current chair of the academic affairs committee. His running mate Game is a third-vear construction management major serving as the SA's chair of internal affairs.


Isaiah Grayson (left) & Tife Olusesi (right) | Courtesy of Olusesi and Grayson

Tife Olusesi, UNC Charlotte's current student body vice president, is running for Student Body President. His running mate Isaiah Grayson is the Student Government Association (SGA) speaker pro tempore.

Olusesi is a fourth-vear political science major with four years of experience in Charlotte's student government. Grayson also has several years of experience in the SGA. The pair's platform focuses on improving collaboration by creating a presidential advisor board, a cabinet of important student leaders on campus.

The Willow Project will damage the Western Arctic and global climate

by Amna Noyal
Staff Writer

An oil and gas drilling project called the Willow Project was passed by President Joe Biden. Many environmentalists oppose the project because of the environmental and wildlife issues it will create.

The Willow Project would drill down to use petroleum stored on the Alaskan North Slope. This may result in up to 180,000 barrels of oil being produced daily or roughly 1.5% of the nation's daily oil output.

ConocoPhillips Alaska, the company that built the project, has suggested five drilling locations. The United States Bureau of Land Management had previously proposed three locations. The U.S. Interior Department, which is in charge of the bureau, has voiced concerns about both possibilities.

The Biden administration also defended federal Arctic seas against additional oil and gas leasing as part of the decision to authorize Willow. Biden outlined a procedure to protect significant ecological regions in the Western Arctic.

Although these actions are constructive, the damage that the Willow Project would do to the climate and the Western Arctic cannot be reversed.



Oil spilling into water | Graphic by Zoya Zalevskiy

Over 30 years, the Willow Project would emit more than 278 million metric tons of greenhouse gasses. This is nearly equivalent to the total emissions produced during the same time by 2 million passenger cars.

The Trans-Alaska Pipeline System currently carries 499,700 barrels of oil per day on average, a significant decrease from the 2.1 million barrel peak reached in the late 1980s.

In addition to majority consensus support in the North Slope region, there is broad political support in Alaska, including from individuals in positions of authority. Advocates have referred to the project as balanced and claimed that the towns would profit from the taxes it would generate. According to them, these funds would be used to improve the region's infrastructure and offer public services.

The proposal appears to go against Biden's principles, though. Fighting climate change is one of Biden's key priorities. He supported a historic bill that will hasten the development of clean energy sources like wind and solar power and take some of the pressure off the U.S. from its reliance on fossil fuels like oil, coal and gas.

Environmental activists have also expressed serious worries. Opponents are being urged by agencies such as Earthjustice to call the White House and request that the proposal be rejected.

Biden faces the problem of the growing conflict between environmental organizations and Alaskan lawmakers. Democrats in Congress are also eagerly awaiting his decision since they claim the project conflicts with his plans to cut carbon emissions that cause global warming in half by 2030 and switch to clean energy.

Activists claim that sanctioning the project will break Biden's pledge to halt new oil and gas drilling on federal lands during his 2020 presidential campaign. The Willow Project should not be implemented because it is detrimental to the environment and goes against Biden's claimed values.

The popularity of weight loss injections raises concerns over adverse consequences

by Natalie Monson
Staff Writer

The use of semaglutide weight loss injections like Ozempic and Wegovy is rising in popularity. Americans need systemic changes for these treatments to be useful. Otherwise, they could have adverse health and economic consequences.

Ozempic and Wegovy are some of the most popular weight loss injection brands on the market, along with Trulicity and Mounjaro.

Ozempic has been FDA-approved for diabetes treatment, while Wegovy, which is a higher dose of semaglutide, is approved for obesity. Even though Ozempic has not been approved for obesity treatment, doctors still prescribe it for off-label weight loss use.

The injections contain glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists, better known as semaglutide. Semaglutide increases insulin release, which lowers blood sugar and slows the digestive process.

Ozempic and Wegovy rose in popularity at the beginning of 2023, particularly on TikTok and through celebrity endorsements. Elon Musk is one of the most notable celebrities who have admitted to using semaglutide.

In an October 2022 tweet, Musk responded to someone asking him what his secret was because he looked healthy and fit. He replied with two tweets: "Fasting" and "And Wegovy."

This kind of outlook has some professionals worried that promoting weight loss injections could exacerbate negative perceptions around weight and contribute to individuals developing eating disorders.

Another aspect of weight loss injections that concerns professionals is the use pattern. Many individuals use these injections for a short period of time when they are designed to be used over long periods. This means that once an individual stops using semaglutide, they will regain the weight they lost, potentially causing fluctuations in self-image.

Another celebrity who has used weight loss injections is Chelsea Handler, who got prescribed Ozempic because she wanted to lose five pounds. She said that her doctor "hands it out to anybody."

These practices have caused a shortage of Ozempic, damaging those it was designed for: people with diabetes.

Along with the drug shortage, insurance coverage of the treatment varies by state. Some insurance companies refuse to cover Wegovy, labeling it a "vanity drug."

With injectables reaching over $1,300 a month out of pocket, it is important to consider the socioeconomic disparages that could result in insurance not covering these treatments for both diabetics and individuals experiencing obesity.

Obesity disproportionately affects certain groups of people, including Black and Hispanic adults. Without universal healthcare, individuals in these groups might be required to pay for these drugs out of pocket.

However, it is also important to be critical of the pharmaceutical industry after decades of prioritizing profit over health consequences individuals might face. Weight loss drugs are a vital and cost-saving treatment for many individuals, but they should not be viewed as a quick fix for everyone.

Injectables are just one aspect of weight loss treatment, and other methods should be given the attention and funding they deserve. This includes universal healthcare, removing harmful food additives, being more active and prioritizing mental health.

Providing people with a wide range of methods that prevent weight gain and maintain weight loss can mitigate the obesity epidemic and save lives.

Gap years serve as valuable time to recharge

by Veda Bireddy
Contributor

A gap year is the time taken off from school to recharge for academics or reconsider higher education. The time taken off from school is valuable for growing as an individual and deciding what path to take.

There are many reasons that people take gap years or semesters. The most common of which are academic burnout and reevaluation of one's long-term goals. Classes can quickly become stressful, and some students' situations may make college more overwhelming.

It is a common belief that taking a break from school will deter one from making a return. There are many reasons behind this, such as life getting too busy with work, circumstances making it more difficult to have energy for school or changing long-term goals.

However, taking a hiatus from school has many benefits. Positive outcomes of a gap year include feeling refreshed and ready to take on school work, gaining real-world work experience, earning and saving money to continue with higher education, developing a mature mindset towards the future and setting realistic goals.

For many students, the immediate transition from high school to college feels like the only option laid out for them, and many students do not know themselves well enough to decide on what they want to major in.

Taking a gap year can help build individuality and gain important life experiences through activities such as traveling and volunteering. A person may not have time for these activities later down the road.

Moreover, not attending school for a semester or two would allow someone to save money. Instead, they could focus on working. Enrolling in a university can be expensive. Being financially prepared is crucial.

Since it is very common for students to go into college with their majors undecided, it would be more beneficial to learn about themselves first and try new things before making decisions that impact them for the rest of their lives.



A bird's eye view of the UNC Charlotte campus | Courtesy of UNC Charlotte

Employers should overhaul work culture and implement a four-day workweek

by E. Alexander Zimmerman
Staff Writer

The four-day workweek alleviates burnout without harming productivity. Employers should remodel work culture and impose this new schedule for the benefit of their employees and businesses.

The proposal is being tested in the United Kingdom, Sweden and the United States. It seeks to address the concerns of workers who felt burnt out from the demands of their workplace by using a model of four days of work and a fifth day of paid time off.

The benefits of the paid day off with a three-day weekend have been attractive to workers. A study in the U.K. has proven that the three-day weekend successfully addresses these concerns of burnout, with employees reporting feeling more relaxed than before the experiment.

This implementation has been considered and attempted in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. When many Americans were forced to quarantine away from work for unprecedented amounts of time, the problems of those belonging to the "essential workers" category, such as health care and food service workers, became more apparent.

In addition to disproportionately low wages relative to the cost of living and unsafe working conditions, Americans are notoriously overworked. This issue has gotten worse as key industries experience labor shortages. This overworking leads to greater stress, poorer health and marginalized social lives as Americans spend less time for themselves and more on survival.

Despite concerns about destabilizing companies or the economy, this policy change has proven to cause negligible harm to productivity. On the contrary, iterations of this experiment worldwide have consistently reported that workers were able to complete their usual workloads and, in some cases, even more.

Only two of the 41 surveyed companies participating in the U.K.'s 2022 four-day workweek program reported any loss in productivity.

American labor laws must facilitate a universal four-day workweek covering not only white-collar jobs, such as office workers or bankers, but also working-class people. Many service and manual labor jobs in the U.S. do not have the same protections and relative wages as U.K. workers.

The direct blockade in America to the four-day workweek is that many non-salaried workers cannot afford it. In the U.K.'s implementation of this project, the traditional fifth day remained a paid day, which would be necessary for many.

However, tipped positions would still suffer significantly if their allowed hours were capped, given the disproportionately low wages of food service workers.

An additional hindrance to the success of an American version of this program is the differences in the minimum wage. While both systems employ tiered minimum wage systems, the American tiered wage policy allows for positions that take tips, such as waiters and bartenders, to be paid $2.13 an hour.

The United Kingdom's minimum wage is adjusted for inflation annually. It has also increased from the £4.81 ($5.79) entitled to those under 18 to the £9.50 ($11.43) minimum for adults 23 and above.

Although $7.25 – North Carolina's minimum wage – is not a living wage and would require raising to accommodate the four-day work week, it is substantially more than the $2.13 it is currently legal to pay tipped positions. This change would require government subsidy for restaurant owners and extensive planning to implement, but it would allow food service workers to enjoy a four-day workweek without risking their livelihoods.

Even as the unique circumstances of American labor make implementing a four-day workweek difficult, studies have proven the project is worth pursuing. With companies seeing their workforces become more relaxed while generally maintaining and occasionally improving productivity, the policy proves to have a low economic cost.

More important than the potential effect on companies, the four-day workweek allows workers lowered stress levels and greater freedom to explore hobbies, spend time with family or simply take care of themselves.

A new era: Biff Poggi talks all things Charlotte football and expectations for upcoming season

by Bryson Foster
Sports Editor

On Nov. 11, 2022, Francis "Biff" Poggi was named the 49ers' third football head coach.

Poggi was the associate head coach at the University of Michigan for three years, helping the program to two Big Ten Championships and College Football Playoff (CFP) berths.

Poggi started coaching at Saint Frances Academy in Baltimore. He built the school into a national powerhouse and was the center of the HBO documentary "The Cost of Winning." Poggi started his tenure at Charlotte by signing 37 recruits and overhauling the coaching staff.

Poggi sat down with the Niner Times to discuss all things Charlotte football and his expectations for the upcoming season.

Niner Times: How has your time with the team been so far?

Poggi: It has been busy. I have loved every part of it. It is a part of the job to be all over the place. I hope I can do a good job getting the people in the building. I want to give the fans something to cheer for.

NT: What made this job so enticing, and why did you pick Charlotte?

Poggi: This is a young program, and I liked that because a lot of institutional history can be a millstone around your neck. I like fixing things, and this program was broken when I inhabited it. I wouldn't have come if Charlotte was 12-1 every year. I am very excited about the city, and there are a lot of opportunities for our players to receive internships and be integrated into the community. I was excited by the University because it is such a good school, and nobody talks about that enough. Charlotte is the best-kept secret in the Southeast, but we will change that.

NT: You brought in 32 signees during early signing day and finished with 37. What do you hope to get out of this bunch?

Poggi: First, I want the kids to have a great experience and integrate into the University. I did not leave the University of Michigan not to win the American Conference, which we built our recruiting class around. We play a tough schedule, and the conference has great teams. It is a terrific conference and a tall order, but we have those expectations. I wanted the best players.

NT: How do you sell the program to recruits?

Poggi: In 2024, the winner of the American will be in the playoff with the expanded format. The goal for every team is to make the CFP [College Football Playoff], and we are in a conference where if you win, you will go. We are going from a power five to a power six. You aren't getting to the CFP unless you win your conference. With Charlotte going into the American, if you are within 90 minutes of this place, you can stay home and have a chance to



Biff Poggi during his introductory press conference | Courtesy of Charlotte Athletics

go to the CFP. Your family will watch you play every weekend, and players can become a legend in their hometowns. You can join a movement to make a college football powerhouse in Charlotte.

NT: What are your overall thoughts on the schedule and move to the new conference?

Poggi: It is a big step up, but we have many Power Five players here who are used to that competition. The American is a great football league, and it is appropriately named. It is American football, and there are a lot of outstanding teams in it. These programs have been at it a long time and play the game the right way. There are a lot of great coaches and players, which is super exciting. We are excited to go down to Gainsville and College Park. I hope to win those games because we aren't going there to lose. We think our team matches up well. We want to play these games. We expect to win every game we play. Our coaches and players expect it, and the fans should expect it too.

NT: It is probably too early, but who do you expect to be the starting quarterback?

Poggi: It is way too early for us to know. The quarterback position is a complete meritocracy and based on merit. Those that play the best in spring practice and training camp will get to play. You use three running backs in a game, so I am not afraid to play 3-4 quarterbacks, especially if they do certain things well. Having a plethora of quarterbacks makes it hard for other teams to prepare for us.

NT: I am sure you know of the defensive struggles last season, but what is your game plan to correct the negative trends from a year ago?

Poggi: We will be elite on defense.

NT: You've made new hires for many positions in your coaching staff. How will these additions help?

Poggi: Our players are blessed to have this group coaching them. I wouldn't have hired this staff if they weren't good people. They really care about these young men. I am so impressed with this staff; it is an excellent group.

NT: You are coined as an architect; what do you hope to build here in Charlotte?

Poggi: I want to build a national football power that cares for its players by providing them with an excellent education and opportunities in the business world. This place is very special to me, and I want to do the best job I have ever done. I want to build a platform of excellence that lasts after I am gone.



Charlotte Football Coach Biff Poggi and Athletic Director Mike Hill | Courtesy of Charlotte Athletics

Charlotte track and field sprinter Ta-Halia Fairman pushes herself to further succeed

by Cedric Baker
Intern

Charlotte women's track and field fourth-year junior Ta-Halia Fairman has grown as a player and leader for the team.

The junior won multiple state championships in high school and finished No. 1 at the Conference USA Track & Field Championships during the 2021-2022 indoor season.

"There's always something left on the table; the job's never done. For this year, I have some specific goals that I want to reach, but with the help of my team and my coach, we're definitely able to obtain those goals," said Fairman.

Early life

Fairman was born and grew up in Manchester, Jamaica. Her Jamaican roots bore an early start to her track and field path.

"Growing up, [running is] the first thing when you come out of the womb," said Fairman.

Inspiration

Fairman has always been persistent in doing something despite how hard it can be.

"My biggest inspiration is the quote I live by 'perseverance conquers everything,'" said Fairman. "Also, your attitude determines your altitude. So keep that in mind and where I've come from. From the family struggles to where we are now, continuing to try and excel and also reach as high of a mark that I can."



Ta-Halia Fairman in the 2020 Conference USA Championships | Courtesy of Charlotte Athletics

Becoming a leader

Among the coaching staff and fellow teammates, Fairman is viewed as one of the team's leaders.

"Every day we come to practice, I try to push the warm-up, try to get us in the best shape that we can be to tackle the workout, and try to be a positive image for my teammates," said Fairman. "I try not to let them see me kind of down on the bad days, but just being an overall good role model for the younger."

Fairman said that is what separates the good from the great.

Preparation for the season

Coming off of a strong outdoor season despite some adversity during the indoor season, Fairman has big expectations for what's to come this season.

"My biggest challenge is coming off of having such a great outdoor season and trying to replicate that or even do better for this coming outdoor season," said Fairman. "Indoor was a little bit difficult for me because I had some adversity that came up, but trying to overcome those adversities and push myself to be even better than I was last year."

This is the ultimate goal for Fairman and her teammates, to go out and be the best version of themselves.

49er Classic

When asked about the 49er Classic being hosted at Charlotte from March 16-18, Fairman said it is a time to put on a show for fans.

"We only have two meets here per year. So it allows us to have everybody from Charlotte come in and let the whole school know that hey, 'we're here and just come out to support,'" said Fairman.

In the 49er Classic, Fairman finished closely behind Charlotte's Joyasia Smith at No. 2 with a time of 11.66 on the first day. In the women's 4x400m on day two, the team of Fairman, Smith, Aniya Matthews and Maya Singletary set a facility record in their win. Their time of 3:37.26 broke the previous record that had stood since 2012.

CLT
CHARLOTTE 49ERS SCOREBOARD

RECENT GAMES
MARCH 12 - MARCH 19

MEN'S BASKETBALL

March 18:
Charlotte 65, Western Carolina 56
(In the CBI tournament)

BASEBALL

March 14:
No. 18 North Carolina 16, Charlotte 3

March 17:
Louisiana Tech 2, Charlotte 1

March 18:
Charlotte 14, Louisiana Tech 6

March 19:
Charlotte 9, Louisiana Tech 0

SOFTBALL

March 15:
No. 4 Clemson 9, Charlotte 1

March 17:
Charlotte 8, FAU 2

March 18:
FAU 4, Charlotte 0

March 18:
Charlotte 3, FAU 2

UPCOMING GAMES

Men's Basketball:
Vs. Stetson/Milwaukee on Monday, March 20, in the CBI tournament at 6:30 p.m.

Baseball:
Vs. South Carolina on Tuesday, March 21, at Truist Field at 6:05 p.m.

Softball:
@ Virginia Tech on Wednesday, March 22 at 5 p.m.

Charlotte men's basketball great Byron Dinkins remains at University as director of player development

by Juwan Watson
Staff Writer

Byron Dinkins, a former collegiate and professional athlete, is now a Charlotte men's basketball coaching staff member. As director of player development, Dinkins plays a crucial role in the players' success on and off the court.

Playing career

Dinkins played for the Charlotte men's basketball team from 1985-89. During his career, Dinkins scored 1,657 points, with 513 career assists and 137 three-pointers.

He was named Sun Belt Player of the Year in 1988. Dinkins is one of two 49ers to earn the honor.

After playing at Charlotte, Dinkins went pro and played two seasons in the NBA. He started his career with the Houston Rockets during the 1989-90 season and split time between the San Antonio Spurs and Indiana Pacers in 1990-91.

A leader of men

Dinkins started coaching in 2010 at the Northside Christian Academy and then moved to Carmel Christian School in 2016. He had a coaching record of 210-30 with four North Carolina state championships.

Dinkins said his role as a director of player development consists of various things.

"My role involves on-court stuff with basketball and off-court stuff with classes and life. It is meant to develop them as people and young men," said Dinkins.

Dinkins graduated with a degree in human services and said it has helped him succeed in his coaching career.

"Human services and public relations had me dealing with kids," said Dinkins. "I was kind of heading that way towards education, so it helped me to communicate, and I like dealing with young people and helping them develop and understand future goals and roles."

Dinkins said the main thing he tells players about navigating the student-athlete experience is to roll with the punches.

"It is a fine line, and you asked to do a lot as an athlete. You spend a lot of your time in the gym and the weight room getting ready to go through a season. During the season, you have classes and study hall, so it can be tough, but I tell them all the time it can be done and has been done."

In his fourth season as the director of player development, Dinkins said he is homegrown and representing the city and university is unbelievable.

"I am a hometown kid born and raised. Just to come back and see the next generation and impart some wisdom and things I've learned over my career into them is a joy," said Dinkins.

Hall of fame inductee

Dinkins is one of eight players with their jersey hanging in the rafters of Halton Arena. On Oct. 20, 2022, Dinkins was announced as a member of the second class in the Charlotte Athletics Hall of Fame.

Athletic Director Mike Hill honored Dinkins for his work and achievements in front of the men's basketball team at the end of practice. Dinkins said the induction caught him by surprise.

"I wondered where he [Hill] was going with his speech. And then he said we want to welcome you into the second class Hall of Fame players at Charlotte," said Dinkins. "It's just an overwhelming feeling. I'm grateful, blessed, honored and humbled."

Dinkins will be inducted in the fall of 2023 alongside his former coach, Jeff Mullins, and teammate, Henry Williams.



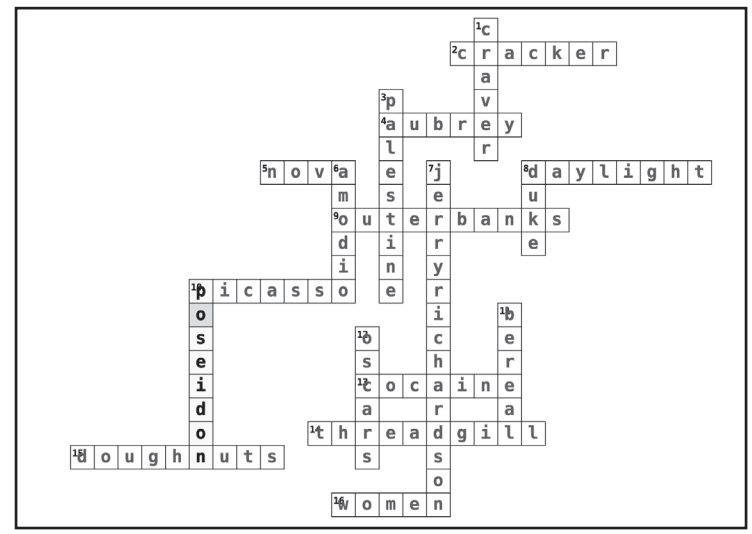
Charlotte's Byron Dinkins on the sideline in 2020 | Niner Times file photo

CHECK THE NEXT ISSUE (4/4) FOR THE ANSWERS TO THIS WEEK'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU!

NINER TIMES SUDOKU

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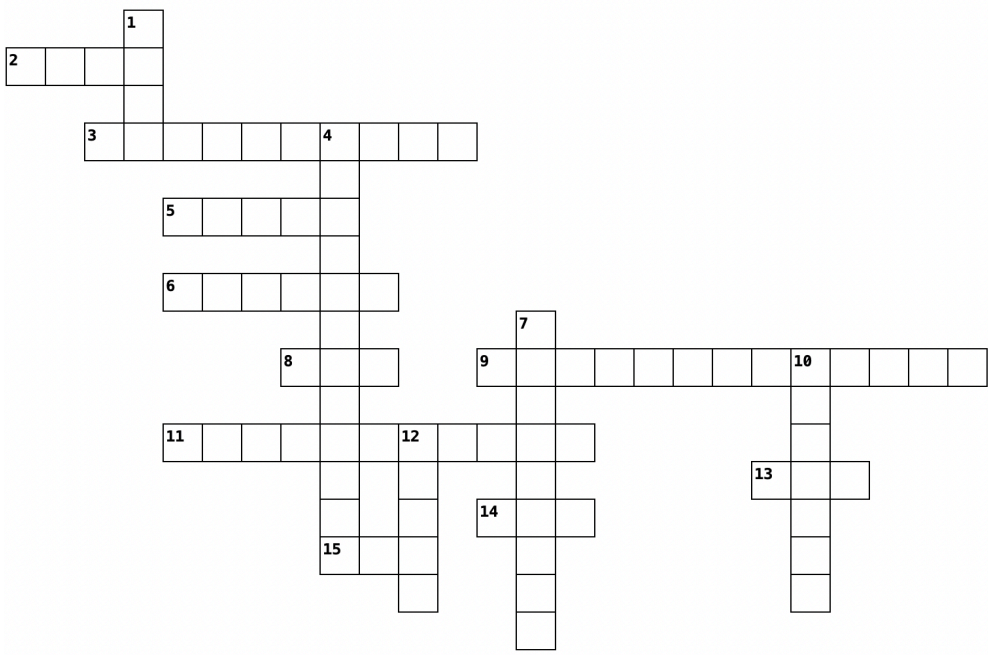
3/7 ISSUE ANSWERS



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7	2	8	1	4	9	3	6	5
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2	8	1	7	9	5	6	3	4
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DID YOU KNOW?

THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS ARE THE SALAMANDER CAPITAL OF THE WORLD. IT HAS MORE SALAMANDER SPECIES IN THE REGION THAN ANY OTHER PLACE ON EARTH.



NINER TIMES CROSSWORD

Down

1. Number of days for shortened workweek in bill reintroduced to congress
4. Movie series that Ke Huy Quan first acted in
7. Third head coach of Charlotte football
10. Team that Charlotte FC beat for first win of season
12. Most recent production of UNC Charlotte Department of Theatre

Across

2. Number of perfect March Madness brackets ever predicted
3. Music festival in Raleigh, NC from April 1-2
5. Name of disease that resulted in UNC Charlotte's move to online starting March 23, 2020
6. Winner of 2022 March Madness
8. Month that 'Marvel: Universe of Superheros' exhibit opens in Charlotte
9. An oil development project by ConocoPhillips located on the plain of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska
11. Singer who broke record for highest attended concert for a female artist
13. New Zealand actor, _ Niel, known for star role in Jurassic Park
14. American psychological thriller television series that recently released season four
15. Abbreviation of organization that released investigative bill on Lockdown Browser

Humans of UNC Charlotte: Sydney Carmer creates and curates art on campus

by E. Alexander Zimmerman
Staff Writer

Sydney Carmer is a third-year digital media major standing amongst the guests of a reception for a gallery that she has curated. She never expected to be here. A digital artist by education and trade, Carmer always saw herself heading toward commercial art and marketing. "That's always been my expectation, especially because I'm usually less of a fine artist."

Carmer's mentality is something that they honestly lives by. Her father was a double major in computer science and art, hedging his bets between what he loved and what could be a solid career path. Although she sees this as an influence on her journey, her parents have supported her diverging path.

"I'm very lucky to have very supportive parents; they help me pay for the paint," said Carmer. "My brother majored in computer science, and I majored in art; it makes him super proud."

Carmer's gallery, "Desensitized," and the curated work felt more at home in the fine art world, dealing with the difficult realities of a culture overexposed to violence and made up of a wide variety of bold styles. Born from the final project from their figure drawing class, her professor pushed her to take the next step and organize a show. Having taken that step, the world of fine art came to look far more accessible.

As she studied the work of other artists, she found her horizons broadened after engaging with different art disciplines. Through the University's arts program, Carmer found inspiration in places they would not have had on their own.

"Fortunately, I have a lot of experience with interdisciplinary classes and collaboration. I took collaboration in the arts with other kids from other disciplines," they said. "We did a lot of experimental things and performance-based artwork that I would never have done on my own. I feel like just doing one thing is boring; art overlaps in many areas."

The University's College of Arts + Architecture's annual trip to New York City is something that Carmer sees as formative toward their appreciation for other art forms.

We went to art museums like The Met and saw a Broadway musical. We went to the Martha Graham Dance school and got to sit in on a special dance class," said Carmer. "It was really interesting to watch."

Even as she had learned to appreciate other art forms, putting together her own gallery was a struggle. In addition to navigating their school schedule and the logistical details of the gallery, Carmer found organizing the work of others to be a unique struggle.

"I learned you have to have faith in other people when collaborating, which is scary because I'm such a control freak," said Carmer. "But it also allows me to do things I'd never do alone. It involved a lot of coordinating everyone."

The gallery itself was a triumph. On the night of the reception, excited viewers filled the room, and the artists stood with their work in the light of the public eye. The crowd was steady through the night; students, staff and parents entered just as soon as others left.

From the colored pencil drawings of decaying organs to the window pane dotted with bullet holes and bloodstains, Carmer's work successfully challenged their viewers' perceptions. The detailed process of organizing six separate artists and their work proved worth its while as viewers were awed and disturbed all at once. The work presented in the gallery is dense with themes and the subjectivity of its artists.

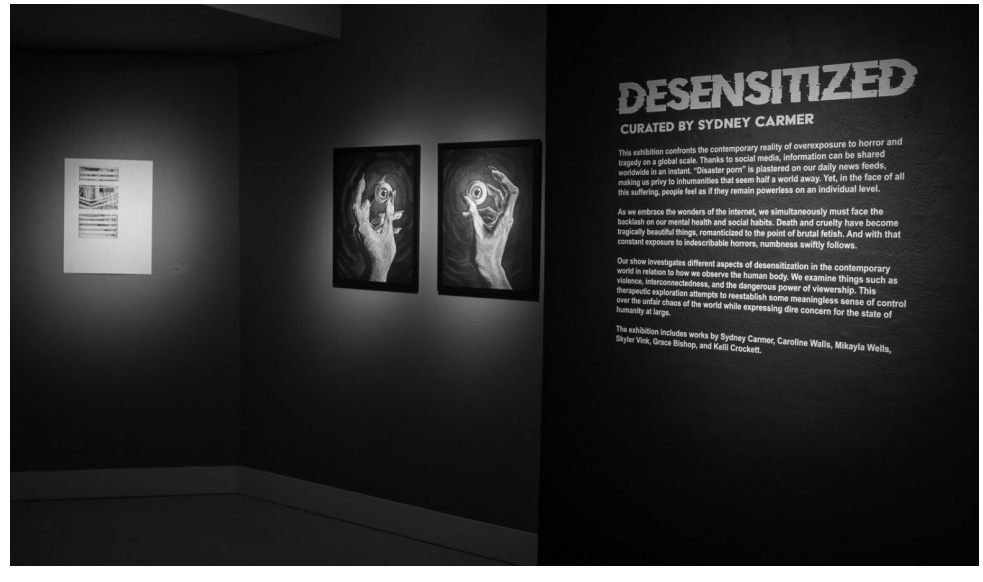
As an artist, Carmer has an apparent talent for creating meaningful and disruptive art. As a curator, they can see those same qualities in the work of others. Although she may not have initially had fine art in the forefront of her consciousness, her eye and her heart for it could not be more apparent.

As both a curator and an artist, Carmer ironically finds themself in this same position. She finds her understanding of the world and her work disrupted by taking in the art and the event she put together. A commercial artist by expectation and education, they has now entered the world of fine art and finds themself staring down the path ahead.

Carmer's "Desensitized" gallery is open until March 24 in Rowe's side gallery from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Carmer in front of her work, 'Disconnected' and 'Desensitized' Exhibit | Courtesy of Sydney Carmer



Charlotte's Department of Theatre puts on 'Sweat' play

Lola Oliverio
by Asst. Opinion Editor

UNC Charlotte's Department of Theatre hosted the production of the Pulitzer Prize-winning play "Sweat" from March 16-19 at the Anne R. Belk Theater. The play tells the story of a group of family friends in Reading, Pa., whose experiences are greatly and irreversibly impacted by a bar fight following tensions brought upon by economic hardship.

The play begins with Jason's (Elijah Hensley) and Chris' (Eljae Roe) individual parole meetings with their shared parole officer. Both young men are fresh out of jail but have strikingly different attitudes regarding their next steps. Jason, a young white man, dons face tattoos and shouts racial slurs at his Black parole officer. Chris wears a suit and tie and appears remorseful. It is heavily implied that the two men committed the crime together.

Next, we meet nearly the entire remainder of the cast: Cynthia (Jada Dozier), Tracy (Marina Faillace) and Jessie (Kiana Vazquetelles), all of whom work at the local manufacturing plant. The bartender, Stan (Rayden Leeder), appears to be part of their loosely-defined friend group. Through dialogue, we learn that Cynthia and Brucie (Kobi Selby) are Chris' parents, and Tracy is Jason's mother. Towards the middle of the first act, the three women discuss a potential promotion at work. When Cynthia earns the position, Tracy becomes bitter and resentful. The first act ends with the revelation that the warehouse has shipped away several machines, indicating that the plant is preparing for layoffs.

The second act mainly focuses on the fallout from the machine fiasco. Furious that Cynthia did not warn them, the rest of the group begins interrogating her, even though she asserts she had no forewarning.

The interaction causes an irreparable rift between the cast; tensions are high. This clearly stems from Cynthia's friends' resentment of her cushy job and mistreatment from the higher-ups at the warehouse.

The play's climax involves a bar fight instigated by Jason after the gang finds out that Oscar (Julio Hernandez), the bar's busboy, plans on becoming a "scab," or a temporary worker brought in when a union strikes. Chris repeatedly tries to calm Jason down, but his mother eggs him on until he breaks. Finally, a violent brawl breaks out, ending with Stan receiving an accidental traumatic brain injury. As Jason and Chris flee, the fight reveals that this sent them both to jail.



Photo of the performance of 'Sweat' | Photo by Cairo Smith

The production cuts back and forth between two different parts of the early 2000s, presumably before the young men have gone to jail and after they have been released. In between each scene, news recordings are played while the tech crew strikes and prepares the next part of the play. These recordings overlap and can feel overwhelming, which reflects the stressful and exhausting nature of the economic climate at the time.

The play ends with Oscar in charge of the bar, looking after Stan, who is now severely mentally disabled from his accident. Chris and Jason run into each other at the bar, hardened from their time in prison.

"Sweat" was an impactful production and reflected the tension the working class felt during economic hardship in the early 21st century. The play takes place in the aftermath of the 1994 passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which cost hundreds of thousands of workers their manufacturing jobs. It shows how money–or lack thereof–can override morality and turn people against one another if pushed far enough. Though the story is fictional, it was based on multiple interviews and conversations Nottage had with residents of Reading and displayed the authentic struggles of those in Pennsylvania's poorest town.

The story sheds light on the often-forgotten cyclical nature of poverty in America. The families in the play struggled for years, yet none of them ever made it out of Reading, Pa. Right before the end of Act II, Jessie has a monologue about her past dreams of traveling the world. Still, when asked why she never followed through, she states that she began working at the manufacturing plant, fell in love with a man working there and ended up staying in Reading, Pa.

"Sweat" quickly oscillates between comedy and drama with ease and paints a realistic picture of the turmoil that the manufacturing industry went through after the passage of NAFTA.

DEAR NINER TIMES, What are some ways that I can succeed in class?

by Amna Noyal
Staff Writer

Spring semester can be challenging for many students; the term is short, and the classes are fast-paced. Summer is approaching, and motivation may be low. Here are some ways to succeed in class and bring that motivation up.

Wake up early and turn off any electronics

Many college students are guilty of picking up their phones when they wake up. Phones can increase productivity and quality of life but can be a significant source of stress and distraction, particularly first thing in the morning.

Try to wake up and establish a morning routine to start the day earlier. Self-care activities such as making the bed, eating a healthy breakfast, exercising or journaling can help start the day on the right foot and increase happiness and productivity.

Go to class and take notes

Attending a lecture or class can seem like a chore, especially if it is a long lecture with a slow, monotone professor. However, it is worth participating in class to build on prior reading and studying. Going to class allows students to ask questions and practice active listening. Make a note of crucial keywords the lecturer highlights on lecture slides. Finally, these times are great for filling in informational gaps outside class.

Try new study techniques

Studying can be exhausting, and it is easy to lose motivation and procrastinate. However, when done correctly, studying can be productive and fun.

Try the Pomodoro study method, which involves setting aside a specific activity to complete in a set amount of time. Then, divide that time into two segments: breaks and studying, alternating until the time ends. This method distributes the information and can reduce the likelihood of burnout.

Go to a professor's office hours

While many professors offer office hours, students tend to ignore them despite the fact they are great opportunities to take advantage of. Office hours allow students to get to know their professors and help them land a job or research opportunity.

If a student is having difficulty in class, office hours serve as an opportunity to speak with a professor about problems. Then, depending on the professor, a student may receive professional advice on their degree or career path.

Set up a goal and reward system

Setting goals, whether they are short-term or long-term, can help students perform better in college courses. In addition, effective goal-setting helps students plan and offers motivation to finish schoolwork.

Once the goal has been achieved, a small reward can either involve treating yourself to a lunch and dessert or buying something for yourself.

Dreamville Festival returns to Raleigh

by Jess Danesi
Opinion Editor

The annual Dreamville Festival comes to Raleigh, N.C., at Dorothea Dix Park on April 1-2. Established by rapper J. Cole, the outdoor music festival features rhythm and blues, rap and hip-hop artists.

The headlining artist on April 1 is Usher, while the headliners on April 2 are J. Cole and Drake. An additional headlining set appears on Sunday with Burna Boy.

Other famous artists will perform at the festival, such as Summer Walker, City Girls, Sean Paul and Waka Flocka Flame. Those attending can expect the performers' new releases and older classics.

This year's Dreamville Festival presents artists specializing in numerous genres, catering to multiple audiences. Those attending can expect excited crowds of fans, passionate performances and plenty of merchandise for sale.

Though tickets are sold out, those hoping to attend can join a waitlist to be notified of available spots. However, people on the waitlist are not guaranteed a ticket; they save themselves a place in line if someone relinquishes their ticket.

General admission tickets start at $299.99, while VIP options begin at $1,499.99. The festival doors will open at 12:30 p.m.

In addition, parking is $50 per day. Alternatively, guests can take a shuttle to the festival for $20 daily.

The Dreamville website has links to available hotel accommodations in the area.

The festival is Black-owned and prioritizes inclusivity, unity and diversity in the musical community and beyond. Through this, the organizers hope to create a valuable experience for all kinds of fans.

J. Cole, a hip-hop artist raised in Fayetteville, aims to uplift the North Carolinian community that has been a home to him. He and his team have worked to give back to the place that inspired him and fostered his creativity.

The first Dreamville Festival was held in 2018 and has become one of the most significant annual music events in North Carolina.



2022 Dreamville Festival | Courtesy of Greg Noire (@gregnoire)

It is also one of the most popular artist-led music festivals on a global scale. This gives the musicians more freedom than if the event were organized exclusively by a label or company.

TV review: 'You' season 4

by Haywood Hayes
Staff Writer

Warning: This article contains major spoilers.

Netflix's "You" season four has officially released all episodes. Part one was released on Feb. 9, and part two arrived on March 9. Joe Goldberg returns unchanged, continuing his murderous acts.

Season four opens with Joe (Penn Badgley) now living in London. He has taken on a new persona: Jonathan Moore, a professor of literature at Darcy College. Jonathan befriends a colleague, Malcolm (Stephen Hagan). He is invited to a soirée where he meets the upper class of London, notably Lady Phoebe (Tilly Keeper), Adam Pratt (Lukas Gage) and Roald Walker-Burton (Ben Wiggins). After a drunken night, Malcolm takes Jonathan home, where he falls asleep on the couch. When Jonathan wakes up, he finds Malcolm with a knife in his chest on his kitchen table. Jonathan disposes of Malcolm's body but learns that the Eat-The-Rich-Killer is stalking him.

The Eat-The-Rich-Killer murdered Malcolm and continues to murder members of Jonathan's newly wealthy friends one by one. When Jonathan uncovers the identity of the murderer, he is shocked to find that they were within him, Joe Goldberg.



'You' season 4 | Courtesy of USA Today

Joe has two personalities. In part one, Jonathan is searching for the killer, but part two reveals that Joe is the killer.

The writers leave a clue about the two personalities throughout the season. The key to the cage, where Marienne (Tati Gabrielle) is, lies hidden in the classic book "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," which explores the duality of man's nature: good versus evil.

But this is the only clue in the entire season. Unfortunately, the writers instead employ distractions. If the writers wanted the season to follow a whodunit storyline, they should have incorporated more clues.

I want to play a role in finding the killer, helping the detective track down clues, connect the dots and bring everyone to a room where the killer is revealed. I wanted to be involved in the show, but the writers never allowed me that opportunity. Instead, everything is uncovered in episodes eight and nine without much setup.

Part one came across as a distraction from the events revealed in part two. After episode seven, I was shocked to see the actual storyline unveiled. Jonathan begins to learn that he is Joe but does not remember.

He switches between who he wants to be (Jonathan) and who he is (Joe). Jonathan embodies Joe's desired reality: normalcy. But since Joe cannot heal from past traumas, he will always be a murderer obsessed over who he loves.

Because of this, he continues to kill people over a love interest. Season four's Kate Galvin (Charlotte Ritchie) is his new love interest, and Joe lines up bodies for Kate, including Kate's father, Tom Lockwood (Greg Kinnear). Tom leaves his fortune to Kate, and she takes Joe to her new realm of power.

This season did an excellent job with suspense when revealing it was Joe all along. But Joe never grows as a character. If Joe does not accept that he is obsessive and needs help, he will continue to kill those he loves.

If this continues, the show's creators will only be able to keep audience members engaged with suspenseful moments.

Overall, season four was a rollercoaster ride of emotions, dropping, twisting and spinning the audience in every direction with Joe's murderous acts. If this show continues, Joe must grow and be held responsible for his actions.

Rating: 5/10

Charlotte celebrates St. Patrick's Day

Photos by Miguel Sanchez-Nuñez

The Charlotte St. Patrick's Day Parade took place in Uptown Charlotte on March 11. The parade took place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and the festival took place from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The parade passed through Uptown on Tryon Street and ended its route at the festival location near The Mint Museum. The festival featured many participants enjoying music, dancing and drinking. This is the first St. Patrick's Day parade since 2020 due to COVID-19 cancellations.

















