

# THE SOUTH END

**WARRIOR WINTER REVIEW**

EST. 1967

**WSU Talks Politics**

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**Housing Fires Spark  
Emergency Procedure  
Conversation**

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**Quentin  
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(Bronze- Men's  
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Reyes**  
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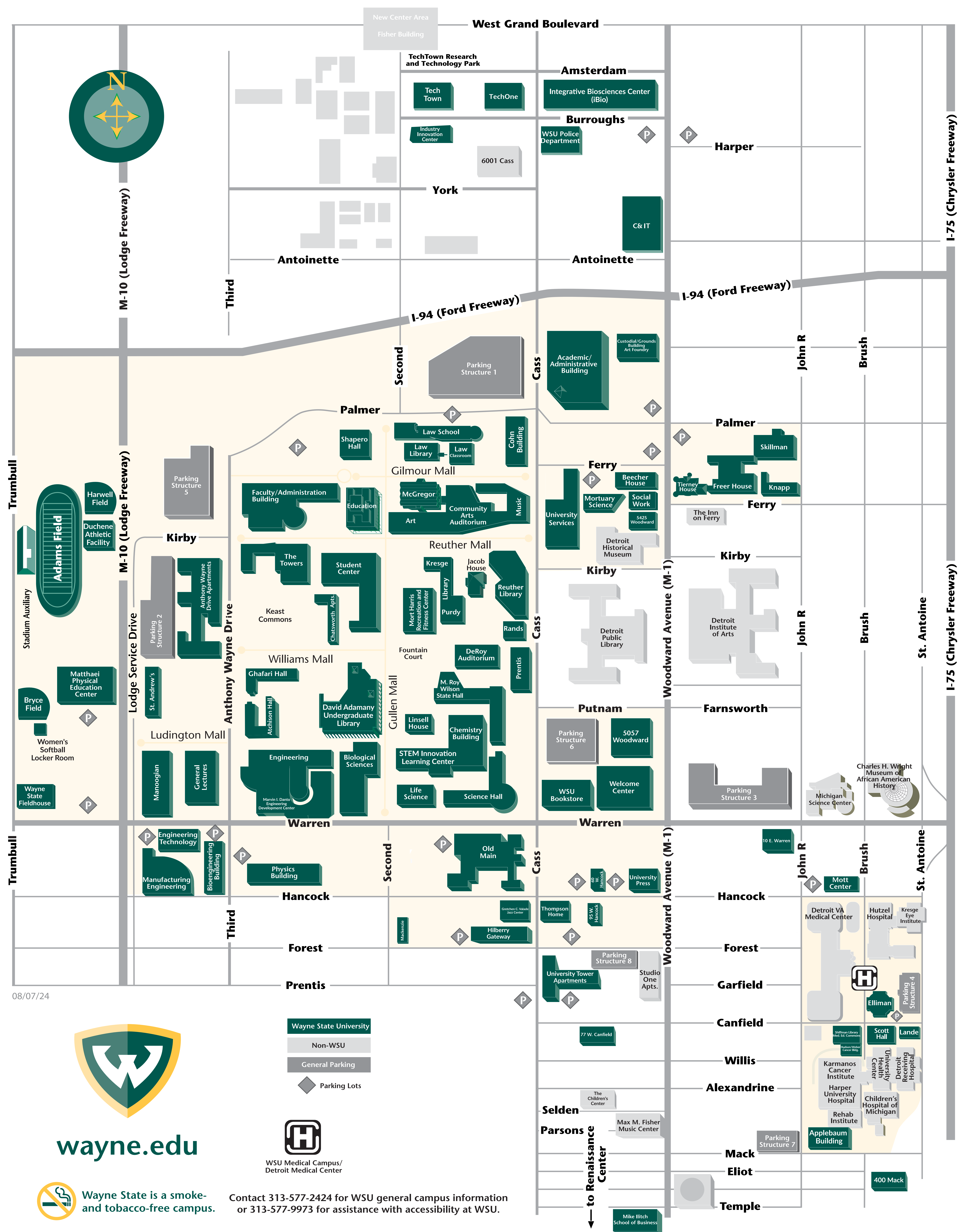
**Rasha Baki**  
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# CAMPUS MAP





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## TSE STAFF

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The South End welcomes letters to the editors regarding all inquiries and concerns from the Wayne State community. Please limit letters to 500 words. All submissions are subject to editing and may be published.

## CORRECTIONS

The South End corrects all factual errors published online and in print.

## ONLINE POLICY

The South End publishes articles online and in print. Visit our website at [thesouthend.wayne.edu](https://thesouthend.wayne.edu) While we support the right to free speech and expression, there are guidelines for good and morally acceptable content. Comments and feedback deemed offensive are subject to editing or removal.

## PUBLICATION

The South End is a daily online publication created by Wayne State students. The South End publishes special print editions at the beginning and end of the academic year. Copies of the print edition will be available free of charge at various locations throughout campus. Business operations are handled through the Dean of Students Office. All complaints, comments, and suggestions concerning the student newspaper should be directed to [thesouthend@wayne.edu](mailto:thesouthend@wayne.edu).



# A Letter from the Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor

*Happy New Year Warriors,*

At The South End, we work to share the stories and voices of Wayne State. In this winter edition, we focus on the people who make up our campus—students, faculty, and staff—and the things that matter to them.

As the Managing Editor and Editor-in-Chief, we are grateful for the opportunity to lead this publication and to work with such a hardworking and dedicated team. Our staff has spent countless hours reporting, writing, and designing to bring this edition to life, and we couldn't be more proud of their efforts.

We came into this publication with a vision to continue the legacy of progress that The South End has seen since 1967. Our voice on campus has grown in more ways than one. Our staff is dedicated to representing the Wayne State student body with understanding and that's why it was important for us to build a diverse team.

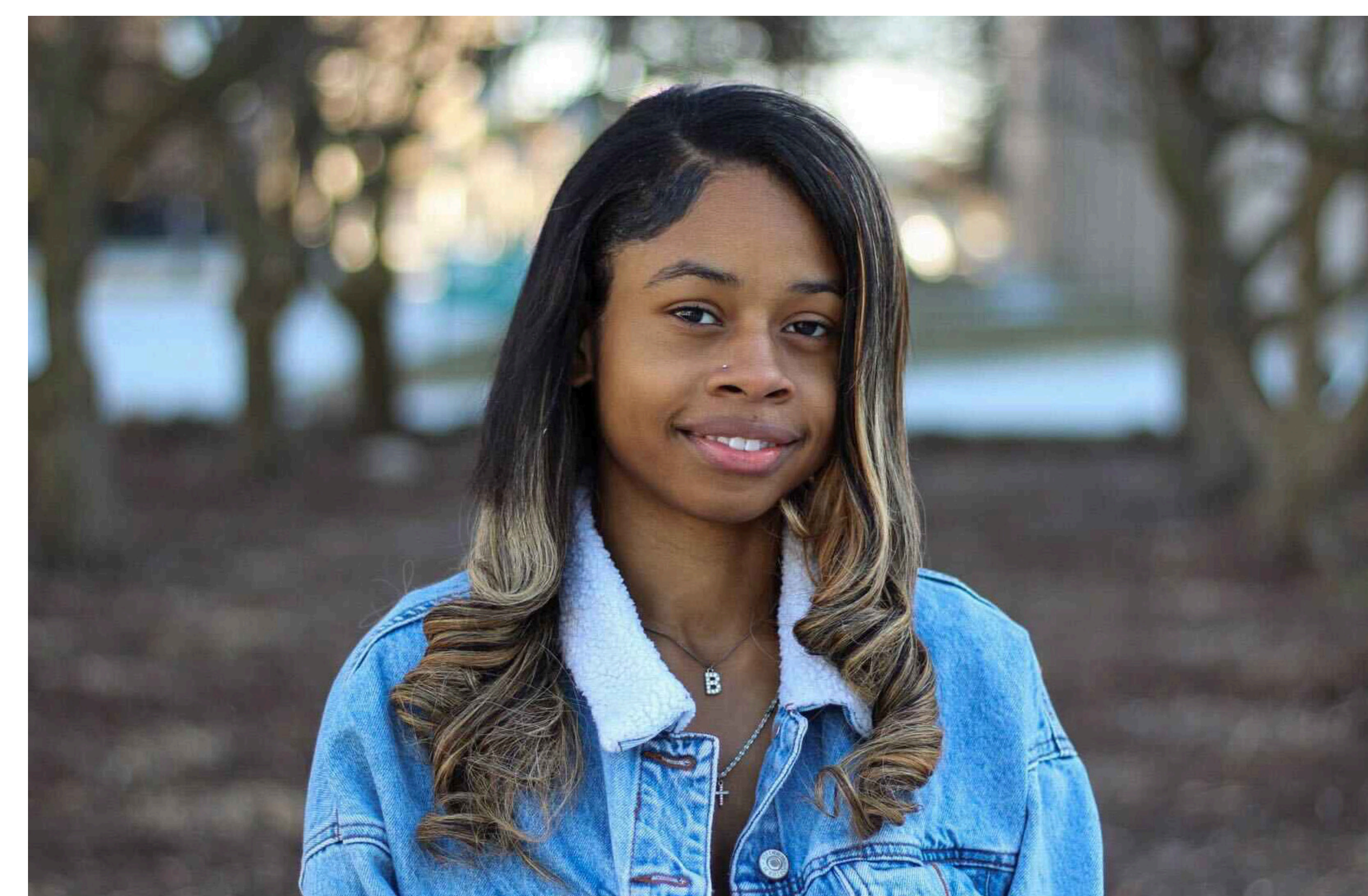
Wayne State is a place full of different experiences and ideas. From life on campus to bigger issues in the world, this edition highlights the conversations happening every day.

Through interviews, personal stories, and reporting, we hope to inform and start new discussions. As always, we welcome feedback, story ideas, and engagement from our readers, because your voice matters too.

Thank you for reading and supporting The South End!



TSE Editor-in-Chief, Akeel Ahmed  
Photo by Natalie Davies



TSE Managing Editor, Cris'tia Bowden  
Photo by Akeel Ahmed

*Akeel Ahmed*

**Editor-in-Chief**

*Cris'tia Bowden*

**Managing Editor**



# A Letter from President Espy

*Dear students,*

Welcome—or welcome back—to Wayne State University! Whether you're starting here or returning for the winter semester, I'm thrilled to have you as part of our community. I hope you had a relaxing and rejuvenating holiday season and that your semester is off to a strong and productive start.

This winter marks an exciting time for Wayne State. We're celebrating our highest winter enrollment since 2022, with a two percent increase from last year. Additionally, students are taking four percent more credit hours year-over-year, as more of you opt for a full-time course load. This semester reflects our most diverse student body in six years—a testament to our inclusive and welcoming environment.

Let me share a few updates that highlight the energy and progress on campus:

- **Campus upgrades:** This semester, we reopened the newly renovated DeRoy Auditorium, offering an inviting and state-of-the-art learning space. Later this spring, DeRoy's iconic reflecting pond will sparkle to life for the first time in nearly 40 years.
- **Law School expansion:** The design phase is underway for a new classroom facility to support the growth and success of Wayne Law School, which has climbed from No. 100 to No. 55 in national rankings over the past seven years.
- **Health sciences research building:** A new transdisciplinary health sciences research facility is currently being designed and is scheduled to open in 2028. This will foster groundbreaking collaboration between the School of Medicine, Karmanos Cancer Institute and other partners, advancing urban health and cancer research.
- **School of public health:** We're excited to welcome Dr. Bernard Costello, our new senior vice president for health affairs, who began on January 17. Among other priorities, Dr. Costello is collaborating with Provost Laurie Lauzon Clabo, Dr. Mark Schweitzer and more than 100 other leaders – including students, faculty and staff – to establish Michigan's next school of public health. A national search for the school's inaugural dean will begin soon. This new school will help us address critical urban health challenges and serve our community in transformative ways.

As the new semester begins, a world of opportunity awaits you. Your success as a student remains our top priority. This is your time—your chance to grow, explore and embrace the journey of learning.

When you're in the classroom, each lecture and discussion is a chance to expand your mind. Don't hesitate to ask questions, challenge ideas and let curiosity guide you. Engage in lectures, challenge ideas and let curiosity guide you. Check in with your advisor to stay on track and build a diverse network of friends and connections.

College is more than just academics; it's about experiences. Get involved in campus life, join clubs, attend events and develop healthy habits. Balance is key, so find time for both hard work and self-care.

Most importantly, dream big. This moment in your life is unique, offering you the rare luxury to focus almost entirely on learning and growth. Take full advantage of it. Push boundaries, explore new passions and set your sights high.

The journey is yours—make the most of it.

I wish you an enriching and Warrior Strong winter semester!

Sincerely,

*Dr. Kimberly Andrews Espy*







**WSU Talks Politics:  
Made America, Trump  
Again**

*See pgs. 7-9*

**Housing Fires Spark  
Emergency Procedure  
Conversation**

*See pgs. 9-12*

*Picture Credit: Akeel Ahmed*



# WSU Talks Politics: Made America Trump Again

*By Abeer Sheikh*



*Error Page on the White House Website*

President Donald Trump began his second term with a rapid series of executive orders aimed at reshaping the federal government and prioritizing his administration's vision of America.

As of Jan. 25, the executive orders Trump has signed or plans to sign cover a wide range of issues from immigration and deportation to the issue of civil rights and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). The Wayne State community has revealed mixed reactions and predictions of these executive orders and changes Trump has brought in the beginning of his term.

"The first week's Executive Orders has had analysts drinking from a firehose," Political Science Professor Brad Roth said. "There is simply too much there to distinguish 'what

will' from 'what will not' have long-term consequences."

President of WSU College Republicans Tyler Campbell said Trump came prepared with executive orders, foreign diplomacy, and federal office nominees lined up for his first day.

"I am feeling enthusiastic with Trump's win," Campbell said. "I like that he already had plans made for his term before taking office... I dislike Trump's rhetoric and him pushing for more than he can actually achieve. It's vital for making deals but acts as a double-edged sword, making it easy for the Democratic Party to weaponize his statements."

## **Changes To The White House Website**

A visual action of the administration was the removal of the Constitution, DEI, Spanish translation, reproductive rights and accessibility features from the official White House website. Along with the White House, federal agencies such as the Department of Labor and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture are removing their statements on their DEI commitments.

Chemistry student Kevin Kometta believes the removal of parts such as the Spanish translation symbolizes a message Trump disclosed in his 2015 campaign.

"Removing these things from the White House website sends a sign that the administration is not welcoming to Hispanic people in America, as shown by the continuous targeting of



the Hispanic community by Trump,” Kometa said. “They don’t actually care about accessibility and they are not for diversity, equity, and inclusion, as shown by the many attacks using DEI by himself and members of his party.”

Director of Government Affairs on Student Senate Cordelia Krajewski said she is concerned but is not surprised about the removal of reproductive rights on the website.

“It is difficult to watch someone in power continuously take steps away to deny AFAB individuals health-care,” Krajewski said. “Trump has given mixed signals about further restrictions on abortion and other reproductive care, but I am preparing myself for the worst considering all he has done to undo progress made over the last few decades all across the board.”

## Immigration Policies

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Some of Trump’s key changes in immigration policies include limiting and redefining birthright citizenship for many and stricter deportation policies. Both of these orders are being challenged in federal court.

Trump’s order on redefining birthright citizenship declares a person born in the U.S. is not a citizen if either the mother is not a legal immigrant or is only in the country legally for a limited amount of time, or the father is not a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident. In an interview with the South End, Associate Professor of Sociology Lauren Duquette-Rury said she believes it is unlikely there would be a full repeal of the 14th Amendment’s definition of citizenship.

“The 14th Amendment restructures civil rights in the United States. Along with two prior Civil Rights bills, it fundamentally changes what states need to do in order to protect

not just the citizens within their jurisdictions but also non-citizens,” Duquette-Rury said. “It changes what we call alienage rights. It’s all those rights post admission that govern the lives of immigrants.”

According to Forbes, Trump’s Mass Deportation Plan has allowed U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to arrest and deport any undocumented immigrant, whether or not they are suspected of a crime. The Trump administration expanded a policy which allows federal officials to hasten deportations for immigrants unable to prove they have applied for asylum and have been in the U.S. for less than two years.

“I agree that we should deport undocumented immigrants who are criminals, but the majority of them are not criminals, which is what Trump and many Republicans try to make it out as,” Kometa said. “America functions on immigration. A lot of our crop workers, construction workers and hospitality workers, are undocumented immigrants.”

During Trump’s campaign, he said international students who graduate from U.S. universities should receive green cards. Campbell said that could benefit international students at WSU.

“If he’s serious and pushes for that change, that would help the many foreign students at WSU have an easy pathway to U.S. citizenship and would be a good change for campuses nationwide,” Campbell said.

## Changes to Federal Funding For Science and Research

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Since Trump’s first term, he has proposed cuts to organizations such as the National Institute of Health (NIH). He currently has suggested cutting costs to support the NIH, which according to an email from Vice President for Research & Innovation Ezemenari Obasi, “Many of

our campus community are directly affected—participants on current grant review panels and those with grant applications currently under review to name a few.”

Political Science Professor Ronald Brown believes these cuts will have one of the biggest impacts on the WSU community.

“The NIH is a huge part of the operating budget of Wayne State. That means you could see a loud layoff of faculty and staff if [Trump] chooses to slash budgets,” Brown said. “If organizations such as Medicaid or nutrition programs also receive budget slashes, there will be huge impacts on more poor families. It could have drastic impacts on the quality of life of students at Wayne State.”

## DEI Removal

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One of Trump’s first actions in his second term was beginning to revoke DEI efforts at the federal level. Trump signed two Executive Orders revoking DEI policies and programs, and commanded all federal DEI staff to be put on federal leave and laid off.

DEI describes the efforts put into increasing opportunity in things such as education, career and more, for people who come from different races, gender, religion, socioeconomic background, and other forms of identity and background. DEI is traced back to the 1960s, when discrimination in employment based on these above factors first became illegal.

Although the Executive Orders removed DEI policies on a federal level, Roth believes there may be an indirect effect at a university level.

“Even if this latter does not actually happen, fear of it happening can trigger ‘anticipatory compliance,’ where institutions seek to head off possible confrontations by eliminating potentially controversial programs,” Roth said.



Wayne State transformed its DEI office into the Office of Inclusive Excellence in the summer of 2024.

Computer Science student Kadin Boggan told The South End he found himself concerned for his loved ones given the DEI removal's effect on LGBTQ+ rights.

"The removal of those protections does two things. It makes homophobes or transphobes feel enabled to commit more hate crimes, historically which do not receive the level of punishment they deserve," Boggan said. "It also makes queer people, especially queer youth, feel less seen and further alienates what people who are labeled as a gender/sexual minority, when in reality are often secretly a part of our lives."

## Community Response

Trump's first month set a tone for his next four years of administration: a sharp pivot toward conservative policies. These changes, and many others, may force a question of what the WSU community can do as both everyday people. Brown believes the most important thing is to be a community.

"We have to find ways to build a community where we are holding hands in a circle," Brown said. "Once we feel the emotional connection, it's easier to come to a census about the mission and values we have."

Political Science Professor Ewa

Golebiowska believes our role as citizens is very crucial these next couple years.

"Your country needs you more than ever- if you want your country to remain a democracy," Golebiowska said. "As someone who spent the first 20 years of my life living under an autocratic regime in Communist Poland, I speak with authority when I say you want your country to remain a democracy."

# Housing Fires Spark Emergency Procedure Conversation

*By Natalie Davies*



*Photo Credit: Andy Jeffrey*

Sophomore Travis Smart was in class at Mike Ilitch School of Business when he received Snapchats about a fire starting in Towers Residential Suites in February 2024. Sorting through the messages, he realized it was his dorm.

"It was mentally draining trying to imagine if it was okay," Smart said. "I was having a breakdown on the QLINE thinking, 'I don't know what's going to happen.' Having little information sucked." At least three more

housing fires have happened since the fire in Smart's dorm. University Towers and Anthony Wayne Drive also experienced fire protection sprinkler pipes bursting from freezing on cold days in January.

Romer said all recent fires have been related to actions and items outlined in the Housing and Residential Life Community Living Guide as "prohibited," though Smart and Senior Director of Risk Management and Fire Marshal William Kemp said no official cause of the 2024



Towers fire was determined. Kemp said one possible cause was incense in the room.

Smart said one of his roommates had a candle in the suite but it was in a different room than the one where the fire started.

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“The March 2024 fire was something ignited in a trash can,” Associate Vice President of Communications Matt Lockwood said in a message to The South End. “The buildings fire detection and suppression systems worked and put it out. It is believed to be a behavior-based fire because it was not related to the building.”

## What Does Emergency Response Look Like?

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Fire alarms in University housing buildings are set off through smoke detection, and the sprinklers go off due to heat, Romer said. If a pipe bursts and it was a fire sprinkler pipe, the fire alarm would activate.

“We want people out of harm's way and to evacuate,” Romer said. “That includes full-time staff. That makes it easier for first responders to do their job.”

Kemp said when an alarm is activated, it automatically contacts WSUPD. The fire code dictates that the alarms should go off on the floor of a fire, as well as the floor above and the floor below, Kemp said.

Kemp said updates about active emergency situations in University housing come through the Detroit Fire Department or the Wayne State University Police Department at pre-planned evacuation locations.

Resident advisors are required to discuss the evacuation plan at mandatory meetings with their residents at the beginning of the fall and winter semesters, Romer said.

Kemp said evacuated residents and employees should only reenter a building when the Detroit Fire Department or a WSU police officer, through communication with DFD, gives an all-clear and says the situation is safe. This would happen at the pre-planned evacuation location, Kemp said.

Romer said the University only uses email to notify residents in situations where they are directly impacted.

“We might have someone burn popcorn, (so) we won’t send building-wide email,” Romer said. “If residents are directly impacted, we will go to residents directly impacted so people understand what happened and what

we are doing about it.”

Residents are not notified of drills in advance, as the University wants residents to evacuate and gather at the appropriate locations, Lockwood said in an email to The South End.

## Emergency Situations Especially Impact Residents With Disabilities

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Senior Melodie Knappe has lived in Anthony Wayne Drive Apartments for two years and said few people think about what emergency alarms blaring “take the stairs, do not use the elevators” mean for students with disabilities.

“If there was a severe fire, us disabled individuals could be stranded in the building for a very long time, endangering our lives,” Knappe, who uses a wheelchair, said.

*“I have a friend on my floor who is also a wheelchair user. We always try to meet up when the alarm goes off to make sure we are both okay. We often joke about the possibility of our medical equipment being destroyed by sprinklers, ‘I guess I’ll just die then.’”*

*- Melodie Knappe, Senior*

Knappe said she has never seen stair chairs, an evacuation tool for people with disabilities, in AWD and that she is not sure who is trained to use them in housing.

Kemp said the Detroit Fire Department has the equipment to evacuate people who are not able to use the stairs, as well as the key to operate elevators for evacuations when deemed safe.

“Students who request a housing accommodation through Student Disability Services are provided with (the) option to have an evacuation plan,” Lockwood said. “If the student opts for this, then SDS, Housing and Residential Life, and WSUPD work with the student to develop a plan.”

Knappe said she has never been contacted about a personalized evacuation plan or seen anything about it in any handbooks. She lives in an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible apartment and said housing is aware of her disability.

Housing’s Community Living Guide Fire includes a “fire evacuation procedure for mobility impaired/disabled persons” section.

“All mobility impaired/disabled residents should move to the nearest area of refuge (designated stairwell) during any general fire alarm,” the guide says. “In case of a real emergency, emergency evacuation personnel will personally evacuate each mobility impaired/disabled person from the nearest area of refuge.”



Knappe said when emergency alarms go off, her standard protocol is to call 911 and wait for the fire department to evacuate her. Knappe said she was initially assigned to floor eight last year and went through Student Disability Services to change her living arrangement to a lower floor she lived on in previous years.

“The idea of being stranded so high up during a fire was terrifying,” Knappe said. “But housing would not change my room until my SDS counselor made it a requirement that I be on a lower floor as part of my housing accommodations.”

Housing takes accessibility into consideration when assigning rooms, Romer told *The South End* in 2024.

“Accommodation is based on specific needs,” Romer said. “It could mean a lower floor (in case of a situation where elevators go out). It is specific to each individual, and we find space to fit that need.”

## The Cost Of Damage

Smart said the fire caused about \$300 worth of damage to his possessions, including a rug and books.

Knappe said the cost of fire or sprinkler damage is especially high for people with disabilities who have specialized equipment, such as ventilators and feeding tube pumps.

“Medical equipment is not cheap. It can range from hundreds to tens of thousands of dollars, and each of these items literally keeps us alive,” Knappe said. “Things like custom wheelchairs can take several months to replace. In that time, use of poorly fitted temporary wheelchairs can lead to joint damage or pressure sores, which can quickly become fatal if infected.”

Romer said WSU does not pay for personal property damage caused in emergency situations, but that an unaffiliated renters insurance could.

“We encourage all residents to have renters insurance,” Romer said.

The *South End* reported no students were injured in the 2024 Towers fire, and the sprinkler system caused damage to 31 suites, causing students to relocate rooms.

“At first trying to take care of everything was overwhelming but I had some friends who were willing to help me. It took half the week to move everything,” Smart said.

The *South End* was not able to confirm the exact number of fires in housing in 2024. Kemp said the University will begin to compile 2024 data for the 2025 Annual Security Report in August.

## How Does WSU Prepare For Emergencies?

Kemp said risk management provides lab training tailored for specific groups, including housing staff, resident advisors, community events, chemistry teaching assistants and the theatre department.

“Housing does emergency training for floods, severe weather, and on-call rotation for community directors to make sure staff are prepared when something happens,” Romer said.

WSU’s contractual partners Corvias and Aeromark have “robust training for their staff with maintenance and their roles in emergency situations,” and Facilities Planning and Management goes through similar training and coordinated with partners with contracts, she said.

Resident advisors do not play a specific role in the evacuation outside of informing their residents of the plan at floor meetings each semester, Romer said.

“They are residents, as well, and we want them to be safe,” Romer said.

Romer encouraged residents to be familiar with the Community Living Guide, which outlines prohibited items and emergency situation protocol.

Romer said housing tests the fire suppression systems twice a year, as well as conducts three fire drills as was required by Michigan law. Housing also followed state requirements to conduct one drill within 21 days of the start of the semester and one between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m., Romer said.

Michigan’s legislature changed fire drill laws to require a minimum of eight drills a year at the end of 2024. Romer said housing will plan 2025 drills accordingly.

The 2024 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report released by the University in October, 2024, said Yousif B. Ghafari Hall was the only dorm building to hold two fire drills in 2023, and Chatsworth Suites, Towers Residential Suites and the Thompson held one. The report says Anthony Wayne Drive and University Towers held no fire drills, although apartment buildings aren’t classified the same as dorm buildings.

Lockwood said the numbers in the report are not accurate and that the University did conduct fire drills and reported them to the Michigan Bureau of Fire Services.

“The ASR contains data for university housing ‘fire stats,’” Kemp said. “The data is compiled and corroborated by multiple university departments.”

Smart said experiencing a fire in University housing did not deter him from continuing to live on campus.



“I originally had thoughts about whether I wanted to be in Towers again, but anything can melt and anyone can be negligent and start one (fire) accidentally, and I wanted to stay on campus.”

Knappe said she hasn’t been able to find much accessible housing around campus.

“Unfortunately, I’ve been all but forced to remain here, because there is so little accessible housing close to campus,” Knappe said. “We basically have no other options. Under the ADA, we are supposed to have accessible housing and an equal access to facilities, especially in the context of education. Adequate emergency planning should be considered a crucial aspect of access.”





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**www.drshaunadiggs.com**

**EVERY WARRIOR HAS THE RIGHT TO LIVE AND LEARN AT WSU – FREE FROM HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION**

**TITLE IX**

Title IX is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education. Sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking are forms of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX and by University policy.

To learn more about WSU’s Interim Title IX Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures, please visit the Title IX website.



**OPTIONS FOR REPORTING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

Students may report sexual misconduct to law enforcement, to the university, to both, or to neither. All Warriors are encouraged to make the reporting decision that’s right for them.

**REPORTING EMERGENCIES**

In cases of threats, imminent danger and other emergencies, contact the Wayne State Police at 313-577-2222.

**CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT**

For confidential assistance, contact Counseling and Psychological Services at 313-577-3398. For after-hours crisis support call the crisis line at 313-577-9982.

To learn more about support resources and reporting options, connect with the Title IX office.

**313-577-9999      TITLEIX@WAYNE.EDU      TITLEIX.WAYNE.EDU**





# GET INVOLVED

## FIND ORGANIZATIONS

Wayne State boasts over 500 student organizations on campus ranging from social to academic and everything in between.

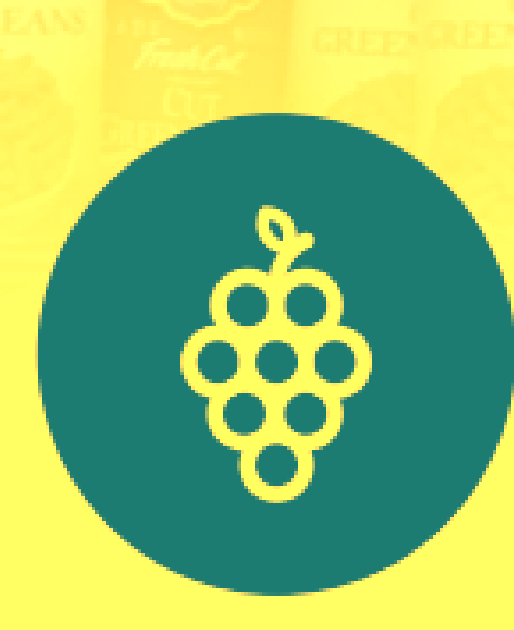
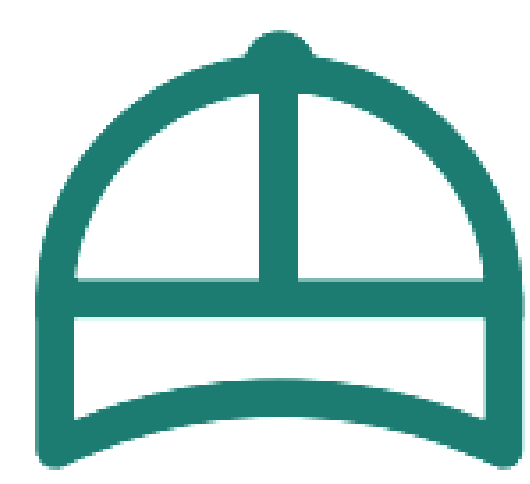
## ATTEND EVENTS

Search, RSVP and check into events happening on campus. Wayne State is bursting with fun activities, sporting events and learning experiences to attend.

## TRACK INVOLVEMENT

Record your activities and memberships on campus to showcase your involvement. Discover your Involvement Record in your account menu.

[GETINVOLVED.WAYNE.EDU](https://getinvolved.wayne.edu)



The W Food Pantry & Thrift Shop provides currently enrolled Wayne State Warriors in need of food assistance with supplemental food and additional resources gently used garments to enhance student success.

### Food Pantry

Access to food twice a month  
Feminine hygiene items available any time  
Essential baby items

### Thrift Shop

Casual and career clothing items available  
Household items available

### Other resources

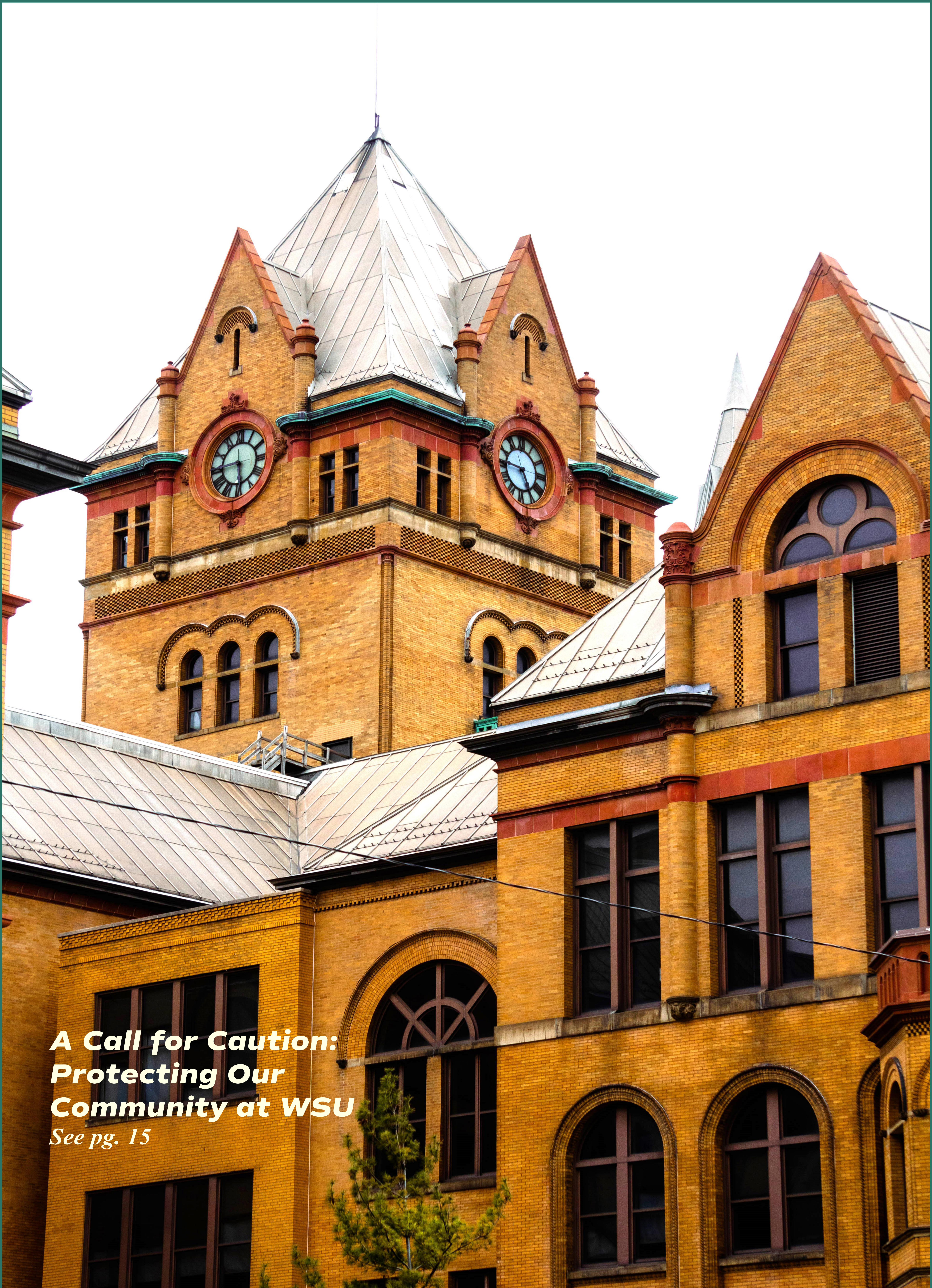
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services representative on campus to learn and apply for state and federal benefits (SNAP, childcare, transportation, etc.)

Warrior Meal Share Program

[THEW.WAYNE.EDU](https://thew.wayne.edu)



# OP-EDs



**A Call for Caution:  
Protecting Our  
Community at WSU**  
*See pg. 15*

*Picture Credit: Quinn Banks*



# A Call for Caution: Protecting Our Community at WSU

*By Abeer Sheikh*



*Photo Credit: Abeer Sheikh*

The Wayne State University community was shaken by the loss of Sharif AliDinar, a financial aid officer at the School of Medicine, who was struck by a vehicle and killed while crossing at the corner of Warren and Woodward Ave on Jan. 8.

The Wayne County Prosecutor's Office charged Antoine Bradley in connection with the death of AliDinar. According to Fox 2 Detroit, Bradley was driving 69 mph seconds prior to the crash in the 30 mph zone. Bradley faces charges of reckless driving causing death as a result of the incident.

AliDinar's death reminds us of a critical issue that affects everyone — pedestrian safety — and the importance of being more aware as pedestrians and drivers. Michigan Traffic Crash Facts reports, there were 90,650 total crashes with 539 people killed and 3,012 serious injuries in the city of Detroit, between the years of 2017 and 2021.

As we process this loss, I want to call on all members of the Wayne State community to reflect on our collective

responsibility for safety on and around campus. AliDinar's death reminds us to be more alert and considerate of our surroundings, whether we're walking or driving.

Wayne State's campus is hectic, with students often hurrying between classes and events. It's easy to become distracted and take shortcuts by jaywalking or not paying attention to traffic signals. While many of us may think taking a few steps outside the crosswalk or not giving our full attention to the road as we cross is a harmless convenience, the consequences can be injurious or deadly. Given AliDinar's sudden death, we cannot afford to ignore the reality that we could be at risk also. Even if you are safe on the road, it doesn't mean everyone else will be.

Drivers must remember that they are entrusted with vehicles, and with that comes a responsibility and a promise to be safe on the road. Given that a large portion of the WSU population commutes to school, the streets around campus can be congested. Speeding,

distracted driving and failure to yield to pedestrians can have lethal consequences. This is a reminder that tragedies like AliDinar's can happen in an instant.

In a city like Detroit, the quick pace of life often leads to rushed decisions behind the wheel. But we must remember that we share the road with others and approach every intersection cautiously for pedestrians, and other drivers.

As we mourn AliDinar's loss, we must also come together as a community to ensure that such incidents don't repeat. Let us take the time to cross the street responsibly, drive with care and consideration.

This is not just about following laws or policies — it is about protecting the people we care about. We must focus on becoming a community that prioritizes safety for ourselves and others. Stay safe on the road, Warriors!



# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



**New Gretchen  
Center**

*See pg. 17*

*Picture Credit: Mike Tokarz*



# Wayne State's New Gretchen C. Valade Jazz Center Becomes a New Home for Detroit Jazz

By Sydney Waelchli

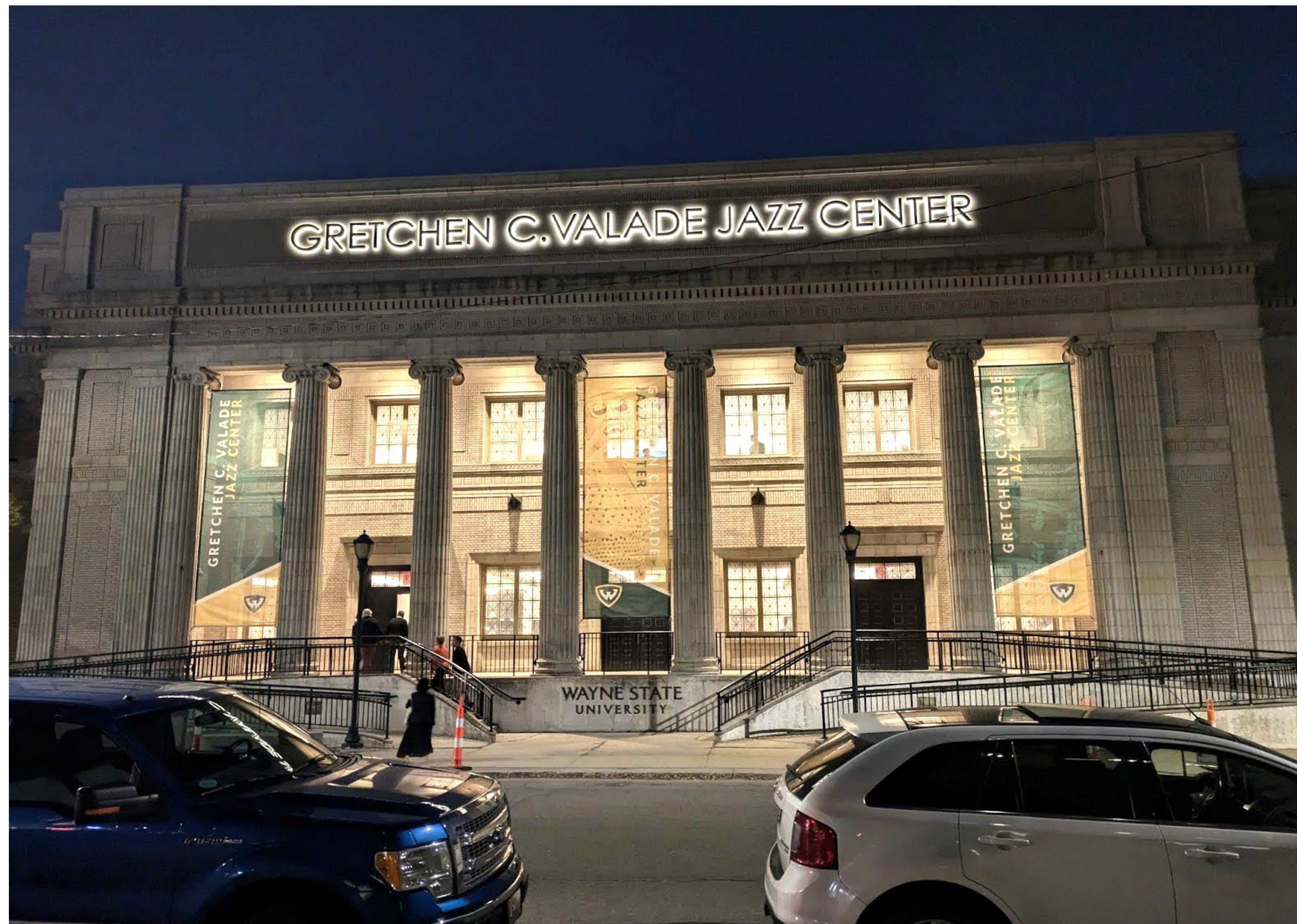


Photo credit: Devarian Jackson

Wayne State University's Gretchen C. Valade Jazz Center Labor Day weekend in 2024 for the Detroit Jazz Festival, providing a remodeled performance space for WSU students and a hub to celebrate Detroit jazz.

Christopher, the director of Jazz Studies and the Valade endowed chair in jazz, said Detroit needed the center because of the city's contributions to jazz and other musical genres.

"I think it's really important, given the unique connectivity, really the symbiotic connectivity, between Detroit and jazz, that we have a place that celebrates it as the high art form," Collins said. "That it is providing that art form and those artists and the audience with an exceptional experience around that music, and on the campus of Wayne State, where some of the greatest jazz musicians in history went to school, it all makes sense."

Third year jazz studies major Hanna Kahrchenko plays the double bass. She said she was really excited for the new jazz center to open because it's not only for WSU students, but there's a major interest among musicians and community members too.

"There's a lot of external community interest in just seeing these concerts. And all our concerts are free, at least the ones that are on campus," said Kahrchenko. "So for anyone who's like, 'I don't want to go spend \$100 at a jazz club,' you can just go and do it here for free. So it's very cool."

Collins said the Gretchen C. Valade Jazz Center benefits the Detroit community and WSU students by providing them a place to collaborate.

"It brings to bear just one of many community connections that will provide artistry and workshops, and educational and engagement collaboration opportunities between students, faculty and the outside professional world in a facility that is specifically designed and has all the great backline and instruments in accouterments," Collins said.

He said the center hosts a couple of free events

on Mondays to gather WSU students and community members. Collins said the first and third Mondays of every month host Wayne State student jam sessions, while the second and fourth Mondays host Jazz from the Cellar events.

"We started these series that begin to acclimate audience and artists to the uniqueness of the space, and we'll be adding to that various community series, a national series, and, of course, around the Jazz Festival, some very special programming in there that offers a different flavor of jazz than what one would experience at the Jazz Festival," Collins said.

The jam sessions are currently held in the Detroit Jazz Hall in the new center until the Dee Dee Bridgewater's club opens. Collins said construction of the Dee Dee Bridgewater's jazz club in the basement of the Gretchen C. Valade Jazz Center should be finished in a few months.

He said the Gretchen C. Valade Jazz Center was also acoustically designed for jazz production and performance. Kahrchenko said the way the center was designed enhances the listening experience for the audience.

"Engineers came into that new Valade center and they measured everything out," Kahrchenko said. "Each sound panel is adhered to be turned and changed to the instruments that are in a jazz band, which is why it's so unique that I don't think there's a lot of venues made like that."

Douglas Bianchi, director of bands and the conductor of the WSU Wind Symphony, conducted a Wind Symphony performance for the first time in the Gretchen C. Valade Jazz Center in Oct. 2024.

He said the acoustics in the new center were noticeably different from how the symphony sounded in rehearsal and previous performance spaces.

"The hall was such that I'm not sure how it sounded in the audience. It seemed a little bright sounding to me on the stage. However, all the musicians could hear each other," Bianchi said. "In

fact, one of the most interesting things is they could hear things that they hadn't heard before themselves. They could actually hear better on that stage than they could in rehearsal. So, that is unheard of at Wayne, because the two other places that we've played on campus are just horrible acoustics."

He said the previous performance locations, St. Andrews Hall and the Community Arts Auditorium, were inadequate for musical performances.

"They're just not made for music. This is definitely made for music," Bianchi said. "We've needed a place to perform on campus that's worth a damn since time immemorial."

Collins said the Gretchen C. Valade Jazz Center was made possible because of Gretchen C. Valade herself. He said Valade made the largest arts single endowment donations of \$9.5 million to WSU, which partly went into the construction and naming of the jazz center and the Dee Dee Bridgewater's club venue downstairs.

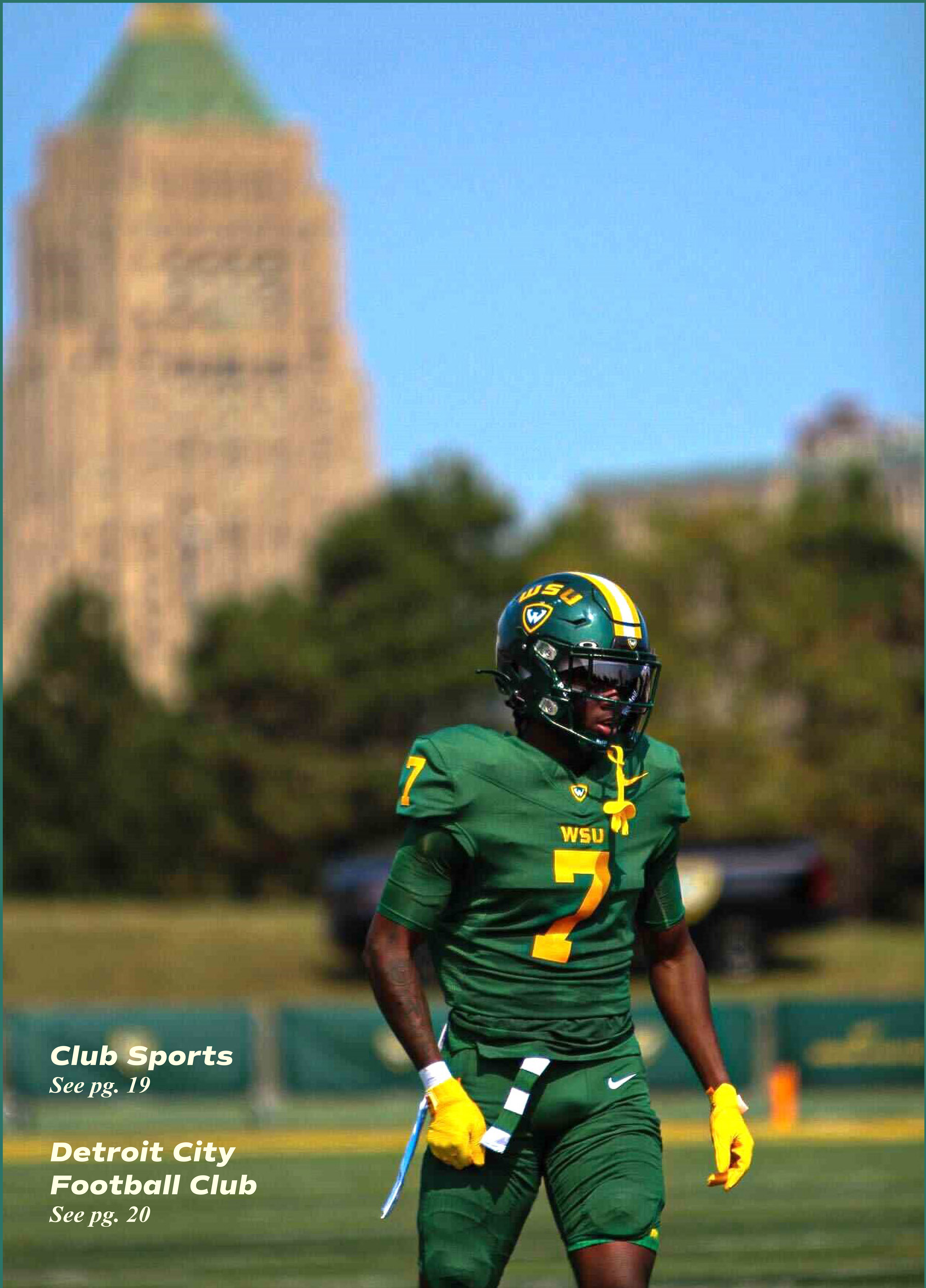
"We became very close, and her mission and vision of providing jazz and accessibility to jazz, not only for patrons, but for artists, as well as inclusiveness that is required in that to bring the art to everyone, and to include everyone that is of excellence in producing that art that was of great importance to her," Collins said.

He said this donation and construction of the Gretchen C. Valade Jazz Center is even more significant for putting WSU on the map in the historic Detroit jazz scene.

"So it really provides an exceptional environment for students and faculty to do what we do and celebrate the greatness of Wayne State's current faculty, students, alums, and the history of the jazz program and the music program in general," Collins said. "I mean, there's nothing like this in the region. This has the potential to be a world destination for jazz and a place for artists to record at the highest level and release those recordings."



# SPORTS



## **Club Sports**

*See pg. 19*

## **Detroit City Football Club**

*See pg. 20*

*Picture Credit: Akeel Ahmed*



# Club Sports Offer Competition and Leadership To Wayne State Students

By Nick Campbell



Photo Credit: Nick Campbell; Devarian Jackson

## CLUB SPORTS

- Cheer-** Molly Cottrell
- Dance-** Chloe Hamelin
- Equestrian-** Isabel Okumura
- Esports-** Naveena France
- Figure Skating-** Leila Ackerman
- Grappling-** Eriyon Adams
- Men's Soccer-** Matt Kraydich
- Women's Soccer-** Jordyn Nutting
- Men's Volleyball-** Caden Walker
- Women's Volleyball-** James Stebelton
- Rowing-** John Brunelle
- Swim-** Ella Ford
- Table Tennis-** Abhi Dharani
- Tennis-** Vera Azuz
- Waterpolo-** Daniel Patrascu
- Wrestling-** Joseph Stachelek
- Running Club-** Magnolia Lundquist



Among the variety of varsity sports teams that Wayne State University has to offer is a growing number of club sports, which increased from 10 to 19 in the last two years, according to Associate Athletics Director Rob Latva. A club sports team is “a student organization that provides a medium for people who share a common interest in a particular sport or activity” as outlined in the WSU Club Sport Handbook.

Among these teams are figure skating, swim, water polo, women's basketball, men's and women's volleyball, Esports and tennis, which are all currently in season. Club swim began their winter season after competing at a few meets in the fall. The team has gained a significant amount of members over the past year.

Senior Ella Ford and juniors Emily Ericson, and Alyssa Emerson, serve as the three co-presidents for the club swim team.

“Our team has expanded a lot, so I feel like a good goal for us for the end of the season is to continue to work on team bonding and foster that community within the group that we do have to help connect us more with the bigger group that we have now,” Emerson said.

Emerson has been a member of both varsity and club swim teams at WSU, and saw advantages with the club team.

“When we come to practice, we are able to talk, we can do fun activities and team bonding. We're all there to make connections and be our personal best as opposed to working to represent the school above everything else. So I feel like it's a little bit lower stakes and higher fun, which allows us to do more within the group,” she said.

For most club sports, it's a little bit less commitment for students with busy schedules. Latva said they practice four times a week at most.

“A lot of our club sports students are med school students or law students whose course loads are basically full-time jobs, but it allows them to play competitively and go to school and focus on their future as well,” Latva said.

Another difference with club sports is the responsibilities of the board members, who are students who organize and represent the team.

“We've pushed for the students to do some of the administrative stuff, which is also really good development for them,” Latva said. “Dealing with budgets, dealing with people, making decisions that affect an organization, travel arrangements, and working with the national governing body to make your schedule. Soccer's got scheduling meetings coming up in April, so they have to get on a virtual meeting and they have to knock out the schedule for themselves for their division, and they have to attend because me or (Intramural and Club Sports Supervisor) Whitney (Savage) cannot attend those, those have to be done by the club presidents.”

Latva said this extra responsibility can be a beneficial learning opportunity for student board members.

“If you have to manage people in any way, shape, or form; club sports leadership is one of the best experiences you can have,” Latva said.

Club swim co-presidents use these leadership skills to coordinate their season.

“Our rule with the new team is to make sure things are basically running smoothly,” Ford said. “Specific things that we do are getting our

meet forms ready and the meet coordinated in general. We go to a couple of meets every month and those include places like Michigan State or Bowling Green.”

Club sports can also benefit commuters who do not play varsity sports.

“I'm a commuter student and club swim is the way I got more into Wayne State extracurriculars,” Ericson said. “Before that, I would just go to my classes and then go home, but now, I have something more to do on campus and it's how I've met a lot of people and made a lot of good memories. I would encourage any first-year or anybody who doesn't feel like they have a place to fit in at Wayne right now and they're only there for the academics to find a club sport that resonates with them.”

Junior Daniel Patrascu is the water polo club president. The water polo team is midway through their season and is seeing a lot of progress with \_\_\_\_\_.

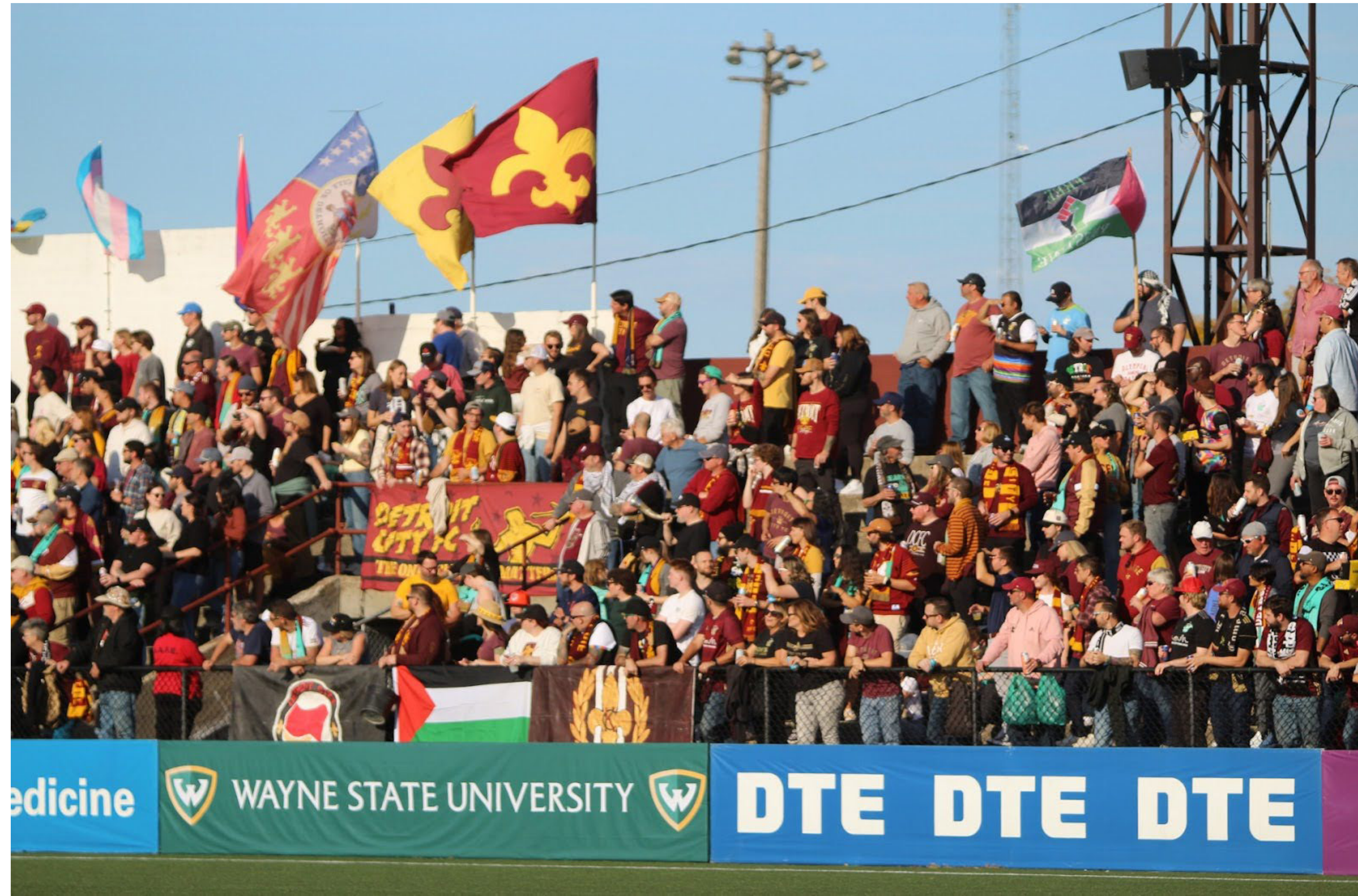
“A lot of it (being a club president) is getting our team together, making sure practice runs smoothly, setting up fundraisers, setting up matches with other teams, and providing an environment that makes everyone feel welcome and like they can learn something new each day,” Patrascu said. “A lot of the people on our team have just started this year. A lot of those people have definitely gotten better and shown massive improvement. We're starting to feel more like a team where we can play other people and actually have a chance to win.”

For more information about club sports, visit the Mort Harris Recreation Center website at [rfc.wayne.edu](http://rfc.wayne.edu).



# Wayne State Partners With Detroit City Football Club

*By Akeel Ahmed*



*Photo Credit: Akeel Ahmed*

Wayne State University announced a historic partnership on Oct. 2 of last year with the local USL team Detroit City Football Club, making the university the exclusive higher education partner of DCFC.

This partnership not only strengthens the relationship between the two organizations, but also creates an internship program that will provide current and future Wayne State students with opportunities to gain hands-on experience in sports management, marketing, and event coordination. DCFC includes an outdoor stadium, indoor facility, as well as men, women and youth clubs, that will all offer opportunities for WSU students and graduates.

“Whether it’s through DCFC’s youth academy and indoor soccer facility in Detroit, or Wayne State’s financial aid offerings and academic support programs, both of our organizations offer young people and other members of our community access to opportunity,” said DCFC CEO and co-owner Sean Mann. “I’m excited to see what we can accomplish together on the same team.”

Wayne State student Izzy Rincon interned at DCFC for the summer of 2024 and will continue as a photographer for the team in the 2025 season.

“They are great at hiring people in college or recent graduates to get some experience. There are many opportunities working for DCFC and the people there are genuinely great people who want to help,” Rincon said.

“Wayne State consistently provides our students with a top-tier academic experience in the classroom. We also want every student on our campus to benefit from exciting learn-by-doing opportunities that prepare them for success in their future careers,” said WSU President Kimberly Andrews Espy, Ph.D. “Many of our students and faculty choose Wayne State because of our unique relationship with Detroit. The growth of Detroit City FC is one of the best stories in American sports, and now our university and students will benefit from it.”

“Wayne definitely prepared me for all of my roles. My boss who is the Director of Creative Content and Branding at Wayne is Zack Belsky and he has been my biggest mentor and taught me and prepared me for everything I have done,” Rincon said.

In addition to this top-tier academic experience, DCFC offers discounted tickets to faculty and staff for the price of five dollars per admission ticket, a total discount of thirty percent off of any section in the stadium, or 100 dollars off of designated season passes.



# FEATURES



**WarriorGPT**

*See pg. 22*

*Picture Credit: Andy Jeffrey*



# WarriorGPT, WSU Dives Into Artificial Intelligence With Its Own Generative AI

By Sydney Waelchli

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Photo Credit: Wayne State University

Wayne State University's academic senate subcommittee on AI collaborated with the Computing & Information Technology department. Together, they developed their own generative AI chatbot tool, WarriorGPT, for faculty and students.

A pilot program for WarriorGPT began in the 2024 fall semester with a selection of professors who chose to opt-in access to the AI chatbot for their courses. Professors could also opt-in to WarriorGPT for the 2025 winter semester.

Senior Director in Service Management of C&IT and part-time faculty member Curtis Kratt said improvements have been made for the winter. He said approximately 70 courses and 1,500 students had access to WarriorGPT in the fall, while around 54 courses and 1,350 students currently have access this semester.

Kratt said they developed WarriorGPT at no cost to students to help ensure security and privacy across the university by keeping WSU's institutional data out of free, public AI platforms.

"That's what WarriorGPT is. It's a secure place. It doesn't store information. It doesn't train on anything you type into it. It doesn't know who you are. And once you close that browser window, that history is gone. There's no storing of information," Kratt said. "It was intentionally developed to be completely private, completely secure, so that faculty and students can feel comfortable learning these technologies."

"With the big boom in generative AI over the past two years, we saw a lot of faculty wanting to be able to basically get into the technology. Start using it, start rolling it into their curriculum," Kratt said.

Kratt said C&IT works with the Office for Teaching & Learning to provide opportunities for faculty to train in AI. WarriorGPT is up to the discretion of the faculty, depending on their stance on AI.

"You've got the one side that it's only used for cheating. Students are going to cheat. Everyone's cheating," Kratt said. "And then you've got the other side is, hey, we need to be teaching this because students are going to be using it in their careers. It's actually quite an impressive technology. So let's be teaching and ahead of the curve on how we could train students on using this as well."

Dr. Karen McDevitt, Associate Professor of Teaching in the Communications department, opted-in for WarriorGPT in the 2024-25 academic year. She said it is there if students want it, but noticed many of them do not utilize it.

"Well, to be honest with you, most students are using ChatGPT and other platforms instead of the WarriorGPT, just because of speed and access," McDevitt said. "I don't want to say it's a moot point, but it's there, although students seem to be opting for other platforms."

She said she thinks people should experiment with generative AI no matter what, whether it is WarriorGPT or another platform.

"It's an emerging tool. I think it's changing every day, and it's something that we need to familiarize ourselves with," McDevitt said. "We need to be aware, but we need to know what makes it good and what makes it not so good."

Ethan Holmes, a WSU senior majoring in communications, experimented with WarriorGPT and said it was "very bare bones." He said students would be better off using a more popular and expansive generative AI engine.

Holmes said people need to be wary when experimenting with AI because it is unreliable and can provide false information.

"I don't think that AI is ethical, but we use unethical things everyday and it seems this one is becoming more and more expected of us," Holmes said. "If you are to use it, check your sources and make sure they're real."

Kratt said people should be exploring AI because it is here whether they like it or not. He said it is a resource, not a replacement to a search engine.

"I think the world in general still has an AI literacy problem. I think there is confusion on what this technology is and what it can do. It is a generative tool," Kratt said. "So it's great at doing things like writing based off of a prompt you've made or summarizing. This is a brainstorming tool or an idea generation type tool."

WarriorGPT has been updated since the fall 2024 beta version and will continue to be updated as new open source models and large language models are released with more relevant information, Kratt said.



THE SOUTH END  
*Winter 2025 Staff*







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# STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

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