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WVU's Independent Student Newspaper WEDNESDAY APRIL 26, 2023 www.thedaonline.com

WVU raises apartment rates for second year

Pre-pandemic trend reemerges following two-year rent freeze

BY NICK JOHNSON
STAFF WRITER

West Virginia University Apartments is raising its rent for the second year in a row, matching a pre-pandemic trend.

Although prices remained stagnant from spring 2020 to 2022, students witnessed increased apartment rates in the years before, according to data provided by WVU Director of News Communications Shauna Johnson.

Now, many rates are once again being raised.

Gary Furbee, deputy general counsel and executive director of Real Estate Operations, has been following the trend of University Apartment rates since 2020 when he moved into his current position.

"Each apartment is sort of under its own management team. All of them report up through me through real estate," he said in an interview with The Daily Athenaeum.

Furbee said University Apartments aims to increase rates by about 3% each year, although the amount raised varies depending on the location and type of room. The most expensive lease type, such as a single-bedroom unit, might not increase as much as the least expensive apartment type, like a four-bedroom unit.

Furbee said he and the apartment management team put together a price sheet each year to determine the most reasonable increase. Although there is some variance, he said the targeted 3% raise each year is based off of the market and rising expenses.

Rent for a two-bedroom/two-bathroom apartment at College Park increased from $749 per month during the 2022-2023 leasing year to $771 for

See **Rent** page 3

PHOTO BY TYLER PRUSINA

University Place is located at 2161 University Ave. on the Downtown campus.

University makes test-optional policy permanent

BY SAVANNAH JONES
STAFF WRITER

West Virginia University announced in a press release Monday that it will be moving to test-optional admissions permanently.

WVU is the first university in West Virginia to adopt the admissions policy permanently, following a multitude of institutions across the country.

"WVU is a leader in providing students with new choices when it comes to college and, with this permanent test-optional move, joins the growing number of institutions nationwide that are taking this approach to college admissions," George Zimmerman, assistant vice president for Enrollment Management, said in the press release.

This policy has been in place temporarily since fall 2020 due to challenges brought on by the pandemic, but after three renewals to help ease admissions-related stress, the policy's permanence has been approved by the WVU Board of Governors.

"Students have been embracing test-optional admissions processes as part of their college searches since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and, going forward, we have an obligation to remove any barriers that may deter those interested in higher education," Zimmerman said.

The policy was initially put in place to account for pandemic restrictions that kept students from taking the ACT and SAT. Additionally, it helped students feel "more in control" of the admissions process, according to Zimmerman.

He said this also contributed to the move from temporary to permanent.

While students are still encouraged to submit test scores if possible, according to WVU admissions, most programs will not require them.

The School of Dentistry and The School of Pharmacy are among the few that still encourage students to submit test scores for direct admission to their programs.

Students lacking test scores who do not meet program requirements, however, will still be eligible for admission to the Center for Learning, Advising, and Student Success. The programs aims to assist students on the undecided pathway and those who have not yet met the requirements for pre-professional degree programs.

Additionally, the University will continue to offer test-optional scholarships, such as the Go First Scholarship, for those students who take advantage of the new policy. The Promise Scholarship, the Scholarship of Distinction and some other institutional scholarships, however, will still require students to submit ACT or SAT test scores.

To find out more about scholarship and program requirements, visit Undergraduate Admissions.

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THURSDAY 04/27
PARTLY CLOUDY
HIGH 70° - LOW 53°

FRIDAY 04/28
RAIN
HIGH 60° - LOW 52°

SATURDAY 04/29
SCATTERED SHOWERS
HIGH 64° - LOW 50°

CRIME REPORT

POLICE LINE ▪ DO NOT CROSS ▪ POLICE LINE ▪ DO NOT CROSS ▪ POLICE LINE ▪ DO NOT CROSS ▪ POLICE LINE

Apr. 22
5:11 P.M. | Investigating
Boreman North
Harassment.

Apr. XX
5:49 P.M. | Resolved
Mountainlair
Suspicious Person.

Apr. 22
7:00 P.M. | Inactive
1 Waterfront Place
Destruction of Property.

Apr. 22
11:24 P.M. | Resolved
Newton Ave.
Prop Alarm.

Apr. 23
1:12 A.M. | Warning
North High St.
Public Intoxication.

Apr. 23
1:52 X.M. | Warning
Dadisman Hall
ABCC Violation.

Apr. 23
2:03 A.M. | Inactive
Summit Hall
Talk with Officer.

Apr. 23
4:51 P.M. | Resolved
Student Health Building
Panic Alarm.

Apr. 23
7:34 P.M. | Resolved
WVU Physical Plant House
Suspicious Event.

The DA is student-run and editorially independent from West Virginia University. All content decisions in the DA are made by students without prior review by the University.

SOCIAL MEDIA MOMENTS

dailyathenaeum

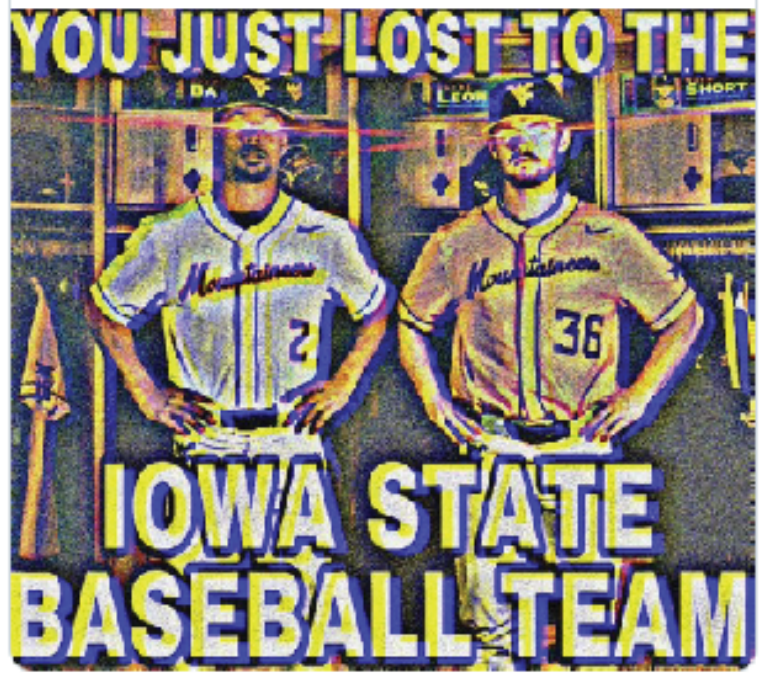
WVU Mountaineers @WestVirginiaU - Apr 22

It's Mikel's first day - what better person to help than our 68th Mountaineer, Mary?

2 12 230 11.6K

WVU Barstool @WVUBarstool - Apr 22

Replying to @TCU_Baseball



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The Daily Athenaeum strives for accuracy and fairness in the reporting of news. If a report is wrong or misleading a request for a correction or a clarification may be made.

Did you know the DA is editorially Independent from the University?

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WVU's INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER

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WVU hires ombudsperson amid concerns from graduate students

BY SAVANNAH JONES
STAFF WRITER

West Virginia University's Office of the Provost has appointed Professor Kayla Follmer as the first graduate student ombudsperson amid continued concerns from graduate students.

As the ombudsperson, Follmer will serve as an "impartial third party" for graduate students.

"I don't really have any authority or any investigation power or anything like that, so I'm not a representative for one side or the other. I'm just a neutral party to help students work through challenges or conflicts that they're having in their roles at WVU," Follmer said.

The University's Academic Transformation project, which focuses on student success and the health of degree programs, contributed to this new hire, according to a University press release.

Associate Provost for Graduate Academic Affairs Richard Thomas suggested that the University create the ombudsperson position last fall to provide graduate students with an outlet to discuss issues they may be facing within their programs.

"Grad students are a little different than undergrads in that they're working with faculty, and so faculty and grad students are dependent on each other every day," Thomas said. "When a conflict happens between a grad student and a principal investigator, advisor, department or their program, students really may not know what to do or who to go to talk about it or how to resolve that conflict."

Graduate students have also faced many challenges over the past year, such as financial stress, including the new fee for international graduate assistants.

Last semester, more than 70% of graduate workers who responded to a survey sent out by the Graduate and Professional Student Senate reported that they felt unfairly compensated to match their cost of living in Morgantown.

GPSS responded by sending a letter to University Administration asking for solutions. The University has responded to these concerns by raising the minimum stipend for graduate assistants, hiring an additional counselor at the Carruth Center for graduate students and adopting a policy that allows them to take paid time off.

PHOTO COURTESY WVU

Kayla Follmer will serve as the University's first graduate student ombudsperson for the 2023-24 academic year.

According to Provost Maryanne Reed, the University has done what they can to atone for these issues.

"I would argue that as an institution, we've done everything we can at this moment in time to support our grad students ... ," Reed said at the State of University Address in March. "But you saw, we have limited resources. It's not a matter of will. It's a matter of ability to meet those challenges."

The ombudsperson position is included in these efforts, according to Thomas.

Follmer's background and demeanor made her a contender for the job, according to Thomas.

"She basically understands the way in which individuals have unique ways of experiencing their workplace, their lab, their department, and, quite frankly, she's really easy to talk to." Thomas said. "I think students really have an easy time discussing those kinds of issues with her."

These qualities are important, as the ombudsperson's purpose is to help graduate students make important career decisions and maneuver through conflicts, according to Follmer.

"My role is to help them outline some decision-making options that they have, to help inform them about university policy and procedures and to talk through different pathways they might pursue," Follmer said.

She said that her Ph.D. in Industrial Organizational Psychology makes her well suited for the position.

"I'm really invested in student well-being, and I found in my role as a faculty member that students often come to me anyway, kind of informally, to ask my opinion or to seek advice," Follmer said. "I think I've tried to really work hard to create a culture of inclusion that's a safe psychological space for students, and so this seemed to me like an opportunity to leverage that skill set on a larger scale."

According to Thomas, the ombudsperson will help resolve issues that affect student productivity and mental health.

Although the new position was not created in response to the University's ongoing budget crisis and declining enrollment, Thomas hopes that it will serve as an aid in student retention.

"Hopefully, [the ombudsperson] will keep them in the program going towards graduation with that being the ultimate goal," he said.

According to the press release, Follmer will begin her three-year term in fall 2023.

"I've already gotten several emails from students, and I'm so excited to really get started in this position," Follmer said.

Rent

Continued from page 1

the 2023-24 academic year. The same apartment type at Vandalia increased from $659 per month to $695.

The maximum rate per bedroom type is set by the WVU Board of Governors when tuition and fees are approved, according to Johnson.

Some causes of the increased rent are the city's recent rise in fire service fees, the cutting of costs or services and inflation in utility prices, Furbee said.

"Each property has a budget that is contained, meaning the revenue we generate off of that property pays for the expenses associated with that property," Furbee said. "So for example, if the cost of a painter goes up in those apartments, we have to accommodate that request ... And that usually means an increase in revenue or cost."

Although the University is facing a budget deficit, Furbee said there is no correlation between it and increasing University Apartment rates.

"Going back to the four communities, each of those are treated as an auxiliary component of the University, and so each one of those essentially has to be self-supporting," Furbee said. "So what you may see happening on tuition and things of that sort really do not impact the apartments themselves."

Although the University Apartment rates increase each year, Furbee said there has been no issue leasing out to students, as the apartments are at 98% capacity for fall 2023. In fact, he said it has been one of the fastest filling leasing years yet.

"For context, we have a little over 1600 beds. We run out by the unit," Furbee said. "So each bedroom is a unit. And so we've got 1600 residents. And I think as of Friday, we might have about 36 beds still available for rent across the four communities."

Since rates have increased, Furbee said he has not received any formal complaints from tenants, students or parents that have renewed their lease with the apartments.

"But the end result is that I think folks understood the situation with costs of just about everything going up. I think it was reasonable and we didn't apply for an unreasonable increase," Furbee said. "If somebody didn't like that rate, they probably looked elsewhere."

While increasing rates may not be a problem for some, other students find it an added financial challenge, especially in light of the rising cost of tuition.

Rachel Irwin, a tenant of College Park, is a self-supported student who is moving to Canvas Townhomes complex in light of the rent increase at University Apartments. She resided at College Park for two years.

"It gets harder to pay for because we already have so much that we have to pay for with tuition, groceries, rent and utilities and all that stuff," Irwin said.

This comes at a time when students are seeing rising costs of tuition and additional fees.

This leasing year, students that renewed their lease before mid-December will be given a discount. For example, College Park residents living in a four-bedroom/four-bathroom who renewed their lease on time only saw their rent raised by a little over 1% instead of the proposed 3%.

PHOTO BY TYLER PRUSINA

Vandalia apartments is located at 49 Falling Run Rd.

Furbee said the discount works as a compromise even with the increased rates.

"Going forward, we will likely still have some sort of an incentive rate for renewals, but it will not be a flat rate," he said.

New finger food restaurant offers late-night options

BY DEVIN ANDERSON
CORRESPONDENT

Downtown Morgantown has a new late-night restaurant serving a wide range of finger foods.

The restaurant of the same name, Finger Foods, located at 363 High St., opened its doors to the public last week after a several month long process of transforming a former barber shop into a fast food business.

Revel Williams Jr., the restaurant's owner, moved to Morgantown when he was in middle school and would later attend West Virginia University. Williams said he wanted to bring good food to the place where he grew up.

"This is a friendly city, a good place to live and do business," he said.

Finger Foods is located in what was formerly "Simple Cuts," which Williams also owned.

Options at the new restaurant range from chicken to seafood. Williams said the restaurant offers bone-in and boneless wings with 11 different sauces, multiple different versions of french fries and other handhelds, including vegan tenders.

The restaurant also has many different sandwich options, including the "De-Best Chicken Sandwich," which Williams said sold out just five days after the store's opening.

"We tried to pretty much carry some of the same stuff that Sheetz or any other mainstream restaurant would," Williams said. "And everything we make is under 10 minutes, so you're not going to be waiting that long."

Williams isn't new to the food industry.

He previously owned and operated the Hilltop Grill in Fairmont, which could seat more than 100 people at a time. However, the restaurant closed in 2018.

PHOTO BY DEVIN ANDERSON

Finger Foods is located at 363 High Street, Morgantown, WV.

With the new fast food restaurant, Williams's goal is to quickly serve late-night customers.

He said the menu is cut down at night to ensure that patrons get the food they want after a night out. The nighttime menu will include crispy wings, boneless wings, tenders and fries.

Williams and his staff of two chefs and a host highlight efficiency as central to the business. There are also two ordering kiosks in the front of the restaurant to assist in this.

"People just want some quick stuff and don't want to wait 20 minutes and order big stuff, people want stuff that's quick," Williams said.

The lunchtime hours are from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and the nighttime hours are 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. Thursday through Saturday.

Finger Foods also offers a loyalty program for customers to sign up for upon checkout where every $50 you spend becomes $5 in rewards.

Finger Foods does take-out as well as delivery through DoorDash or the Toast app.

WVU researchers share new way to screen for domestic violence

BY JESSICA RILEY
CORRESPONDENT

Researchers at West Virginia University have developed a toolkit to change how domestic violence is screened in the medical industry into a more inclusive way for the safety needs of all patients.

The toolkit, which has been in the making for the past seven years, is meant to improve and educate medical professionals on screening for domestic violence. It works as a paper guide on how to perform a proper screening based on the team's research.

Right now, there are several recognized screening tools that guide healthcare providers on how to use psychometric data to determine domestic violence risk in patients.

These guides usually include a list of questions or warning signs in patients, as well as a scale for measuring the level of violence patients have experienced. Healthcare providers will then use that scale to determine steps for intervention.

Researchers, like Associate Professor Danielle Davidov, believe the current way of screening is set up in a way that is not sufficient enough for the safety of domestic violence survivors.

"It operates as something that is briefly screened for, rather than a true universal assessment of a person's safety," Davidov said.

Almost all questions asked during traditional screenings are designed in black and white and can be answered by a simple yes or no, according to Davidov.

She said experiences with domestic violence will not be the same for everyone and can include gray areas, adding that the current screening method used by medical professionals doesn't always account for the diverse backgrounds and varying environments of patients.

For example, the level of intervention one patient needs in their situation might not be the same as another, and this gap could cause some things to be missed in a more limited screening process.

"There is a lot of pressure on health care providers to screen for a lot of different issues. We know that more people that experience domestic violence are seen more in health care than shelters or a criminal justice setting, so it makes sense screening assessment would take place in this environment," Davidov said.

With that in mind, Davidov and her team of researchers want to implement a new way of conducting domestic violence screening through this toolkit.

One of the biggest issues Davidov noticed with previous testing was the disconnect between researchers of domestic violence and those who experience it.

"We learned that there seems to be a disconnect between what researchers are studying related to what patients might want or need when it comes to domestic violence screening compared to what survivors actually want," she said.

The toolkit contains information on how to implement new strategies to combat this.

"We outline and map out our procedures from start to finish on how to explore things that are involved in screening that are important to patients and survivors, not just what is important to researchers," Davidov said.

She said implementing these procedures, which focus on the safety of survivors and how to combat their current situations, will be more beneficial to them.

According to Davidov, part of the research was gathering information from a survivor advisory board, medical professionals and key stakeholders to discuss the current setup for screening patients.

They learned from survivors that they want to feel safe and heard in an environment where they're sharing their situations. This information helped Davidov and her team create a toolkit that restructures the screening process with these considerations.

Davidov said the goal of the toolkit is to map out ways for healthcare providers to assess patients, educate and make referrals, as first reported by the School of Public Health.

Davidov's passion for her research on domestic violence came early on.

"What motivated me to be interested in the topic of intimate partner violence was a situation with a childhood peer, who was in an abusive relationship. I tried to help with the tools I had available at the time, which, looking back, weren't the best," she said.

She explained that as she went through undergraduate and graduate school, she became interested in prevention and intervention opportunities for those at risk of becoming and currently being affected by domestic violence. She also wanted to learn how to prevent young adults from entering abusive relationships and help those currently in them.

"The toolkit is most beneficial for anyone wanting to experience working with survivors," Davidov said.

The toolkit is currently in the works of being published online, where the public or medical professionals can view it. Davidov's team hopes this will attract a desire to change the ways domestic violence screenings are conducted.

According to Davidov, some locations have already begun switching their screening to reflect the toolkit's processes.

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‘It’s been a dream’: Roush passes rifle

BY LARA BONATESTA
CULTURE EDITOR

Friday evening marked both an ending and a beginning as West Virginia University welcomed its newest Mountaineer mascot Mikel Hager and celebrated the closing term of 68th Mountaineer Mary Roush.

“I am so grateful to be the Mountaineer. And it really has been the best year of my life,” Roush said. “The opportunity to serve WVU and the state of West Virginia, it’s been a dream. And I can’t even believe I’m even standing here today.”

At the traditional Passing of the Rifle ceremony hosted by Mountain Honorary, friends, family and former Mountaineer mascots gathered in the Gluck Theater to honor Roush’s accomplishments and offer words of encouragement to Hager.

In addition to Roush and Hager, event speakers included former Mountaineer mascots Mark Boggs (1984), Michael Garcia (2014-15) and Trevor Kiess (2018).

During her tenure, Roush made more than 450 appearances, traveled across the state and visited more than 100 schools.

With tears in her eyes, she recounted some of her favorite memories including visits to the WVU Children’s Hospital, the Mountaineer mascot reunion and singing Country Roads with a child at a soccer game.

“The Mountaineer means absolutely everything to the state of West Virginia,” she said. “Every appearance I went to, somebody wanted to talk to me, somebody wanted my picture. It didn’t matter if they were a young kid, if they were an adult, if they were elderly in a nursing home, it did not matter. They loved the Mountaineer, and they loved me because I was the Mountaineer. Being able to touch lives is something that I’m forever grateful for.”

In her closing remarks, Roush spoke about one of her last appearances at an occupational therapy white coat ceremony.

“One tradition that they did that I thought was really, really awesome is that when they received their white coat. They dedicated their white coat to somebody — whether that be their family, whether it be their friends — maybe it was a relative who passed,” she said.

“And so as I stand here today, I would like to dedicate these buckskins to every single child in West Virginia who has the dream of being the Mountaineer.”

PHOTO BY LARA BONATESTA

68th mascot Mary Roush poses for a photo with incoming Mountaineer Mikel Hager at traditional Passing of the Rifle ceremony on April 21, 2023.

After speaking, Roush officially passed Rifle to Hager marking the beginning of his term. In the following moments Hager shared his excitement for the upcoming year.

“While, I know there’s gonna be nothing like running out on the field for that first Pitt game back,” he said. “The thing that I’m looking forward to the most is to have the small interactions at small towns in small communities. I know whether it’s a classroom with 10 kids or parade with over 1000 kids, it matters and you have to be the same Mountaineer no matter where you are.”

Before closing his speech with the words “Let’s go Mountaineers,” Hager shared a piece of advice that was given to him by 2019 Mountaineer mascot Timmy Eads.

“He told me, ‘As the Mountaineer, you are not a character. You are you. The Mountaineer is not a character but it amplifies your character.’ If I can always remember that I think I’ll be in store for a pretty good year,” Hager said.

Hager will make his Mountaineer mascot debut on Saturday, April 22, at the Gold-Blue Spring football game.

Metal record store opens in Morgantown

BY AUBREY BURKHARDT
STAFF WRITER

A new metal-based record store is now open to the public in downtown Morgantown.

Shiny Dome Records, located across the street from the bar and performance venue 123 Pleasant Street, provides a place for those interested in expanding their punk and metal vinyl collections.

Over the past decade, record and vinyl sales have been increasing. According to the Recording Industry Association of America, vinyl albums earned $1.2 billion, compared to $483 million for CDs in 2022.

While streaming services account for the majority of music revenue, it’s no question that recording artists are making physical copies like vinyl and CDs a priority.

Chris “Baldy” Herrod, owner and operator of Shiny Dome Records, has been involved in the music scene of Morgantown for over 17 years and has been collecting records for a lifetime.

Working closely with 123 Pleasant Street, Herrod has done performance bookings, put together benefit shows and worked as the main sponsor and host of the annual FuzzFest in August.

After setting up record booths at both the festival and during shows at 123, Herrod said he decided to open his own space.

“I was a cook for 19 years, and then the pandemic hit,” he said. “I had just had enough of it, and I was already in my collecting phase. So, I said screw it, I’ll just start a record shop.”

Herrod’s store has a wide collection of albums and genres ranging from death metal including Obituary, groove metal including Pantera, thrash metal including Power Trip, to punk albums including music from Dead Kennedys and post-hardcore albums from Fugazi.

The store also offers some hip-hop and country options including records from Dolly Parton, Garth Brooks and Waylon Jennings.

For local bands, Herrod created a “Loud and Local” section in the store.

PHOTO BY AUBREY BURKHARDT

Chris “Baldy” Herrod, 40, owner and operator of Shiny Dome Records, stands in front of a wall of albums known as Baldy’s Picks.

“Being that I’m a big supporter of the local scene, it would make sense for me to do that,” he said.

Along with records and vinyl, Herrod has included VHS tapes, CD’s, action figures and books in the store.

With the nearest record shop being Assumption Records in Rivesville, West Virginia, Herrod said he wanted to create an accessible record store for the community of Morgantown.

Kiedan Michaels, Herrod’s assistant manager at the shop, also comes from the 123 Pleasant Street community and will be focusing on pricing, stocking and floor sales.

Like Herrod, Michaels comes from working over 18 years in the service industry.

Michaels hopes that Shiny Dome Records will supply Morgantown community members with affordable and accessible ways to expand their music listening experience.

“Most of our [records] are sealed,” he said. “Which allows us to price used stuff at a more friendly price for consumers. You’re buying everyone else’s experience.”

Michaels believes that the shop will provide a space for both collectors looking for rare finds and those interested in newer releases.

“The hunters who are out there looking for used gold, old and rare, can still have that thrill,” he said. “And for people who are more interested in new stuff and are willing to pay, we have plenty of that too.”

Eventually, Shiny Dome will allow individuals to bring their own records in either to exchange, donate or trade.

Shiny Dome Records will be open Mondays through Saturdays from noon until 7 p.m. For more information, check out their Facebook and Instagram page @shinydomerecords.

Three things to do in Morgantown this weekend

BY SABRINA SIEGAN
ASST. CULTURE EDITOR

While many students are hitting the library or local cafes, study breaks are essential to surviving finals season. This weekend the DA recommends a local orchestra concert, a bird walk and a nature walk.

1 A Jubilant Spring Concert

The Morgantown Community Orchestra will be putting together a Spring Concert that will provide light hearted and elevated feelings on Saturday, April 29 at 2 p.m. at Lyell B. Clay Concert Theatre at the CCAC.

This event is free for those interested. It is suggested that attendees arrive 30 minutes early to grab their seats for the show. For more information head to the Morgantown Community Orchestra’s eventbrite page.

2 Communi-Tea Party

On Saturday, AntiquiTea House will be hosting a free event in its parking lot from 4 to 7 p.m. This event will feature live music, artists, vendors and different community organizations.

That seems to be the only information provided for the event, but updates may be posted on their Facebook page.

3 Forest Wander & Wonder Walk

Judith Clister will host a nature walk through the West Virginia Botanic Garden (WVBG) on Sunday at 2 p.m.

While many people use their walking time to talk with friends, those participating in this will walk through the woods quietly. During this walk, Clister will help individuals explore mindfulness and nature as a whole.

The cost of the event is $5 dollars for WVBG members and $15 dollars for non-members. For more information and the link to register, visit WVBG’s website.

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OPINION

Meet the 2023-24 DA editor-in-chief

BY JULES OGDEN
NEWS EDITOR

Jules Ogden, The Daily Athenaeum's current news editor, was selected as the publication's next editor-in-chief for the 2023-24 academic year. Jules is a Morgantown native and rising senior dual-degree student majoring in journalism and English. Read her introductory letter below.

I never thought I was good at writing or telling stories.

As a kid, reading was always my preferred escapism. I loved being able to live a thousand lives through the lens of others.

However, I never thought I could tell my own stories.

English was my favorite subject in high school, and my interest in writing grew.

When senior year rolled around, and it took what felt like months to settle on a college major. I knew I loved writing, but I still felt like I wasn't strong enough to pursue it.

Then, the pandemic hit. And just months before I was meant to graduate, the whole world changed.

I wasn't feeling particularly risky at the time, so I settled on a major that felt safe.

But I still felt something was missing. And with the pandemic still imposing on all of our lives, I felt alone.

The summer before my sophomore year, a professor in the Reed College of Media encouraged me to join The Daily Athenaeum, WVU's independent student newspaper.

It was the best decision I've ever made. My love for writing rekindled, and this time, with confidence.

Telling meaningful stories in my community and seeing its impact is incredibly rewarding.

I quickly moved into an editor position that spring and continued to watch as my reporting catalyzed change across campus.

I will never forget the feeling of breaking the story of a student who was served raw chicken in one of WVU's dining halls. Or how honored I felt to be telling the stories of frightened mothers over the summer as they grappled with the formula shortage during my internship.

Embracing my passion for storytelling and joining The DA has led me to my favorite people, and it's made me realize who I am: a storyteller.

And for that, I owe it to you to continue telling your stories and delivering the strongest, most well-rounded news possible.

STAFF PHOTO

Jules Ogden is the 2023-24 Editor-in-chief at The Daily Athenaeum.

I am so thankful for this opportunity to serve my community as a Morgantown native after all this town has done for me, and I promise to be an honest and fair storyteller.

'The Super Mario Bros. Movie' levels up animation

BY LUKE BLAIN
SPORTS EDITOR

I remember when the cast of "The Super Mario Bros Movie" was first announced, the casting choice of Chris Pratt as Mario was something I wasn't even concerned about.

Many people wrote off the movie months before it came out because of the controversial choice. While I understood the objection to the casting, I think the reaction was unfair, especially as the movie turned out to be alright.

While many video game-based movies fall short of being good, "The Super Mario Bros Movie" is a fun exception, and it is now the highest grossing video game film of all time. Although the film is no groundbreaking piece of cinema, it is a fun watch that tells a story of reaching one's full potential, despite what is said by those around them.

We are first introduced to Mario after we see Bowser — played by the sensational Jack Black in a career-defining performance — finding a star that will make him all-powerful. Early on, we see that Mario is looked down upon by those around him, such as his family and other acquaintances.

Eventually, he and his brother Luigi — portrayed by Charlie Day — get sucked into sewer pipes and find themselves in the world that we have come to recognize in the video games. However, Mario is sent to the Mushroom Kingdom, while Luigi winds up into what is called "The Darklands" and is captured by Bowser.

PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSAL PICTURES

A poster for "The Super Mario Bros. Movie."

Luigi's captivity introduces an interesting dynamic that I really liked about the movie, which is that Princess Peach is not the classic damsel in distress that she has usually been depicted as in most Mario media. In this film, Peach is a capable fighter and warrior in this movie, while Luigi is the one who needs saving.

I really enjoyed this new direction because it creates a much more believable motivation for Mario to fight against Bowser's reign. Rather than pursuing a random princess he's never met, Mario is going to save his brother, which I believe is much more compelling.

"The Super Mario Bros. Movie" also introduces the motivation for Bowser, which is to marry Princess Peach. It creates a hilarious rom-com dynamic that I wish the movie leaned into more. The aspect of the film is elevated by the voice acting by Jack Black as Bowser, which (as a surprise to nobody) is the best performance of the movie.

Black also performs a fantastic musical number in the middle of the film that portrays Bowser's desire to be with Princess Peach. It is a raw and intimate moment in the film that truly fleshes out the film's antagonist.

In a predictable but fun conclusion, Mario teams up with Donkey Kong — played by Seth Rogan — after bonding over their lack of familial support and defeats Bowser to save Luigi.

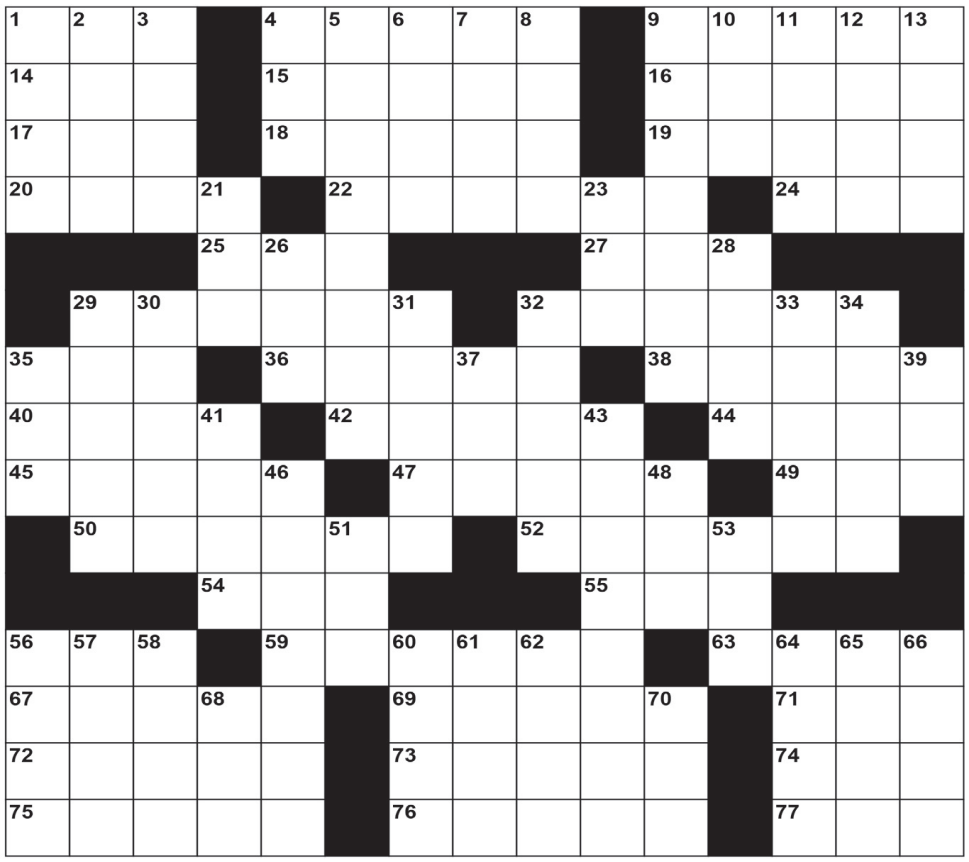
It is a charming and enjoyable story, completed by the willingness of the movie to stay true to aspects of the games.

Mario and his friends use "power-ups," which are referred to as such in the film to help them fight and run across elevated obstacle courses, just like in the games. The cinematography and animation are also well-done and used to reflect the style of the video games within the flick.

While it is by no means a perfect film, I don't think it tries that hard to be. With satisfying Easter Eggs and references sprinkled throughout, "The Super Mario Bros. Movie" plays off of the nostalgia of viewers who grew up with the Mario franchise. The movie tries to be fun, and I think it accomplishes that.

If you want a fun, family-friendly movie that will still be entertaining for all ages, there's no better film in theaters right now than "The Super Mario Bros. Movie."

CROSSWORD



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22 Framework for drying cloth
24 Stretch to make do
25 Good grief!
27 Unrefined metal
29 Asian nation
32 Crustacean
35 Picnic pest
36 Musician Adams
38 Black spider
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76 Cluttered
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Down

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21 Possessive pronoun
23 Goddess
26 Chitchat
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30 Inscribed pillar
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34 Goosy
35 Point
37 Cause of sickness
39 Newly ___, Nearly Dead
41 Land unit
43 ___ watermelon, no black
46 Aims at
48 Ocean
51 Not against
53 BB association
56 What Celestial Seasonings makes
57 Mr. Disney
58 Gawk
60 Trickery
61 Window ___
62 Reproductive cells with shell
64 One of Columbus' ships
65 Hour
66 Want
68 Hushed
70 Pigpen

For answers, visit thedaonline.com

Pet of the Week

PHOTO BY OLIVIA SCHMIEDER

Meet Jax (right) and Aspen (left). Jax loves to be around people, and never misses a chance to sit on your lap even though he isn't a puppy anymore. He loves to lay proper with his paws crossed, going for car rides and listening in on conversations by turning his head from side to side. However, don't bring him near a laundry basket or outside during the night; he gets frightened easily. Aspen is a young pup who is obsessed with squeaky toys, eating tons of food really fast and laying sprawled out on the floor like a bear rug. Both of his eyes are half brown and blue.

Submit your favorite pet photo at da-classifieds@mail.wvu.edu

SUDOKU

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3x3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9.

Sudoku puzzle brought to you by Jim Bumgardner at krazydad.com

For answers, visit thedaonline.com

9				1	7			3
			5		2	4		1
	1	5				6		
		8	7	6		3		
	3						1	
		1		4	5	2		
		3				9	5	
5		4	2		9			
1			4	5				2

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A sendoff for the DA sports staff's favorite seniors

BY THE DA SPORTS STAFF

As the 2022-23 school year comes to a close, many students will graduate and begin new chapters of their lives.

This also means that Mountaineer fans will have to say goodbye to some of their favorite student athletes. In honor of the Daily Athenaeum's final print edition of the semester, the sports staff decided to highlight some of the athletes they will miss seeing in the Blue and Gold.

Adrian Ell
Volleyball

BY EMMA SCOTT
CO-SPORTS EDITOR

Adrian Ell may have already graduated from WVU but she will be missed on the court.

Ell made All-Big 12 First Team and was Big 12 defensive player of the week on Sept. 28. Her accomplishments were ranking seventh in the Big 12 with 3.47 kills per set and also being No. 10 in the Big 12 for having .29 in service ace per set.

She brought the heat to the court but her academics were on point as well. She was a part of the CoSIDA Academic All-District 2 First Team and a part of the Big 12 Commissioner's Honor Roll.

Ell graduated in December with a degree in Sport Management.

PHOTO BY COLE HUNT

Fifth-year senior Adrian Ell sets the ball against Kansas State at the WVU Coliseum on November 16, 2023.

Killian Cardinale
Wrestling

BY MATT ROSS
STAFF WRITER

Killian Cardinale is currently in his fifth year of college and has earned his bachelor's in Communication Sciences and Disorders in the WVU School of Medicine.

Cardinale is one of West Virginia's most decorated wrestlers. Not only did Cardinale place eighth at Nationals this year, he also placed seventh two years ago at the NCAA Tournament.

He finished his career with 102 wins and 49 losses. Cardinale has been one of WVU's key pieces to the team's success as he has rarely lost for the Mountaineers within the last couple of seasons and has done what he is needed to do in order to bring the team closer to their goals.

Cardinale has been one of the most exciting and successful wrestlers to come through the wrestling program and has helped change the program's culture in just a short time.

PHOTO BY BENJAMIN POWELL

Killian Cardinale grappling with a wrestler earlier in the season at the WVU Coliseum in Morgantown.

Madisen Smith
Women's basketball

BY RACHEL LIBERT
STAFF WRITER

When West Virginia fans think of a Mountaineer that impacted the women's basketball program, fifth-year guard Madison Smith is at the top of the list.

Smith represented West Virginia for all five years of her collegiate basketball career. The guard averaged 9.2 points per game over her five year tenure, most notably averaging 14.1 points per game during her final season as a Mountaineer. Smith also surpassed the 1000-point milestone in her last season.

Smith earned several honors during her time in Morgantown in 2022. She was awarded an All- Big 12 Honorable Mention and was named to the All-Big 12 Academic First Team for the second time in her career.

After using her final year of eligibility, Smith took to Twitter, saying: "Forever grateful to say that I'm a Mountaineer. Wouldn't change this experience for anything in the world."

Smith will leave WVU with a master's degree in Sport Coaching.

PHOTO BY JAKE TAYLOR

West Virginia's Madisen Smith (30) drives to the basket through contact against Texas on Feb. 20, 2022.

Emmitt Matthews Jr.
Men's basketball

BY JONATHAN HAMILTON
STAFF WRITER

Emmitt Matthews Jr. was a Mountaineer for three years. Then, for his fourth year of college basketball, he wasn't. But after a year away from Morgantown, Bob Huggins and the team were able to get the forward back to where he started his college basketball career.

Matthews, who was a fifth-year senior last season, played at WVU from 2018-2021, and then transferred to his home state os Washington for the 2021-22 season. After one season in Seattle, the forward decided his home on the court was in Morgantown, and came back for his fifth and final season.

He played and started in 32 games last season, the most of his career. He had career highs in most statistical categories, including points per game at 10.2, total minutes at 943, minutes per game with 29.5, and rebounds with 125. Matthews was an important part of West Virginia's NCAA tournament bid, making it to the Big Dance for the first time since 2021.

Matthews had a nice career at West Virginia, and the alluring call of Morgantown made him want to transfer back for one more season.

PHOTO BY LUKE BLAIN

Fifth-year senior forward Emmit Matthews Jr. directs the offense against Texas Tech in the Phillips 66 Big 12 Men's Basketball Tournament on March 8, 2023.

Pei-Ju (Penny) Hsieh
Tennis

BY LUKE BLAIN
CO-SPORTS EDITOR

Penny Hsieh leaves the WVU tennis team after two years with the program.

Last season, she went 8-4 in singles play while competing in the fifth and sixth seeds, and finished 4-6 in doubles in the third seed. In 2022, she tallied a singles record of 7-3 with a 10-3 doubles record.

The Changhua, Taiwan native's highlight of the season came against in-state rival Marshall University. She won her singles match 6-4, 7-5 to clinch the 4-3 overall win for WVU after the team went down 3-1.

While not a consistent part of the singles lineup, Hsieh is a fierce competitor and brought energy every time she stepped on the court. She provided leadership for a young team and will surely be missed by the program.

Hsieh will graduate with a masters degree in Sport Management. After graduation she intends to keep working in collegiate tennis as a coach.as a coach.

PHOTO BY LUKE BLAIN

Fifth-year senior Pei-Ju Hsieh celebrates a point against No. 50 TCU at the Mountaineer Tennis Courts on April

WVU baseball routes Penn State with two grand slams

BY JAKE HOWARD
STAFF WRITER

The West Virginia University baseball team continued its dream season Tuesday night, taking down the Penn State Nittany Lions 14-2 at Monongalia County Ballpark.

WVU (30-11, 8-4 Big 12) scored two grand slams, as Penn State trailed far behind for most of the game (23-14, 5-7 Big 10).

To nobody's surprise, JJ Wetherholt showed out for the Mountaineers. The sophomore second baseman, making his return to the lineup at designated hitter, crushed a pitch to right field in the bottom of the third inning for a grand slam.

"We thought originally the defense would come back before the offense," head coach Randy Mazey said about Wetherholt postgame.

"Hopefully, he'll be in the lineup defensively this weekend."

After PSU made it 4-1, Wetherholt made it a four-run game again by hitting a sacrifice fly to the left field warning track to plate Barry in the bottom of the fourth.

That wasn't it for the Mountaineers that inning. Tucker and White scored together as redshirt senior right fielder Caleb McNeely drove in both of them.

Soon after, an RBI single from freshman second baseman Ellis Garcia drove in junior left fielder Landon Wallace and redshirt senior catcher Dayne Leonard.

WVU took full control in the fourth inning as sophomore first baseman Grant Hussey crushed a pitch to deep right center for a 415-foot grand slam to put the Mountaineers up 12-1.

The team added to its lead in the fifth inning after Wetherholt tripled and was driven in by a Wallace single. A Penn State homer in the top of the sixth made the Nittany Lions down 13-2.

In the bottom of the sixth inning, a pinch-hit home run from freshman catcher Logan Sauve put the Mountaineers up 14-2 with the third West Virginia homer of the game.

That was it for the scoring, as WVU won by 12 runs over its Big 10 opponents.

PHOTO BY TYLER PRUSINA

Freshman Robert Porco throwing in pitch on April 23, 2023 vs TCU.

The Mountaineers had success at the plate once again, going 13-34 to score 14 runs. Wetherholt was the star of the show, going 2-3 with five runs batted in on a triple and homer.

On the mound, six Mountaineer pitchers got it done as WVU had nine two-run innings. Freshman right-handed pitcher Carson Estridge got the start, pitching 3 ⅔ innings and giving up one earned run.

Five relievers finished the job — graduate student Noah Short, sophomore Grant Siegel, freshman Gavin Van Kempen, freshman Cole Fehrman and junior Carlson Reed.

The Mountaineers head south this weekend to face the Baylor Bears in Waco, Texas. First pitch for the series opener on Friday is set for 7:30 p.m., with Big 12 Now via ESPN+ providing streaming.

U92 SPORTS COVERAGE

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‘We really took a big step forward’: Lisac looks back on the tennis season

BY LUKE BLAIN
CO-SPORTS EDITOR

The West Virginia University tennis team’s season concluded this earlier this month. Head coach Miha Lisac took time to reflect on what the spring term brought for his Mountaineers, as well as look toward the future of the program.

“We really took a big step forward as a program this year,” head coach Miha Lisac said on the Mountaineer Sports Insider podcast.

WVU finished with an 11-12 overall record with a 1-8 conference record for ninth place in the Big 12.

The season held multiple achievements for the program. The Mountaineers achieved the highest national ranking in program history at 51 and also claimed their first Big 12 win since the 2017-18 season with a 4-2 victory over Kansas State.

While the team is more talented than with prior seasons, Lisac said that the culture is a big reason for the improvements.

“What is different about this group, compared to the teams and groups that we had in the past, is that they are sticking together through the thick and the thin,” Lisac said. “They are continuing to support each other. They come to work every day and look to continue to improve and get better, regardless of how we competed throughout the weekend.”

One player who has proven to be a leader for the Mountaineers is sophomore Camilla Bossi. Bossi played in the top speed in singles for every match after primarily being in the fourth and fifth seeds as a freshman.

PHOTO BY LUKE BLAIN

West Virginia University tennis head coach Miha Lisac speaks with sophomore Camilla Bossi and senior Ting-Pei Chang between games against TCU at the Mountaineer Tennis Courts on April 16, 2023.

“She went home over the summer and really took it upon herself to dedicate her summer to training, competing, developing [and] growing. And she did extremely well,” Lisac said. “And that allowed her to take a big leap from year one to year two on the tennis courts.”

Several players took big steps in the 2023 campaign. Another Mountaineer in particular made stride is sophomore Michaela (Misha) Kucharova.

“I actually wouldn’t even say from last season to this season, I would say that Misha had one of the biggest turnarounds that I have seen within one year,” Lisac said.

Kucharova finished her freshman season with an 8-6 singles record and a 3-7 doubles record. Last, she was a consistent piece of the singles lineup, achieving a 10-11 record with a 11-9 record in doubles alongside junior Momoko Nagato.

The Mountaineers will only lose one player going into next year — fifth-year senior Pei-Ju (Penny) Hsieh. However, the team landed fifth-year senior transfer Love-Star Alexis, who spent last season as the top-seeded singles player for Middle Tennessee State.

Even after the progress made last season, Lisac believes there is more to be done.

“We are not very far from some of the top players in the Big 12,” Lisac said. “And that’s what’s exciting about us concluding the year, and then moving into the work over the summer [and] fall, and really building towards what we’re going to accomplish next year.”

The team’s season may not be fully over, as there is still a chance they could make the eight-team NIT tournament. If the Mountaineers qualify, fans can watch them compete in the tournament on Amazon Prime Video.

The full interview on the Mountaineer Sports Insider podcast, which is available on all podcast streaming platforms.

Track and field complete Mountaineer Showcase

BY MATT ROSS
STAFF WRITER

The West Virginia track and field team completed the Mountaineer Showcase on April 21-22 in Morgantown.

Junior Ceili McCabe had a very impressive meet as she won her 3000 meter steeplechase by two whole minutes. McCabe finished with a time of 9:45.40 to become second in the WVU records.

“Ceili took care of business this weekend by punching her ticket into the NCAA championships in May,” head coach Sean Cleary said. “While she would have liked to have run a little faster, this performance takes care of the first step into the national finals.”

Senior Tessa Constantine ran an amazing race in the women 400 meter hurdles. In both heats, she ran a time of 59:43, earning her first place in the event.

“Tessa was impressive running solo in the 400 hurdles by running the second-best time of her career,” Cleary said. “While Tess sits inside the qualifying mark for the hurdles, she is well aware that she will have to run about half a second quicker.”

The Mountaineers dominated in the 1500 meter run where there were five runners finishing in the top eight. Senior Mikaela Lucki finished in first place with a time of 4:21.99. Following Lucki was fellow teammate Katherine Dowie with a time of 4:27.78.

PHOTO COURTESY: WVU ATHLETICS

Junior Ceili McCabe completes in an indoor track meet.

Megan Weaver, Kase Torchia and Zara Zervos rounded out the top eighth for the mountaineers placing sixth, seventh, and eighth.

In the women’s 800 meter run, Senior Hayley Jackson finished in first place with a time of 2:06.40. Also, Cassandra Williams finished in third place with a time of 2:07.09.

Sophomore Tazanna Epps also placed in the women’s 800 meter run. Epps finished in ninth place with a time of 2:30.03

Standout freshmen Alex Fleck and Aubrie Custer both placed in the top three in the women’s 5000 meter run. Fleck finished in second with a time of 18:52.07. Custer finished in third place with a time of 19:20.94.

Both times were personal bests for the freshmen.=

Senior Sada Wright competed in the women’s discus throw and was able to capture the top spot on the podium. Wright finished with a throw of 45.52.

The throw earned Wright the number four spot in WVU record books.

The WVU track and field team will return to action again in Philadelphia to compete against Penn University on April 27-29. Part of the team will stay behind to compete in the Mountaineer Twilight on April 29 in Morgantown.

THE DA Listen to the The DA Podcasts

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The Mountaineer Sports Insider Podcast is your source for WVU Sports news, analysis, opinion, insights and more, brought to you by the Daily Athenaeum and U92 the Moose sports departments.

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This is DubV 411- West Virginia University's very own weekly update podcast. Every week, Maddie Harris and Lauren Taylor will fill you in on the buzz happening in the coming week on campus and around Morgantown. WVU is such a big school with so many opportunities that there's always something fun and interesting to do. So tune in every Friday wherever you listen to your podcasts and get inspired to go out and try something new!

GradLife 601 podcast series, we'll share the achievements and insights of West Virginia University graduate students and faculty. We'll discuss their experiences and how they came to be passionate about their research. We'll also talk about life beyond the lab and academy. GradLife 601: Research and Beyond is sponsored by the WVU Provost's Office of Graduate Education and Life and hosted by Dr. Nancy Caronia, a Teaching Associate Professor in the Department of English at West Virginia University.

Women in Science and Medicine Podcast The Women in Science and Medicine podcast features discussions with female scientists within West Virginia University and other institutions. In this series, we'll share the achievements and insights from some of the country's top female scientists and learn from their experiences to understand how they came to be passionate about science and overcame any obstacles in their paths. This podcast is offered by West Virginia University's Office of Research and Graduate Education.

Time Out is a podcast focused on issues in sport leadership, performance and health with a wide range of experts and industry leaders. This podcast is offered by WVU's College of Applied Human Sciences School of Sport Sciences graduate online programs.

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