

# THE CAVALIER DAILY

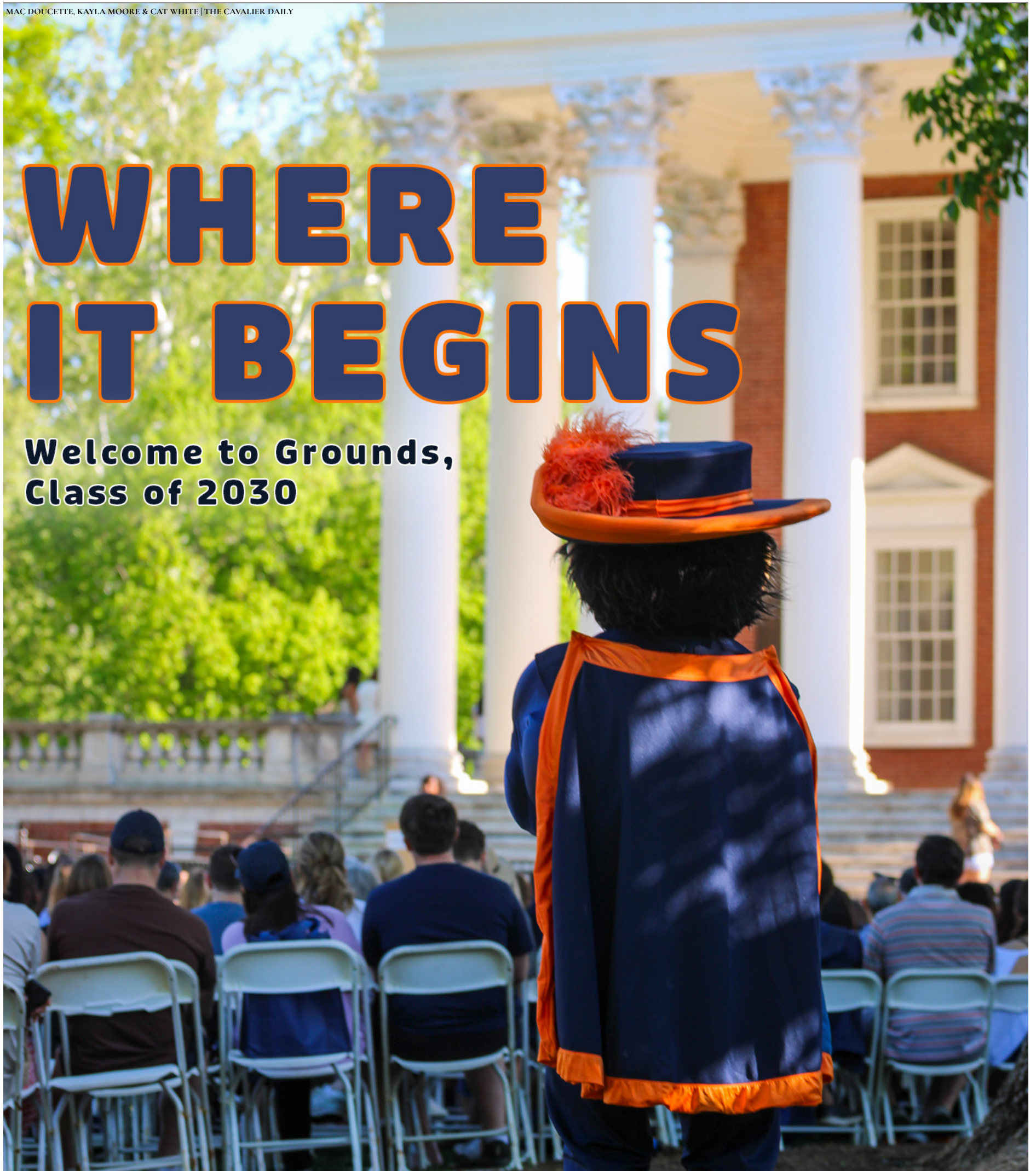
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MAC DOUCETTE, KAYLA MOORE & CAT WHITE | THE CAVALIER DAILY

## WHERE IT BEGINS

**Welcome to Grounds,  
Class of 2030**



## NEWS

# This summer in-brief

CD News Staff

## Students react to Va. Supreme Court shutdown of voter-approved redistricting — May 7

The Virginia Supreme Court ruled May 8 in a 4-3 decision that the Democratic-led redistricting plan approved by voters in the April 21 special election did not follow proper constitutional procedure, nullifying Virginia citizens' narrow vote. The Virginia Supreme Court stated that the General Assembly approved the redistricting amendment on the ballot — which would have allowed the Democratic-led legislature to bypass the bipartisan redistricting commission and draw new state lines before the 2030 census — too late.

The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Virginia Supreme Court's decision May 15. The decision marks a Republican victory in the ongoing bipartisan battle for House seats ahead of the November midterm elections.

Regarding students' reactions to the substance of the ruling, some students expressed that if the law was broken — as the ruling details with the procedural violation in the process of the amendment's approval — then the redistricting plan should not be passed.

## Board of Visitors hears report from President Beardsley on new strategic planning efforts — June 7

The University's full Board of Visitors convened June 5 to hear remarks from University President Scott Beardsley — who outlined preliminary priorities for the University's next strategic plan — and remarks from the chair and vice chair of the Health System Board.

During his report to the Board, Beardsley reflected on his first six months as president and discussed plans to launch a University-wide strategic planning process over the coming year. Beardsley emphasized his remarks were not a strategic plan itself, but rather a set of initial observations gathered from "Grounds for Conversation" — an initiative focused on listening and creating structured dialogue with various University stakeholders. He said that these discussions will inform a broader planning effort that will begin this summer.

## School of Medicine increases its NIH research funding amid competitive landscape — June 22

Despite certain peer schools having lost National Institutes of Health research funding to their respective medical schools, the School of Medicine at the University has managed to increase the amount of NIH funding it is capturing by 20.4 percent from 2024 to 2025. Compared to other medical schools that received funding increases — like Duke University School of Medicine and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine — the University's School of Medicine increase in funding outpaced these other increases.

For the University's School of Medicine, NIH funding sources are a critical component of its total research funding. According to Eric Swensen, the public information officer for UVA Health, the School of Medicine received about \$300 million in total research funding for fiscal year 2025. More specifically, the School of Medicine received \$203,283,468 of this research funding from the NIH. This means NIH funding accounted for about 68 percent of its total research funding.

## ADVERTISEMENT



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# A closer look at student self-governance at the University

Student self-governance organizations administer elections, adjudicate University Standards of Conduct cases and allocate Student Activities Fee funding

Jaylynn Perez | Senior Associate

Student self-governance — one of the University's foundational traditions — refers to a system in which students operate key institutional functions on behalf of the University. Several student organizations hold “special status” within this system, serving as delegated agents of the University and carrying out responsibilities that might otherwise be managed by administrators. These responsibilities include administering student elections, adjudicating the University's Standards of Conduct, allocating Student Activities Fee funding for Contracted Independent Organizations and coordinating class traditions, among other duties delegated by the University.

Special Status Organizations operate within a structured partnership with the University, granting students authority while maintaining oversight through designated University advisors and governing bylaws. These governing bodies, such as Student Council, the University Judiciary Committee and the Honor Committee, form an interconnected system that sustains the University's long-standing tradition of student-led governance and institutional participation.

Here is a closer look at student self-governance organizations at the University, beginning with the organization that administers elections for several of the governing bodies.

## University Board of Elections

The University Board of Elections was established in 2003 through a student referendum and authority from the Board of Visitors to support student self-governance at the University by overseeing student elections. These elections include positions for Student Council, Honor, the UJC and Class Councils.

UBE consists of 15 students drawn from across the University and requires members to maintain academic standing and avoid conflicts of interest related to student elections. UBE is also divided into several teams that manage different aspects of the election process, including candidates, elections, rules and marketing.

UBE functions primarily as an administrative and regulatory body, overseeing more than the collection of votes. The SSO is authorized to conduct University-wide referenda and additional elections upon request while also establishing semester election calendars, administering candidate registration procedures, enforcing election rules and campaign regulations and managing the University's online voting system.

During the fall and spring election cycles, UBE determines deadlines,

oversees petition requirements and publishes candidate information and election materials for students. UBE also possesses enforcement authority related to election conduct. According to its Rules and Regulations, UBE may enact and enforce election procedures and can pursue action through organizations such as the UJC or Honor when election rules are violated. UBE members may also not publicly endorse candidates, participate in campaigns or seek elected positions that fall under UBE jurisdiction.

UBE membership is open to students through an application process rather than an election process. Information regarding recruitment, application deadlines and membership opportunities is available through UBE announcements and the organization's website. Students may also participate in the election process by running for an elected position, voting in University-wide elections or engaging in referenda and public feedback opportunities.

## Student Council

Student Council was established in 1945 to serve as the University's primary representative body for undergraduate students. The organization convened April 25, 1945 to hold its first meeting in Madison Hall, beginning a system of formalized student representation that remains a central component of the University's tradition of student self-governance. While Student Council continues to operate under an updated version of its original constitution, the organization's structure and responsibilities have expanded in response to changing student needs.

According to Student Council's website, the organization seeks to “protect and improve the rights, opportunities and quality of life of every student at the University.” Through legislation, student advocacy and collaboration with University administrators, Student Council functions as a liaison between students and University stakeholders — including the Board.

Student Council is composed of a representative body and the Executive Board who work to represent and advocate for student interests.

The representative body functions as Student Council's legislative branch and includes elected students from the University's various schools as well as representatives for first-year, transfer and international students. Representatives are responsible for addressing student concerns and introducing and voting on legislation.

Student Council representatives consider resolutions and policy proposals concerning University issues,

such as library operating hours, tuition and fee concerns, transportation and parking issues and student healthcare affordability.

The Executive Board oversees the organization's broader operations. Executive Board positions include the president, vice president for administration, vice president for organizations, chair of the representative body, chief of cabinet, chief of coalitions, chief of support and access services and director of University relations.

Student Council also allocates and manages funding for CIOs through the SAF — a mandatory payment with tuition from all University students to support CIOs across Grounds. Through its Organizations Branch, Student Council reviews funding requests and determines allocations that allow organizations to sponsor speakers, host events and conduct its programming.

## University Judiciary Committee

The University Judiciary Committee is a student-run judicial body established through a 1955 agreement between the Board and Student Council. The organization was granted authority to investigate and adjudicate violations of University policy and student conduct standards. In 1970, the Board adopted the original Standards of Conduct, which were revised in spring 2001 and in fall 2011. The UJC's mission statement is “to maintain and promote a community of respect, safety and freedom” at the University.

Unlike representative organizations such as Student Council — which focus on advocating for student voices — the UJC operates as a judiciary body responsible for enforcing the University's Standards of Conduct. UJC investigates allegations of misconduct and conducts hearings involving individual students and CIOs accused of violating University policies. Any member of the University community — including students, faculty, staff or community members — may file a complaint with UJC.

UJC's jurisdiction covers alleged violations of the University's Standards of Conduct — which address conduct that may interfere with the rights, safety and educational experiences of members of the University community. However, the UJC does not oversee all forms of student misconduct. UJC operates separately from Honor — which addresses cases involving lying, cheating and stealing.

UJC does not hear cases involving certain issues such as sexual misconduct cases — which are handled by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights — or University motor vehicle violations — which fall under the

scope of the University Department of Parking and Transportation. In addition, the UJC does not have jurisdiction over Student Council or Honor.

UJC consists of 27 representatives from the 12 undergraduate and graduate schools who are elected during the spring election cycle, serving one-year terms beginning April 1. Representatives act as judges during UJC trials and are responsible for policy and procedures.

In addition to representatives, UJC includes student support officers who serve as counselors, investigators and educators. Counselors act as advocates for both complainants and accused students during UJC proceedings. Investigators compile impartial factual records and evidence related to UJC cases. Educators conduct outreach intended to increase awareness of the UJC's procedures and mission.

UJC cases are heard by trial panels composed of student judges who evaluate evidence, hear testimony and determine findings and sanctions. If a student is found responsible, sanctions can be intended to be educational and rehabilitative rather than purely punitive. These sanctions can range from written warnings to suspension or expulsion in more serious cases.

UJC additionally includes the First-Year Judiciary Committee — a subsidiary body composed of first-year undergraduate students who hear cases involving other first-year students. According to the UJC's website, this provides first-year students with peer accountability involving individuals navigating similar transition experiences at the University.

## Honor Committee

The Honor Committee serves as the student-run body responsible for maintaining and administering the University's Honor System. Honor is tasked with maintaining the “Community of Trust” — which reflects the expectation that members of the University community act with honesty, integrity and mutual respect, supporting shared accountability across Grounds.

According to Honor's website, the principles of the Honor System are often attributed to Thomas Jefferson's educational philosophy, which emphasized student responsibility within a residential academic community. Amid tensions between students and faculty regarding expectations of student conduct and discipline on Grounds, concerns regarding student behavior intensified following the November 1840 shooting of Law Prof. John A. G. Davis by a student while Davis attempted to address a disturbance on the Lawn.

Also at this time, faculty received

an increase in reports of students' academic dishonesty, and the University adopted the Honor System in 1842. Law Prof. Henry St. George Tucker introduced a resolution proposing that students certify on all examinations that they had “derived no assistance during the time of this examination from any source whatsoever.” According to Honor's website, the resolution was initially intended for classroom conduct, but students assumed responsibility for maintaining a student-run Honor System. Today's Honor pledge asks students to certify they have “neither given nor received unauthorized assistance” on assignments and exams.

The Honor System currently defines an Honor Offense as an act of lying, cheating or stealing committed knowingly. Cases are evaluated based on three criteria, which includes whether a prohibited act occurred, whether the student knew or reasonably should have known their conduct violated Honor principles and whether tolerating the conduct would undermine the Community of Trust.

Honor consists of elected student representatives, alongside support officers who may act as investigators, advisors or educators. Investigators collect information and evidence regarding alleged offenses. Advisors assist students navigating the process and educators conduct outreach and programming intended to increase understanding of the Honor System across Grounds.

The Honor System previously operated under a single-sanction model — which meant that any student found guilty of lying, cheating or stealing faced the automatic two semester leave of absence at the time from the University. The model imposed the same consequence for all violations regardless of the severity of circumstances. In 2023, Honor adopted a multi-sanction model — which allows for a range of sanctions depending on the circumstances of a case. Possible sanctions include educational seminars, probation, suspension or dismissal.

During the academic year, Honor generally meets every Sunday at 7:00 p.m. in Newcomb Hall 480, with meetings open to students and University community members except for confidential case discussions, which are conducted in a closed session. Honor also convenes over the summer and holds monthly meetings via Zoom. Public comment opportunities are provided during open sessions. Honor also maintains publicly accessible summaries of Honor proceedings and meeting minutes on their website.

# How does pre-major advising work for College first-years?

The 2025-26 academic year was the first year that all first-year College students' advisors were also their first quarter Engagements professors

Melody Yuan | Staff Writer

The Fall 2026 semester will mark the beginning of the second year of a new pre-major advising system for non-Echols Scholars in the College of Arts and Sciences — Echols Scholars are students in an honors program who are exempt from many general education requirements, including the Engagements. In this new system, first-year students' first quarter Engagements professors also serve as their advisor until students declare a major.

The new advising system was fully implemented at the start of the 2025-26 academic year, and partially implemented at the start of the 2024-25 academic year. Until 2024, students were randomly matched with faculty advisors for pre-major advising, and in previous coverage by The Cavalier Daily, students expressed that they felt a lack of support as they navigated specific academic questions and that advisors were unable to provide personalized guidance.

The Cavalier Daily spoke to and received statements from Creighton Coleman, assistant director of advising and College lecturer, Liza Flood, assistant director of course design and assistant Engagements professor, Gillet Rosenblith, assistant director of Engagements Cohorts and assistant professor, David Walsh, College advising fellow and lecturer, and Judy Giering, associate dean for undergraduate affairs, to hear how and why the advising system changed, and whether or not the new system is proving to be effective.

## What are the Engagements?

The Engagements program is a set of four quarter-long courses for first-year College students that each focus on one of the program's four pillars — Engaging Aesthetics, Empirical and Scientific Engagement, Engaging Differences and Ethical Engagements. The courses aim to “celebrate learning while introducing first-year students to the liberal arts and sciences,” and the courses are small in size and taught seminar-style by the College Fellows — a group of College faculty members who design the courses and ultimately teach the one they design.

Rising first-year students in the College had until June 15 to indicate their preferences for the Engagements courses and other College courses they are interested in on the pre-enrollment survey, which was located on the New Student Portal task list.

In a statement to The Cavalier Daily, Coleman wrote that the preferences are taken into account before students officially enroll in courses. He added that students were able to see their pre-enrolled courses on the Student Information System as of June 23, though advisor assignments will not be made until August.

Flood wrote in a statement to The Cavalier Daily that 30 to 40 new Engagements courses are designed each year. Flood added that creating new courses for each academic year allows students to engage in relevant topics and faculty to pursue their “academic curiosities.”

As for the overall goal of the Engagements program, Flood wrote that the program seeks to actively engage students in the learning process. Through small classes — no more than 35 students — Flood explained that the Engagements program fosters dialogue among peers and interaction with professors across the College.

“In this way, we invite them into an intellectual community that every student belongs to once they arrive on Grounds,” Flood wrote. “The motivating questions of the four pillars are relevant to any major a student might choose to pursue. This is why we call our courses ‘pre-disciplinary.’”

Students can further tailor their Engagements experience by participating in the Engagements Cohorts program, in which a group of 20 or 35 students spend the academic year together and take Engagements classes focusing on one central theme.

In a statement to The Cavalier Daily, Rosenblith wrote that the Cohorts program began in the 2023-24 academic year with one cohort focusing on monuments and memorials. Rosenblith added that since the successful pilot year, the Cohort program has expanded each year.

“Cohort students know they will be together the whole year and can develop familiarity and friendships with each other in and outside of class. This allows for comfort within classroom conversations, which can be helpful for enabling students to talk to each other across differences of opinion,” Rosenblith wrote.

Additionally, Rosenblith wrote that students participating in the Cohorts program take a related field trip during the academic year, which allows students to experience their cohort theme in person and speak with professionals in the field.

According to Rosenblith, the four cohorts offered in the 2026-27 academic year are titled “Democracy,” “UVa.,” “Landscapes of Memory” and “Powerful Voices.” Students had the opportunity to apply to be a part of the Cohorts program through the pre-enrollment survey that was due June 15.

## What can pre-major advisors help with?

In a statement to The Cavalier Daily, Walsh wrote that pre-major advisors for College students deal with a “fair amount” of major planning because of various major and program structures and their prerequisites. Pre-major advisors are paired with in-

coming first-year students to assist in course registration and make recommendations as the students navigate the University's academic offerings.

Walsh wrote that declaring the economics major, for example, typically requires an “entire year's worth” of planning after taking into consideration the type and number of different classes that can satisfy the same major requirement. Therefore, he emphasized that pre-major advisors “can and do provide some degree of major advising,” before students actually declare their major.

Walsh also wrote that College Advising Fellows — a fellow who serves as a pre-major advisor and who also teaches Engagements courses — do not serve as advisors once a student has declared a major because they do not work for individual departments and thus cannot make any decisions about whether enrolling for a class will fulfill a certain major's requirements.

Once a major is declared — which College students must do by the end of their fourth semester — they are assigned major-specific advisors who are able to help students navigate course substitutions or exceptions for major requirements.

## Why did pre-major advising change?

Until the 2024-25 academic year — the first phase of the Engagements and pre-major advising integration — students received a random match for a pre-major advisor.

The College began an “unprecedented evaluation” of the advising system in 2022, according to Coleman, though he did not specify the cause of this evaluation.

According to Coleman, the 2024-25 academic year served as the transition year for the College into the new system of pre-major advising. During that year, some of the College's newly hired Advising Fellows both taught the Engagements and advised their students. As the College began hiring more Advising Fellows, Coleman wrote the College was able to fully integrate the system in the 2025-26 academic year, and Engagements professors also served as first-year students' pre-major advisors.

Though Coleman did not specify the cause of the evaluation for the old advising system in 2022, Giering wrote that there were several issues that both students and advisors raised to the College over the former pre-major advising system.

“Advisors received little training yet were responsible for an extensive amount of knowledge about the College's undergraduate experience and options available to students,” Giering wrote. “Frequently, the entirety of the advising interaction was a 15-minute meeting before course enrollment.”

Giering wrote that the College

realized the advising model was not serving students “as well as it should” and began looking into a way to better support first-year students. Throughout the redesigning process, Giering explained the College prioritized the academic experience, substantial training for advisors and personalized guidance for each student.

Giering wrote the College concluded that the Engagements program was able to provide first-year students with a connection point between the curriculum of their Engagements course and regular engagement with their advisors.

“Speaking with students, we hear stories of how getting to know their advisor beyond a brief conversation resulted in more meaningful advice and direction and gave them someone to trust as they made important decisions about their future,” Giering wrote.

Giering also pointed to the increase in overall satisfaction with academic advising demonstrated by Student Experience in the Research University survey results — 64 percent of students reported overall satisfaction with advising in the 2022 SERU survey, which rose to 84 percent and 89 percent in the 2024-25 and 2025-26 SERU surveys, respectively. The SERU survey is an undergraduate census survey that asks “about a wide range of aspects, from academic skills through global engagement opportunities to civic engagement to financial considerations.”

## How are these changes impacting students and advisors?

Natalie Nguyen, rising third-year College student, took the Engagements during the 2024-25 academic year before the new advising program was fully integrated. She was randomly assigned an advisor during her first year, but she said her advisor was able to answer a “majority, if not all” of her major-related questions.

Nguyen said her advisor was in the history department, so they were able to provide “basic” advice about the pre-law track. However, Nguyen said if she were looking for pre-law advice, she would prefer to ask her pre-professional fraternity.

For first-year students moving forward, Nguyen said she believes the advising change will be beneficial.

“Since [a] majority of students should be picking Engagements that they're interested in ... the Engagements professors can help them in whatever area they want [to study],” Nguyen said.

George Kamberis, rising second-year College student, said he appreciated having his first quarter Engagements professor also serve as his advisor when he was initially adjusting to college. However, Kamberis said

because he did not take another class with his advisor after the first quarter, he began to feel disconnected from his advisor.

According to Kamberis, his advising meetings never lasted beyond three minutes, and he also never met with his advisor outside of required meetings.

“The small relationship I had never got better — it kind of just got worse,” Kamberis said. “It made the already short advising meetings feel more of just a formality rather than trying to connect with an advisor and get advice.”

Kamberis, also a pre-med student, said he eventually turned to upperclassmen students for advice about pre-med coursework and requirements. He said he felt like his advisor was not equipped to answer specific questions about the track.

“I used [upperclassmen's] experiences to help guide mine, especially when it [came] to [choosing] classes or just what I should expect my next couple of years to look like,” Kamberis said. “[My advisor] didn't really have the resources to help me beyond just making sure I had a balanced schedule.”

Kamberis said another reason he felt disconnected from his advisor was the difference in field of interest. His advisor was in the creative writing field, which Kamberis said he felt did not align with his intended pre-med track.

Additionally, Kamberis said his detached feeling was due in part to his first quarter Engagements class fulfilling the Ethical Engagements pillar. If the class had instead fulfilled the Empirical and Scientific Engagement pillar, Kamberis said there might have been more overlap between his advisor's field of interest and his own.

Speaking on the effectiveness of the new system, Walsh wrote that he believes the pre-major advising change is “excellent” and hopes it can be a model for other universities.

Walsh pointed to Harvard College, where the school announced moving to a group advising model in April due to recent budget shortfalls and layoffs. He called this situation “grim” and expressed his belief that the College's new advising system is exemplary.

“UVa. is doing something very different than many of its peer institutions,” Walsh wrote. “Rather than instituting layoffs and cuts in undergraduate education, UVa. has invested substantial resources in undergraduate education, and I think [the] Engagements and the advising program are superb examples of this.”

# U.Va. leaders, faculty reflect on resilience since Ryan's leave

Leaders acknowledged Ryan's successful leadership and expressed hope in remaining true to the University's mission

Grace Little | News Editor

The Cavalier Daily asked University leaders and faculty from across Grounds — deans, executive administrators and governing members — to weigh in on the University's institutional stability one year after former University President Jim Ryan's announcement of his resignation June 27, 2025. The Cavalier Daily asked these leaders how events from the past year have shaped the University, influenced its future direction and revealed characteristics that define it.

University leaders and faculty members at large expressed cautious optimism. They reflected on the strength of Ryan's leadership, a couple characterizing his departure as premature. They spoke on the importance of adhering to the University's mission — strong academics, research, patient care and service to the Commonwealth — in challenging times and resiliently working through the instability of the last year by chipping forward on this purpose.

Ryan announced his resignation June 27, 2025. In an email to the University community, he said staying in his role would put the University at risk of federal consequences, including cuts to research funding, student financial aid and student visas.

His decision followed a pressured campaign from the federal government — the U.S. Department of Justice was conducting an ongoing investigation at the time of Ryan's departure into his leadership and alleged refusal to dismantle diversity, equity and inclusion programming. After Ryan stepped down from his role, Jennifer Wagner Davis, executive vice president and chief operating officer, served as acting University president until the Board of Visitors announced that Paul Mahoney, former dean of the School of Law, would serve as the University's interim president Aug. 4.

During Mahoney's tenure, the University reached an agreement Oct. 22 with the Justice Department to have the remaining five federal investigations suspended in exchange for compliance with all civil rights law. Also during Mahoney's time as interim president, the University rejected the Trump administration's "Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education" Oct. 17.

Throughout Mahoney's tenure, the University's Board searched for the next permanent University president — a process various University-affiliated groups publicly criticized due to its alleged lack of transparency and community input. Nonetheless, the Board appointed University President Scott Beardsley Dec. 19.

The Board has centered its early efforts in the spring semester and summer around regaining community trust and working towards the University's key mission areas to nav-

igate through the uncertainties of the past year. In a similar vein, Beardsley launched his "Grounds for Conversation" initiative, hoping to gain faculty and administrative input to shape his leadership goals.

After Beardsley's first semester in office and as leaders across Grounds have begun adjusting to the new realities, faculty and administrators have recognized the University's last year was a challenge. They recognized that the events of the last year will be etched in University history, and their response as leaders to these events is imperative to creating a stronger future.

## Residual soreness around Ryan's resignation, a recognition of his administration's successes

Many University leaders and faculty spoke to the success of University leadership prior to June 27, 2025. Faculty and administrators said Ryan's leadership profoundly shaped the University, and his sudden departure is still a tender wound. Ian Solomon, dean of the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, said this lingering pain affects both the University and the higher education landscape writ large.

"The nature and timing of Jim's departure from the presidency at U.Va. remains a scar that has not fully healed — not only for Virginia, but across higher education," Solomon wrote.

Ryan, selected as the 2026 Valedictory Exercises speaker by the student-composed Fourth-Year Trustees and long admired for hosting "Run with Jim" events, received an outpouring of sympathy following his resignation. Vice Provost for Enrollment Stephen Farmer reflected fondly upon the successes of Ryan's leadership.

"I'll always be grateful to have worked for President Ryan and with his remarkable team. Their wisdom, good will and care for students and colleagues were inspiring to me," Farmer wrote.

## Lingering trust and governance concerns, especially among faculty

Many leaders addressed that the institutional instability of the last year and its aftereffects linger. Trust and strong governance will have to be worked for and proven, according to many leaders. To address these qualms with the past and remaining concern of unsteady leadership, Board Rector Carlos Brown wrote in a statement to The Cavalier Daily that the Board is working to improve University governance in its capacity.

"Despite failures in transparency and good governance and the loss of a generational transformational leader, Jim Ryan, far earlier than it should have occurred, we are rebuilding trust and putting in safeguards to prevent

those failures from repeating themselves," Brown wrote.

Over the last year, the Faculty Senate has spoken out against governance actions by University bodies. Recently, it issued a Jan. 15 resolution expressing dissatisfaction in the continued governance crisis at the University, among other resolutions since Ryan's resignation.

Jeri Seidman, incoming faculty representative to the Board, outgoing Faculty Senate chair and associate professor of commerce, wrote this misalignment between the Faculty Senate and University governance makes for shaky bridges of trust moving forward.

"Faculty seem more cautious than they were 15 months ago," Seidman wrote. "There was a significant breach of trust, so this is not surprising, and without a clear understanding of what happened or reforms to protect against it happening again, it's hard for some people to regain confidence."

Seidman noted the University cannot afford to allow this distrust to stop it from making strides in current issues facing higher education, including its response to developments in artificial intelligence, athletics, shifting student enrollments and changing research funding.

## Resilience amid challenges, and the unity that followed

Faculty and leaders consistently spoke on the resilience — at the individual and University-wide level — that pushed the University through the year riddled with unprecedented challenges. Brown — whose term began Feb. 20 — said these challenges are inevitable in "great" institutions.

"Notwithstanding the challenges that we faced in the last 12 months, the University remains resilient and strong," Brown wrote. "Every great institution experiences fractures and threats to its purpose, mission and values. However, great institutions respond by coming together to resist those threats and reaffirm their values. That is what U.Va. is doing."

Dr. Mitch Rosner, U.Va. Health chief executive officer and executive vice president for health affairs, also did not shy away from labeling the past 12 months as challenging. Similar to Brown, he expressed hopefulness that the University will come out stronger.

"There is no doubt that the past year has been unsettling, but I am very optimistic that we will use the lessons of the past year to make U.Va. stronger, more vital and ready to meet the headwinds that we face," Rosner wrote.

Rosner touched on the resilience muscle the University grew, which is a point that Melissa Lubin, dean of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies, emphasized.

"Over the past year, I have seen the

University of Virginia respond to a period of profound change with resilience, compassion and a strong sense of shared purpose," Lubin wrote. "At the School of Continuing and Professional Studies, that spirit is evident in the optimism and determination of our adult learners, faculty and staff."

Kenyon Bonner, vice president and chief student affairs officer, referenced these surviving qualities of resilience, commitment and advocacy at large, pointing to them as the constant "through periods of challenge and change."

Leaders repeatedly touched on the theme of unity — amidst change, the community aligned towards the common mission of perpetuating academic excellence. Seidman wrote that she hopes this unity, including many individual bonds born from the challenges, will last past this year.

"The past year brought faculty, staff and student leaders together in ways we had not seen before," Seidman wrote. "Some of these connections will likely fade over time, but I hope at least some of them ... endure."

Brie Gertler, interim executive vice president and provost, also touched on the impact of individual connections and resulting unity. She emphasized the work of deans in promoting the University's purpose in times of challenge.

"The months that followed showed that we could move through uncertainty together," Gertler wrote. "I am especially grateful to the deans, who guided their schools through that period with dedication and an unwavering clarity of purpose."

## Looking forward — optimism in pursuing the University's mission

Key to the University's past and future success is allegiance to its mission, many faculty and University leaders expressed. The University's mission statement asserts that the "discovery, innovation and development of the full potential of talented students from all walks of life" drives the University. Additionally, it says the University serves the Commonwealth, the U.S. and the world in developing citizen leaders, advancing, preserving and disseminating knowledge and providing patient care.

Beardsley wrote this mission has thrived and sustained the University through the challenging year, acting as a roadmap for all the University does.

"When an institution navigates a season of transition, the ultimate anchor is always its core mission," Beardsley wrote. "That mission is clear and non-negotiable — world-class education, exceptional patient care, groundbreaking research and discovery and a profound commitment to public service."

Bonner echoed Beardsley's com-

mitment to the core mission and harped on the importance of community.

"I am inspired by our resilience, our deep commitment to community — including the care and respect we show for each other — our passionate advocacy for U.Va.'s traditions and values and our grounded optimism for our shared future," Bonner wrote.

Jim Lambert, outgoing faculty representative to the Board and engineering professor, had a unique perspective working both in Board governance and as a faculty member for the 2025-26 academic year. Lambert said his appreciation grew over the past year for the community of individuals driving the University's mission. Lambert, in his written statement, listed all of the facets that come together to run the University, including the health system, arts programming, the College at Wise, international offerings and more. Lambert reflected on the success of the year — University programming's impacts are vast, and these impacts did not halt during the 2025-26 academic year.

"The University projects the Commonwealth of Virginia into roles that are saving the world. In part, what we learned this year is that U.Va.'s success is from principles of discovery, respect and service," Lambert wrote.

Building off of his statement recognizing the still-open wound of Ryan's departure, Solomon wrote the systems Ryan set in place help the University in its future. He harkened back to Ryan's Great and Good 2030 Plan for the University, which pins the University's mission in its values of service, knowledge and patient care.

Jennifer West, dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Science and Saunders Family professor of engineering, referenced the driving mission pillar of student experience while also expressing enthusiasm for the future.

"While this has been an eventful year for U.Va. leadership, in Engineering, we have kept our focus on our mission of Engineering for the greater good and providing an excellent student experience that maximizes their success," West wrote. "We are excited about great things coming in the years ahead."

Community, a repeated theme from faculty and University leaders, is the value Rosner ended his statement with.

"[The last year] has forced us to refocus on our missions and what makes U.Va. great — our people and culture," Rosner wrote. "In doing so, I think we have moved out of a period of instability and uncertainty to a time of more strategic thinking of how U.Va. needs to adapt to the changes around us, but at the same time stay true to our mission and values."

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## Having it all: Students blend academic and artistic passions

The University's flexibility in majors and minors allows students to pursue other interests without sacrificing the arts

Darya Bartol | Senior Associate

Choosing one's major seems to remain an eternal challenge for all college students. To many, selecting a major is akin to selecting a path in life. However, despite the perceived gravity that comes with major declarations, many students at the University have found a way to dive into interests across disciplines, making the case that one does not have to sacrifice their affinity for the arts in academia.

In the transition from high school to college, the arts are often put aside and dismissed as passion projects rather than stable career paths. Other, more career-focused majors are perceived as being more worthy of a degree than one in the arts, causing students to feel as though they need to pick a more practical path. As a result, many students find themselves in love with both arts and another, less artistic discipline, ranging from politics to medicine. Be it programs in drama, art history or music, the University offers a wide range of degree paths that allow students to tailor their academic journey to one that aligns with their passions, not just their career plans.

The University's curriculum allows for students to easily pursue different avenues of study whether they came to Grounds with a certain path in mind or if they discovered this passion upon their arrival. With certain restrictions set in place due to major and school requirements, as well as general education disciplines, students may find themselves boxed in when selecting courses early in their time at the University. However, student creativity — be it through a passion for the arts or navigating a packed schedule — knows no bounds, as many pursuing multiple academic paths often showcase.

In a statement to The Cavalier Daily, Sophia Gallivan, rising third-year College student double-majoring in politics and Media Studies with a prospective minor in studio art, wrote that — despite being daunting — her concerns about credit allocations were eased after talking to Asst. Studio Art Prof. Marisa Williamson about her plans for the future. After taking courses in the department and being accepted into the Echols Scholars Program after her first year — which waives general education course requirements and enables students to have priority enrollment — Gallivan expressed that she wanted to find a way to

integrate studio art into her academic path.

"I felt totally incapable of taking studio [art] again after years of not making art but my professor reassured me that I belonged in her class," Gallivan wrote. "Applying to [the Echols Scholars Program] after my first year allowed me to have even more schedule freedom which I am incredibly grateful for."

Some students also come to college with a substantial amount of credits, making doubling up on majors or pursuing a minor a more feasible process. Additionally, many classes fulfill multiple disciplinary requirements, which may make freeing up one's schedule a more manageable task.

Arts classes can also provide a creative outlet from more intensive classes in a course load. Art inherently requires a creative way of thinking, and Isabella DeMark, a rising third-year College student double-majoring in Global Sustainability and studio art, said that her schedule allows her to alternate between using different parts of her brain.

"Most majors at U.Va. aren't hands-on, they're more academic and lecture based," DeMark said. "Then I'll have art [which] uses a different part of the brain, so it's not like I'm using my brain the same way all day."

While taking art classes can offer an alternative perspective to balance out a student's day, these classes can also bring students out of their comfort zone. Pursuing creative opportunities can feel daunting, and arts classes often push students to share their work amongst their peers, enabling students to further expand their viewpoints. From having work displayed in the Ruffin Gallery in some classes to peer-based critiques throughout semester-long courses, curriculums in the arts can engage students both critically and inventively, offering opportunities to engage with one another.

Gallivan explained that diving into art disciplines at the University has allowed her to interact with different perspectives through public displays of her classmates' work and has opened new doors for her academically and creatively.

"I feel much more well-rounded and it has been incredibly rewarding to see a part of U.Va., the arts program, that I was not previously familiar with," Gallivan wrote. "I



OLIVIA THOMPSON | THE CAVALIER DAILY

have found so much joy in seeing the creations of my classmates displayed in places like [the Ruffin Gallery], somewhere I probably would not have ventured otherwise."

Although art can feel completely separate from other disciplines to some students, many have found ways to meld their passions together. Many students pursuing art and another major said that they are able to bring their artistic way of thinking into their more analytical classes. Mary Gombos, a rising fourth-year Education student double majoring in kinesiology and studio art, wrote in a statement to The Cavalier Daily that she often blends her love of medicine with her art.

"I have created many pieces related to medicine and healthcare," Gombos wrote. "Some projects have focused on anatomical structures, such as a sculpted human heart, while others have explored broader themes and commentary related to hospitals, patient experiences and the healthcare system."

While the expansive nature of many students' course loads broadens the range of academic opportunities available to them, Gombos wrote that the biggest challenge to anyone thinking of taking on more than one discipline is the balance between the areas of study.

While it may be a challenge to

balance two disciplines — even when managing time correctly — pursuing extracurricular activities related to them can be an alternative, yet equally enriching experience. Naomi Diener, a rising fourth-year Education student majoring in youth and social innovation and minoring in dance, explained that opportunities to dance and teach the art form have been meaningful to her outside of the classroom.

"I've loved all the student leadership opportunities that I've had through the dance program," Diener said. "I feel like I've really been able to get involved in that as a community. And the [Education] school I also love ... there are a lot of opportunities [for community involvement] that they talk about."

Outside of the University, the merging of artistic and academic interests have influenced these students' professional lives, allowing them to utilize both sets of skills. Gombos explained that, to potential employers, her art is a physical manifestation of her hard work.

"While my transcript and coursework show my academic performance, my art provides tangible evidence of my creativity, attention to detail and growth over time," Gombos wrote. "I can point to specific printmaking, sculpture and drawing projects that showcase skills that are harder to cap-

ture on paper alone."

Across the University, students take a wide range of paths related to both their time spent on Grounds, as well as their plans for careers after graduation. Diener stated that, while she does not want to be a full-time dance teacher after graduation, she has found ways to incorporate dance into her teaching in preschool classrooms.

"It has been really cool to see how the kids love to dance, or they love to move," Diener said. "That's like the one time where no kids are bickering with each other ... It is cool to see the skills that develop from that both socially and also in terms of motor skills."

Whether one's passion lies in sciences, humanities, arts or the plethora of other disciplines the University offers, there are many ways for students to pursue varied interests in their coursework.

"If you genuinely enjoy something, don't shy away from the opportunity," Gombos wrote. "Some of the most meaningful experiences I've had at U.Va. happened because I decided to pursue interests that seemed completely unrelated on paper."

# University a cappella groups stay in tune over summer break

The 14 musical ensembles spend their summers preparing for the fall and the first-years who will soon find a place among them

Nritho Halima | Staff Writer

When students leave Grounds for the summer, the University's 14 a cappella groups do not go quiet. Members spread across states, but group chats stay buzzing, voices are heard in Zoom calls and plans for auditions and the fall's performances take shape. For incoming first-years who will catch a glimpse of this energy in their first weeks on Grounds, polished ensemble productions are the result of months of practice and planning most students never see.

One of the academic year's earliest introductions to the a cappella scene on Grounds is Rotunda Sing — an annual University Programs Council event that celebrates the range of a cappella groups at the start of each fall semester. Preparation for Rotunda Sing typically takes place before the academic year begins, adding a performance that a cappella participants must prepare for musically and logistically.

Beyond Rotunda Sing, preparation for each group's ensuing events often begins over the summer with a list of concrete tasks — choosing and arranging music, locking in dates for concerts and gigs, dividing up executive responsibilities and preparing for

the fall audition process that will introduce a new class to the group.

Though each a cappella group handles these tasks differently, they embody a similar goal of continuing their groups' musical legacies. For one, the Hullabahoos, founded in 1987 and known for their individually patterned robes, spend the summer with one foot already in the fall semester. Sam Solliday, Hullabahoos president and rising third-year Commerce student, said he spends summer break lining up gigs months in advance. Solliday said the Hullabahoos have taken the break to schedule releases just before the fall semester begins.

"We're already planning stuff in advance for the fall ... and trying to make our schedule out," Solliday said. "[Our music director] has to arrange two songs that we can start rehearsing a week before [Rotunda Sing]."

Ektaal, a South Asian-American fusion a cappella group founded in 1999, similarly spends early summer choosing what songs the group will sing in the approaching semester. Sanka Kammara, Ektaal president and rising fourth-year College student, said group members share suggestions for arrangements, mash-ups or med-

leys as soon as the academic year ends. The group's two music directors then compile song suggestions before singers vote on their repertoire in June, and Kammara said that cultural representation and thematic consistency are also considered in the process.

"We also incorporate a lot of different Desi languages such as Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and more, as opposed to just picking a genre of music ... [and] a theme throughout our setlist, so that there can be a cohesive flow between songs," Kammara said.

Song selection is a consistent hurdle among the University's a cappella groups. The Academical Village People — a group of "misfits" who never "[take themselves] too seriously," according to their website — handpick their fall repertoire through two "song select" meetings over the summer, according to John Thomas, AVP president and rising third-year College student. The music director and two assistant music directors finalize arrangements late in the summer so members can start learning them before they return to Grounds.

The seemingly straightforward process of picking music within groups must also be coordinated be-

tween all 14, as one function of the A Cappella Presidents Council — an organization composed of the 14 groups' presidents — is to avoid musical conflicts amongst groups. Each ensemble claims songs on a shared spreadsheet, and once a song is claimed, another group is unable to perform it for four semesters.

Thomas serves as co-president of the A Cappella Presidents Council, which additionally works to minimize logistical barriers for musical performances and rehearsals. At semesterly meetings, a cappella groups harmonize details on performances, such as their timing and venues, to avoid scheduling conflicts.

In addition to meticulously planning performances, each group tasks themselves with preparing for fall auditions before returning to Grounds. Kammara said Ektaal spends its final weeks of summer finishing singing arrangements, creating a piece for Rotunda Sing and evaluating which voices they will need to fill based on vacancies from recent graduates. Before greeting auditionees, AVP arranges a performance to offer a sense of the group's style, according to Thomas.

Auditionees themselves can broad-

ly expect a multi-step process evaluating vocal ability, vocal fit and enthusiasm, beginning with open auditions early in the fall semester. Then, groups typically invite auditionees for "callbacks," where prospective members further interact with current members before potentially being welcomed to a group. Though audition styles vary by group, the presidents of AVP, Ektaal and the Hullabahoos said that the audition process is far less intimidating than it looks.

"One misconception is that [auditioning] is stressful," Thomas said. "Behind every door, there is a silly tradition ... every group does a little differently, but they make sure you feel okay and safe."

By the time the University's a cappella groups return to Grounds, much of their summer work has made room for whoever walks through their audition room door next. This fall, auditioning students, audiences and a cappella participants can expect to enjoy the product of months of summer preparation, as groups carry forward a cappella's longstanding contribution to the University's music scene.

## At Summer Film Academy, everyone can be a filmmaker

The summer camp, run by Light House Studio, combines artistic freedom with industry education — and plenty of fun

Alena Touve | Staff Writer

When walking on Charlottesville's Downtown Mall, visitors and residents may be surprised to see groups of children wearing costumes, huddled around video cameras and supervised by just a few adults. But this unexpected sight is not a lone venture by some young cinephiles — it is the mark of Light House Studio's Summer Film Academy, where young people ranging from third graders to college freshmen are able to explore the art of filmmaking under the supervision of trained professionals.

Since its debut 25 years ago, the Summer Film Academy has consistently offered local students access to film education and production every summer, catering to various levels of experience and interest in the medium. Regardless of why students join the camp, all are given the unique experience of channeling their internal creativity into a visual film.

The program is dedicated to cultivating the students' artistic visions, as every creative decision during production is made by those enrolled in the workshops. Campers are separated into groups by experience level, and various supervisors — called teaching artists, all of whom have

experience in film industries — help academy members realize their vision by guiding the use of more specialized film equipment and techniques. Zack Marotta, the program's education director, explained in a written statement to The Cavalier Daily that this mesh of youthful originality and seasoned experience creates truly remarkable results.

"When you combine the limitless, unpredictable imagination of, say, a 10-year-old with the skills of, say, a veteran cinematographer, actual magic happens," Marotta wrote. "We give kids the tools they need to express themselves, then they ... use those tools in ways we could never imagine."

At the Summer Film Academy, separate workshops of elementary, middle and high schoolers all follow a similar structure throughout week-long programs. Students arrive, generate ideas and pitch them to teaching artists who help to refine those ideas into a cohesive narrative. Students then shoot, edit and present their films at red-carpet style premieres held at the end of each session, allowing them to experience a perfect facsimile of a true film production.

For students in the elementary and middle school programs, the session experience is more centered around a basic introduction to filmmaking within a warm, welcoming environment. Kayla Saunders, Light House Studio's teaching specialist, highlighted in a written statement to The Cavalier Daily the benefit for young children to experience the structure of teamwork and community created by a film set.

"Many times in our summer program, I have seen the shyest of kids come out of their shells," Saunders wrote. "We have many students who come and are extremely supportive of their team members."

As the age level rises in the Summer Film Academy, so too does the specialization and length of each session. While elementary schoolers choose from various themes like "Myths and Fairy Tales" or "Movie-Makers: Superheroes," middle schoolers can explore specific genres like film noir and general narrative film through specifically designed programs. High schoolers can participate in longer, two-week intensives which focus on dramatic narrative or attend workshops that teach industry trades

like screenwriting or model making.

With such a variety of experiences available, Light House Studio is effectively able to offer an educational experience that compares to those offered by local high schools and even colleges, often at a lower price point and more hands-on level. Marotta wrote that the Summer Film Academy is able to provide local students with the specialized equipment and instruction they may not have otherwise had access to, either because of their financial background or social circumstances such as incarceration or disability.

"The moment ... when students see what they made on a real movie theater screen, with a packed audience reacting to it, and realize that their idea became an actual movie, is the whole point of what we do," Marotta wrote. "The film industry is becoming more inaccessible ... kids think that they can't make a movie. We show them how to prove otherwise."

Last year, films from the Summer Film Academy earned 34 festival acceptances and won 21 awards. The Summer Film Academy itself has earned an award for "Best Student

Program" from the New York Festivals International Television & Film Awards, quantifying what Saunders characterized as a "great reputation" among Charlottesville residents because of the academy's unique mission and warm community.

The city of Charlottesville has many film-focused programs accessible to adults, from the University's Media Studies and Studio Art majors to the Virginia Film Festival and its various outreach networks. However, Light House Studio's Summer Film Academy fills the gap for children and young adults who need a hand in starting their career in film.

By allowing children to experiment with film and artistic expression, Light House Studio is characterizing filmmaking as an accessible, understandable medium rather than an expensive, complicated art form, breaking the barrier that discourages many from pursuing film in the first place. If a short film made in one week, with one camera and a crew made entirely of kids, can be played on a movie theater screen and win awards, then the sky truly becomes the limit.

## LIFE

# How University students are using LinkedIn to stand out

Students are discovering unique ways to differentiate themselves on this popular professional networking platform

Phoenix Banks | Staff Writer

Admission to the University is increasingly selective — but for many students, the competitive application process does not end with an acceptance letter. Whether applying to major programs, Contracted Independent Organizations or internships, many students continue to navigate competitive selection processes throughout their time on Grounds.

In an environment where resumes and accomplishments often carry significant weight, LinkedIn has emerged as a key platform for students to present their experiences, build professional networks and market themselves to potential employers.

With over 1.3 billion members, the platform allows both professionals and aspiring professionals to showcase their academic and career trajectories. Aside from allowing users to post academic achievements and connect with mutuals and potential employers, many companies allow LinkedIn members to apply for jobs directly through the platform.

To better understand how students navigate these competing realities, The Cavalier Daily interviewed three University students to learn more about their experiences with the online networking platform.

According to rising second-year College student Shaniya Gray-Jackson, while LinkedIn can be a helpful networking tool for students, it can also become a source of added stress due to the constant comparison it invites.

Gray-Jackson created a LinkedIn account in the beginning of her first-year to display her accomplishments and give herself a leg-up in starting to network for her future.

“I kind of use it as ... an online resume. [It’s filled with] things that I put on my resume, like I went to this medical conference,” Gray-Jackson said. “[Things] I feel like ... [employers] will want to see.”

As she spent more time on the platform, Gray-Jackson said she noticed that many posts followed a similar pattern, often beginning with the same trite words and phrases. This so-called “standard” LinkedIn structure creates a formulaic style of communication that — according to her — can make it difficult for students to distinguish themselves.

“Even if it is a professional platform, I feel like people should learn to be more authentic on there,”

Gray-Jackson said. “I feel like I look through like people’s posts and [they’re] the same ... [starting with] ‘I’m excited to share.’”

Thus, in order to differentiate themselves from the multitude of other profiles on the site, as well as from the thousands of other accomplished college students vying for similar positions, some students at the University have begun employing creative strategies to stand out from their peers and to employers.

For instance, rising second-year Engineering student Kenny Anderson said he treats LinkedIn as a laboratory for experimenting with his posts and network interactions by creating posts that differ from the typical, corporate-buzzword format of many LinkedIn updates. Anderson said that he believes the platform is an opportunity to present not only his achievements but also aspects of his personality.

Anderson has a creative means of addressing members of the network he has built on the platform. He begins every post with a variation of “Hello Forest.” Just as forests thrive through networks of organisms that work together and support one another, Anderson sees LinkedIn as a community built on connection, collaboration and mutual growth.

“Forests aren’t homogeneous. They’re very, very diverse, and that’s what my connections are [like] as well,” Anderson said. “It’s not just one individual group from UVa., [like] all Engineering students ... [It’s] people from all over.”

According to Anderson, if a user is willing to take the time to make thoughtful posts, directly message professionals and interact with their network of connections, then the algorithm will provide them with the resources and opportunities that could be beneficial for their future careers.

“[LinkedIn] is really difficult to master, but it can be such a useful tool, and I don’t think a lot of people are using it to its full potential,” Anderson said. “It is a networking website, but you also want to be networking with intent.”

Anderson said he believes that using LinkedIn “to its full potential” means being willing to both start and engage in conversations that benefit one’s future, even when doing so may seem intimidating. These conversations could begin with simply sending a message to recruiters at target organizations, reaching out to someone from a



CHLOE PANOS | THE CAVALIER DAILY

high school alumni association who works in their field of interest or asking a question about a program a business offers, he said.

“Starting that connection and trying to foster that relationship between you and somebody else in the company can really put your foot in the door and get you where you want to be with your professional development,” Anderson said.

However, Anderson is not the only University student who places an emphasis on differentiating their LinkedIn posts through creativity. Third-year College student Bella Brown said she foregrounds her personality on her LinkedIn account through a focus on storytelling. Brown explained that as she became more involved in her areas of interest, such as research and advocacy, her LinkedIn developed into more than just an online resume.

“[LinkedIn] became a place where I could tell my story and connect with people whose work inspired me,” Brown said. “I also [learned] how to communicate with professionals about my passion and my different experiences.”

As an extensive LinkedIn user, Brown expressed a similar sentiment to Gray-Jackson — many posts on the platform seem formulaic and monotonous. She explained her belief that personal stories and anecdotes can be critical aspects of

LinkedIn posts, as they allow users to present aspects of their personality to their network. In a sea of similar posts, Brown said she believes these stories provide a unique and deeply human way to connect with people — both on and beyond the platform.

Though students like Anderson and Brown have found techniques to distinguish their LinkedIn profiles, they said they understand that the platform can still be a scary and intimidating place for some users. Brown explained how some users may feel anxious about what is appropriate to post, or feel trepidation about sharing an opportunity if it does not seem as impressive as that of their peers.

“You open LinkedIn, and you see people announcing internships, fellowships, leadership positions, all this other stuff, and it can make you feel like you’re falling behind, even when you’re not,” Brown said. “UVa. is already a competitive [place], and so adding this on top of it can cause a lot of anxiety.”

According to Brown, the platform’s concentration of highly accomplished students and professionals can make it feel overwhelming, fostering anxiety and self-comparison for some users. However, for some other users such as Gray-Jackson, the platform serves as a source of motivation rather than stress.

Gray-Jackson explained how as she scrolls through others’ achievements on LinkedIn, she makes a point of not comparing herself to her peers. For her, seeing accomplishments from people in the fields she’s interested in motivates and inspires her to seek similar opportunities.

Whether individuals use the platform like an online resume — such as Gray-Jackson — or as an empty canvas to showcase their creativity and personality — like Anderson and Brown — the platform offers room for a variety of approaches.

For students, especially first-years navigating both Grounds and LinkedIn for the first time, Brown emphasized that the platform is ultimately a tool for discovering opportunities, building connections and exploring career paths — not a site that turns professional development into a competition.

“At the end of the day, LinkedIn is a tool to help you grow and connect and learn, not make you feel like you are constantly competing with everyone around you,” Brown said. “It’s a tool. It shouldn’t be your end goal.”

# Eating on and around Grounds on a budget

Our go-tos for a good meal we wish we knew about as first-years

Lily Notter and Ingrid Gay | Staff Writer and Life Editor

Each year, thousands of new first-years make their way to Grounds. For many, the University is a place of great opportunity — rigorous classes, prestige as one of the top public universities in the United States, a vibrant social scene and well-rounded athletics. Despite the high standards the University has set in nearly all aspects of undergraduate life, some find that dining options on Grounds fall short.

This often lackluster dining experience when dining on Grounds is a far departure from the greater Charlottesville culinary environment, which was nominated as one of the top culinary towns in the South. Establishments like C&O Restaurant, The Alley Light, Tavern & Grocery and more dine and dazzle Charlottesville residents and visitors alike. However, most fine-dining eateries like these are outside of reasonable walking distance and the typical price range for a college student's budget.

Still, being a first-year student does not mean you should not be able to devour a delicious meal. From our combined five years of exploring the accessible food scene in Charlottesville as rising third- and fourth-year students, here are our go-to meals near and around Grounds. All selections are either part of the University dining plan or under \$10, and on or within a 15-minute walk from Grounds.

## Blenz Bowls Smoothies and Smoothie Bowls

*Lily Notter, staff writer:* A newer addition to UVA. Dine as of February, Blenz Bowls, located in the Aquatic and Fitness Center, offers options that are perfect for post-workout or in between classes. The shop's interior brings a small slice of tropical paradise to Charlottesville with its cheerful decorations and theme. It includes both tall tables and comfortable couches to allow for a positive snack-and-study ambience. The shop offers plenty of smoothie options for a meal exchange, and different sized smoothie bowls that can be bought with dining dollars. Dining dollars are prepaid funds that can be used at on-Grounds dining locations to buy snacks, meals, essential items and drinks.

Besides the variety of bowl options and acai bases, Blenz offers an array of toppings like peanut butter, Nutella, granola and fruit — just to name a few. My personal go-to is an acai base topped with peanut butter, almond slices and strawberries — the refreshing combination never fails. Though Blenz Bowls is new, its tropical vibe and quality meal and snack options have quickly made it a favorite for myself and other students

alike.

## Marco & Luca Dumplings

*Ingrid Gay, life editor:* For those heading to the Corner for lunch but don't feel like waiting in the line for Bodos, I recommend Marco & Luca Dumplings on Elliewood Avenue. Less than a 5-minute walk from the Rotunda, Marco & Luca is affordable enough to be a go-to lunch spot for students on a budget, as nearly every item on the menu is less than \$10.

When it comes to ordering, consider the Fried Pork Dumplings, which come with the addicting Marco & Luca special soy sauce. At \$6.50, it is one of the cheapest meals on the Corner. However, if dumplings aren't your favorite, try the small chicken curry with rice. Despite its name, the portion is actually rather large and is a nice alternative if you want something a bit more hearty.

## Grit Coffee at Nau Hall

*LN:* A coffee shop local to Virginia, Grit has multiple locations in Charlottesville, with two in convenient areas for students. While the Grit on the Corner is cozy, with lovely study ambience, the on-Grounds location can be hard to beat on weekdays due to its proximity to classes. It's located in Nau Hall, where big windows and flexible seating provide the perfect environment to eat and drink while working on an assignment or preparing for class.

Grit's menu includes both drip and espresso-based coffee beverages, tea options for non-coffee drinkers and convenient grab-and-go items. Their coffee and pastries make for tasty combinations for those on a time crunch, and unlike the Corner location, the Grit in Nau Hall is included in the UVA. Dine plan and offers the option to pay with dining dollars.

## Crozet Pizza at Buddhist Biker Bar

*IG:* Crozet Pizza at Buddhist Biker Bar on Elliewood Avenue is a great option for a hot meal in the evening thanks to their student menu. With a University student ID, you can unlock great prices, like a 10-inch personal cheese pizza for \$7 or spin dip — spinach artichoke dip — for \$5. On Wednesdays, Crozet also offers a \$10 large pizza deal, perfect for a small group or a casual date night.

Accompanying the fair pricing, Crozet also has a vibrant social scene. Throughout the year, it hosts special themed events like a Rodeo Day and Mamma Mia Night, both with special deals or menu items tied to the event. There is also weekly trivia Tuesdays at 6 p.m. during the school year. However, beware that tables tend to be claimed quickly on those nights, so I recommend arriving early and order-



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This often lackluster dining experience when dining on Grounds is a far departure from the greater Charlottesville culinary environment, which was nominated as one of the top culinary towns in the South.

ing some discounted appetizers for the table.

## Pavilion XI

*LN:* In my experience, Pavilion XI, colloquially called “the Pav,” is one of the best lunch options if you're looking for something included in a UVA. meal plan. Located smack dab in the middle of Central Grounds, inside of Newcomb Hall, the Pav boasts its own Chick-fil-A and Subway. Both of which offer meal exchange options — a trade-in of a traditional dining hall meal swipe for select menu items at certain on-Grounds dining locations, — perfect for an on-the-go option between classes. Food from Ben & Jerry's and Bento Sushi in the Pav can be purchased with dining dollars.

The Pav is on the first floor of the building, set up like a large cafeteria with plenty of tables for students to use after picking up their food at each counter. Personally, I love that the Pav is a one-stop shop. If — or when — you're still hungry after lunch, skip on over to Ben & Jerry's for some ice cream!

## Atlas Coffee

*IG:* Though the area is far less popular than the Corner, one of my favorite coffee spots in Charlottesville is on the edge of the Fry's Spring neighborhood. Only a 5-minute walk from Gooch-Dillard dorms, Atlas Coffee is a great option to grab local coffee and pastries. I particularly love being greeted by the friendly staff

and admiring the artwork from local artists adorning the wall. Plus, it's hard to beat a 12-ounce latte costing only \$4.25.

Located in a small storefront, Atlas offers limited indoor seating at the coffee bar but a fantastic patio space. Any first-year — especially those residing in the Motels or Gooch-Dillard — should make the walk over to Atlas one fall morning and enjoy a pastry with my personal favorite, the vanilla latte.

## Einstein Bros. Bagels

*LN:* Located inside of Rice Hall on E-Way, Einstein Bros. Bagels is conveniently close to first-year dorms. Inside, you'll find a brightly-lit seating area, but to-go bags make it easy to bring meals anywhere.

While it isn't our beloved Bodo's, Einstein's menu offers nearly every type of bagel with any type of shmear, including plain, strawberry, garden veggie and onion & chive. Beyond bagels, the meal exchange menu even includes avocado toast, pastries and breakfast sandwiches. For a lunch-time pick-me-up, each meal exchange also comes with a self-serve fountain drink or a cup of coffee.

## Guajiros Miami Eatery

*IG:* If you're in the market for bold flavors and fantastic ambience, I cannot recommend Guajiros Miami Eatery enough. A less than 15-minute walk from the Rotunda, Guajiros is nestled off the corner of 10th and

Main. Inspired by flavors of South Florida and Central America, Guajiros goes beyond a typical brunch establishment's menu of pancakes and omelets.

While most items are moderately priced, there are some affordable small fare plates, such as the empanadas de pollo for \$9. Guajiros is also home to one of my favorite coffees in Charlottesville — their cafe con leche is delectable, especially after a full morning of classes.

What really sells Guajiros is the atmosphere. The walls are decked out with art centered on Miami or Central American culture, from a mural of Frida Kahlo to futbol jerseys hanging from the ceiling. Rays of natural light pour in through the large windows at the storefront. For a step up from meal exchanges and Corner dining, Guajiros for brunch is worth a visit.

While the University's dining scene may not always meet students' expectations, there are many ways to get outside of the bubble and enjoy yummy meals throughout your first year. Whether taking advantage of the first-year unlimited meal plan alone or exploring affordable options, there are plenty of alternatives for when the dining hall dinner just doesn't cut it. Although tasting around for yourself is the way to go, this list provides a jumping-off point for anyone who wants to learn about some of the best and cheapest meal options here on Grounds and nearby.

# Letting kids be kids at Camp Kesem

University volunteers run a fun-filled summer camp for children affected by a parent's cancer diagnosis

Sadie Adams | Staff Writer

Every summer, a group of University students head to Camp Kesem to make — in the words of many campers and volunteers — “Kesem Magic.” Kesem, a nationwide nonprofit organization, supports children ages six to 18 who have a parent impacted by cancer. With over 115 chapters at colleges in 41 states, the organization is run by passionate college-aged volunteers, providing year-round peer support, a welcoming community and free summer camps.

For the University, Camp Kesem takes place during one week each summer at Crossroads Camp, located about an hour outside of Charlottesville in Lowesville, Va. For many counselors, volunteering at Camp Kesem is a way to make a positive difference in the community for a cause that is often near to their hearts.

In many aspects, Camp Kesem is a traditional sleepaway camp. Campers spend a week in cabins, unplugged from technology and immersed in outdoor activities — such as making s'mores, playing Gaga Ball, swimming and putting on talent shows.

Despite offering typical summer camp activities, the camp's core mission centers on building systems of emotional support and community. Ryan Allbee, one of Kesem's opera-

tions coordinators and rising third-year College student, explained that this underlying mission — which is present in each and every activity — is what makes Kesem unique.

“Kesem's whole purpose is to improve the lives of children who are affected by parents' cancer,” Allbee said. “[Kesem gives] kids a space where they can just completely forget about ... their struggles in their home life ... they can just be a kid, and not to worry about all the stuff going on that's out of their control.”

To ensure Kesem is accessible to families in various financial situations, Kesem is entirely free of cost — providing meals, lodging, activities and transportation for camp participants.

University students work all year to fundraise for Camp Kesem. For Alka Link, a volunteer counselor and rising fourth-year College student, providing accessibility through fundraising is one of the most meaningful aspects of the program.

“[The] reason why I really wanted to join [Kesem] is because I could really see [my impact.] I'm fundraising all of this money, and I'm devoting all of my time ... to give these kids who have been through so much at such a young age such a carefree week

[where] they can be a kid again,” Link said. “We talk about Kesem magic, and [while] it sounds so cliché, it is truly such a magical week.”

Kesem is also distinguished by its “Challenge by Choice” philosophy, ensuring no child is forced to share a sentiment they do not wish to. Anika Larsen, Kesem volunteer coordinator and 2025 School of Education and Human Development alumna, explained this mantra, describing how campers themselves decide how much they are open to sharing about their personal experiences.

“Sometimes we do talk more about cancer and the reason that we're all here at camp,” Larsen said. “It really is kind of whatever direction the kids want to take it ... It's really important that kids feel comfortable doing whatever they would like to.”

According to Larsen, this flexibility creates a unique sense of community at Camp Kesem. Echoing this sentiment, Malcolm Woollett, volunteer coordinator and rising third-year College student, noted that while campers come from different backgrounds, locations and circumstances, their shared experience of a parent's cancer diagnosis can create a tacit sense of understanding and solidarity.

“I think that [cancer is] a really exhausting thing to be constantly treated differently for. At camp, they're all different kids, but they all share that one thing in common, and they're not treated any differently by any of us or any of them for it,” Woollett said.

According to Allbee, when campers know others have faced similar challenges, they often feel more comfortable when it comes to opening up.

“Having someone that's on the same page as you ... definitely makes kids feel more at home,” Allbee said. “[It] makes kids feel more comfortable when [they] have someone else who's gone through a similar situation.”

Even when the week ends, Larsen noted that the bonds created at Camp Kesem do not. These enduring friendships are further strengthened during “Empowerment,” an activity held halfway through the week. She explained that it brings campers of all ages together, providing opportunities for them to share their experiences to one another.

“[Empowerment is] kind of the first time the word ‘cancer’ is officially said at camp,” Brennan said. “You just see kids who might be hesitant and haven't really spoken up in front of a large group before have the abil-

ity to say, ‘I love Kesem because it makes me feel happy,’ ‘I love Kesem because I feel like I have a family.’”

For those who may be more reluctant to share their deeply personal sentiments, in Link's perspective, the camp's greatest value lies in its ability to provide a place where children can set aside the challenges they face at home and simply enjoy being kids.

Whether campers spend their time sharing personal experiences or simply enjoying a week of games, friendships and outdoor activities, Camp Kesem provides an environment where having a parent affected by cancer is a common experience rather than one of isolation.

“Some kids just love summer camp, and they just love having that really supportive community of people who truly understand them without them needing to say anything,” Larsen said. “They feel like at Kesem, that they can be themselves entirely and feel completely understood without even really needing to try.”

For first-year students interested in becoming a part of the “Kesem magic,” the next chapter begins at the University's Activities Fair, which happens before the first week of classes.

## THE CAVALIER DAILY

### THE CAVALIER DAILY

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# PUZZLE

Shreyas Agnihotri | Puzzle Editor

Answers are available on the digital version of this puzzle which is published at [www.cavalierdaily.com](http://www.cavalierdaily.com).

**ACROSS**

- 1 Largest member of the dolphin family
- 5 Shake \_\_\_\_\_ (fast food chain)
- 10 "Miss Independent" singer
- 14 Lousy
- 15 Small drum of Indian origin
- 16 Rockstar Billy
- 17 (n.) *Sophomore*, at UVA.
- 19 Current event?
- 20 Parisian pals
- 21 Kind of bean in succotash
- 23 Concept in Chinese philosophy
- 24 Nut whose pronunciation is often debated
- 26 (n.) 1. *Site for UVA. rugby matches, familiarly*; 2. *Vegetarian Roots option featuring chimichurri mushrooms*
- 28 "Bottoms" actress Edebiri
- 29 Source of ATM cash

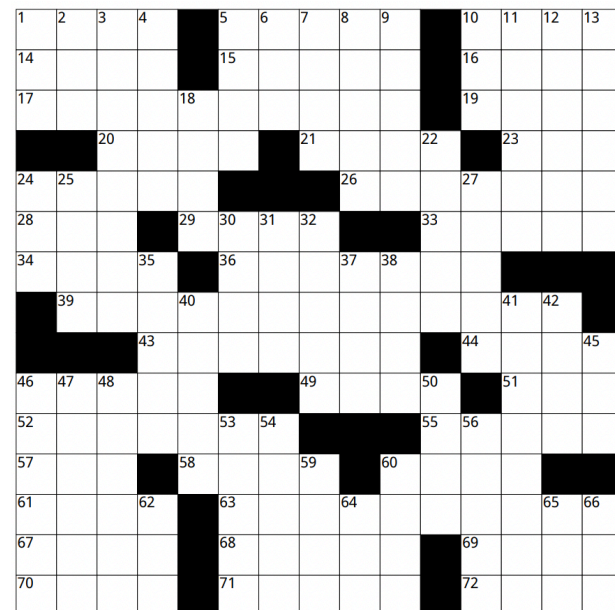
- 33 Cusp
- 34 What Popsicles do on hot days
- 36 Conditioning product
- 39 (n.) *Series of springtime open houses for incoming Hoos*
- 43 Like higher-income students, stereotypically
- 44 2023 Best Actress winner who said, "Ladies, don't let anybody tell you you are ever past your prime"
- 46 Juandiego Wade, to Charlottesville
- 49 Direction from the University Bookstore to the Rotunda
- 51 University \_\_\_ (Corner locale)
- 52 Utterly ridiculous
- 55 Common assignment for an English major
- 57 NASDAQ listing (abbr.)
- 58 Post-punk aesthetic associated with a dark and gloomy style
- 60 Follow closely
- 61 Youngest Stark daughter

- on "Game of Thrones"
- 63 (n.) *Annual July event where many students return to Grounds for the weekend*
- 67 Washing machine contents
- 68 Modify
- 69 One of about one hundred trillion stored in the average data center
- 70 Tries to get an answer
- 71 (adj.) 1. *Number of members in UVA's most secret society*; 2. *Number of points Virginia Tech football scored to UVA's 27, in the 2025 Commonwealth Clash*
- 72 Out on the ocean

**DOWN**

- 1 Word after "black" or "special"
- 2 \_\_\_ v. Wade
- 3 Big name in pop?
- 4 Pleasant smell
- 5 Condoms reduce the risk of them (abbr.)
- 6 Scarecrow material
- 7 The Weeknd's first name

- 8 Allege
- 9 Taylor Swift song whose remix features Ice Spice
- 10 Small criticism
- 11 Max Goldberg, for this crossword
- 12 "Sup, bro?"
- 13 World Cup chant
- 18 Name repeated by "Fish Girl" in a viral 2019 YouTube video
- 22 Motrin alternative
- 24 "The Office" role for Jenna Fischer
- 25 "Brown \_\_\_ Girl"
- 27 Secure, as a ship's line
- 30 High-fashion shoemaker Jimmy
- 31 "Pretty please?"
- 32 \_\_\_\_\_ IX (anti-discriminatory education law)
- 35 Neil deGrasse who spoke at JPI in 2025
- 37 Mother of Zeus
- 38 Esteemed British reference books (abbr.)
- 40 Rosemary piece
- 41 Redheaded family of



- wizarding fame
- 42 Common region of residence for in-state University students, familiarly
- 45 Word before "Jude" or "Ya!" in a song title
- 46 Chicken tikka \_\_\_\_\_
- 47 Houston MLB team involved in a cheating

- scandal in the 2010s
- 48 (n.) *App for anonymous posting in UVA. communities*
- 50 Virginia Softball, for instance
- 53 Spanish for "Enough!"
- 54 One of 12 in a Scrabble set
- 56 Swahili for "lion"
- 59 Many a flat-screen

- 60 Swivel
- 62 Pitches between innings?
- 64 Observe, or a homophone of 66-Down
- 65 U.S. 29, for one
- 66 Ocean, or a homophone of 64-Down

# CARTOON

## Summer Nightmares

Sarah Meisner | Cartoonist



## U.Va.'s Forecast

Sophia Lee | Senior Associate



## SPORTS

## ‘딱 하나’: Jangjun Kim’s journey from Seoul to Charlottesville

5,000 miles from home, Kim is rewriting what tennis looks like for Koreans in the United States

Margaret Piatos

With Virginia’s season on the line against Texas in the NCAA Championship match, Jangjun Kim stood calmly at the baseline during a second-set tiebreak.

The match had already stretched deep into the afternoon heat. Teammates watched courtside. The crowd grew louder after every point.

Kim was unfazed, focused only on the ball in front of him.

There is a word Kim says to himself on a deuce point. Not loudly in the way a typical player might pump their fist and shout. Kim says it quietly to himself in Korean.

“딱 하나.” (Ttag hana). Focus on just this one point.

Not the championship. Not the crowd. Not the fact that he is one of the only Korean players in American college tennis, 5,000 miles from home. Just this one point.

That commitment to staying focused on the task at hand had become central to the way Kim competed all season.

Throughout the postseason, the Cavaliers repeatedly lost doubles points and dropped first sets, forcing comeback after comeback. And through nearly all of it, the biggest moments often drifted toward Kim.

Against Columbia and South Carolina, Kim won critical third sets. Against Mississippi State, he was leading in a third before play was clinched. He rallied for another three-set victory against Wake Forest, then stayed composed through a pivotal second-set tiebreak against Texas in the final.

These results only partially explain his impact. As a freshman, Kim’s talent flashed inconsistently while still adjusting to college tennis, primarily competing at Lines 5 and 6 and finishing 16-7 overall. By the spring of his sophomore season, he had become something entirely different.

Kim moved up to Lines 3 and 4 singles and emerged as one of Virginia’s steadiest players, finishing 25-9 overall with a 16-6 spring dual-match record. But beyond the wins themselves, Virginia came to rely on the calmness Kim brought into pressure moments. He rarely showed emotion or allowed momentum swings to change his approach. It was the quiet consistency that made him one of the team’s most dependable players.

Kim said that composure was intentional.

“No grunting, no reaction after the point,” Kim said. “Just calm.”

His coach agreed.

“He’s just a silent assassin out there,” Coach Andres Pedrosa said.

Kim grew up in Seoul, South Korea, in a tennis culture that exists mostly outside the visibility of the Western game. Korean tennis has no Rafael Nadal or Novak Djokovic. The players who come through its system grind through tournaments with the same ambition as their European or South American counterparts, but with less supportive infrastructure and significantly less recognition.

To get the flexibility elite junior tennis requires, Kim attended online school through high school while training at Dignity Tennis Academy in Korea. By the time he arrived in Virginia in January 2025, he had already spent years competing far from home — from all across Asia to even Australia — knowing what it meant to be somewhere foreign.

Kim first encountered the idea of American college tennis when he competed in the U.S. Open Junior tournament in September 2024, where he met Pedrosa. When it came time to choose where he would continue his tennis career, Stanford and Texas were both on the table. Ultimately, Kim chose Virginia because of the honesty he felt from Pedrosa and the culture surrounding the program, he said.

“Some other schools were telling him it was going to be easy and I told him it was going to be hard, really hard, but it’s going to change your life,” Pedrosa said.

Pedrosa turned out to be right.

Getting acquainted with life in Charlottesville was its own adjustment. Online school in Korea had given Kim flexibility, but not the experience of sitting in a lecture hall and balancing Division I athletics. Like many athletes, Kim had to adapt quickly to the structure of his new college life. And at a university where international students make up about five percent of the total population, some parts of home were difficult to replace.

At times, the adjustment affected his tennis, but Kim attacked it the same way he approached matches — quietly and persistently.

“[There has] been monumental effort that [Kim] deserves a lot of credit for,” Pedrosa said. “He’s gotten into a routine and he’s built momentum academically. That’s kind of allowed him to relax a little bit and be able to train a little more, and he’s playing better tennis because of it.”

Pedrosa credited Assistant Coach Brian Rasmussen, Virginia’s



COURTESY VIRGINIA ATHLETICS

Kim’s composure throughout Virginia’s title run exemplified his journey from South Korea to Charlottesville.

academic support staff and tutors for helping Kim adjust. But he emphasized that much of the progress came from Kim himself.

“He’s learned English, he’s doing great in school, he loves the United States now, he’s made lifelong friends,” Pedrosa said. “So it’s an all-around amazing UVA. student athlete story.”

That growth off the court mirrors the steadiness Kim developed on it.

Around his wrist, Kim wears two rubber black and yellow bracelets that say “Push Through It,” something a trainer made for him seven years ago after a serious shoulder injury in Korea nearly required surgery. Kim spent nearly a month in the hospital recovering and has worn the bracelet ever since.

Years later, that same mentality still appears in the way Kim competes — 딱 하나, focus on just this one point.

His presence has also started resonating beyond Virginia’s lineup.

Kim shared that he is believed to be among the first Korean players to compete in American Division I college tennis, part of a generation beginning to explore the NCAA pathway more seriously.

One Korean tennis account described him as “the future of Korean

tennis,” tracing his journey from ITF Juniors in Korea to Virginia and calling his NCAA success part of “writing a new chapter in Korean tennis history.”

Kim himself told The Korea Herald that, “Going forward, I want to continue showing that Korean players are fully capable of challenging themselves and succeeding on the NCAA stage.”

When Virginia played Vanderbilt earlier this season, Kim faced Hoyoung Roh, another South Korean player. To his knowledge, it was the first time two Korean players had ever met in a U.S. college tennis match.

Kim’s significance has also become visible inside the Virginia community. At home matches, groups of Asian students regularly support him, many seeing themselves represented in high-level college tennis for the first time.

“Being a Korean-American myself, it is inspirational watching Kim represent both my school and country,” said Eric Lee, Class of 2026 alumnus. “Tennis is not exactly dominated by Asian players, which makes him a trailblazer for the sport. He also plays with great ferocity, and really rises to the occasion no matter the opponent, which really embodies the UVA. spirit.”

What makes Kim’s story resonate so deeply is not simply that he is Korean, but the path he took to get here — leaving Korea by himself, adapting to a different language and culture, while becoming one of the most dependable players on a national championship team.

For Kim, though, the experience at Virginia has always meant more than tennis.

“I feel like I’m going to be a good person after I graduate here,” Kim said.

The adjustment to life in the United States gradually became something Kim learned not just to manage, but to grow through. And in many ways, the same steadiness that carried him through that transition became one of the qualities that made him indispensable to Virginia’s lineup.

In the biggest moments of Virginia’s national championship run, Kim never seemed rushed by the noise around him. While crowds got louder and matches swung emotionally, he narrowed the court down to something smaller.

One point.

딱 하나. Focus on just this one point.

# MCNIFF: Flagship programs have finally achieved parity

Football and basketball failed the Class of 2025 — they will not fail the Class of 2030

Ben McNiff | Senior Associate

The word for what happened in Scott Stadium on the night of Sept. 27, 2025, is pandemonium. Described by many as “the fastest field storm” ever, a flood of Cavalier faithful cascaded down the Hill and spilt onto the field following an overtime victory against then-No.8 Florida State.

That crisp fall night was one highlight in a year full of them for Virginia athletics, defined by the resurrection of their two flagship programs from ruin.

When the Class of 2025 entered their first year at the University, football and basketball were one year removed from an ACC title game berth and a national championship, respectively. Every member of that Class graduated without experiencing a single winning football season or a single NCAA Tournament victory for basketball.

Lackluster performance and a rapidly shifting college sports landscape, combined with the departures of Coach Bronco Mendenhall from football after the 2021 season and Coach Tony Bennett from men’s basketball in 2024, left the futures of these programs in flux.

Virginia’s Class of 2030 enters an

entirely different athletic environment than the fourth-years of yesterday. Unprecedented financial investment allowed ACC Coach of the Year Tony Elliott to construct the football program’s greatest season ever in his fourth year in Charlottesville. The hiring of Coach Ryan Odom and a complete roster overhaul yielded basketball’s first NCAA Tournament win since the title game in 2019.

Unlike the successes preceding the disasters of the early 2020s, the revamped iterations of these programs are here to stay. Elliott’s 2026-27 Cavaliers is the most experienced roster in college football. Although key leaders like Chandler Morris and JMari Taylor are gone, senior linebacker Kam Robinson and graduate guard Drake Metcalf remain — new additions such as graduate quarterback Beau Pribula and senior safety Brandyn Hillman will join them.

Robinson is perhaps the best player on the roster. Last campaign, he achieved the rare feat of being the only FBS player in 20 years with a punt block, a pick six and a fumble recovery in one season — he did this despite only playing in eight games.

Metcalf, a former Stanford Car-

dinal and Central Florida Knight, has played well at both guard and center throughout his career. His mistake-averse play means fans will not hear his name called out often on broadcasts for blown assignments or false starts.

Pribula spent the first three seasons of his career at Penn State before jumping to the SEC and spending a year with Missouri, where he went 7-3 across his starts. The former Tiger is the presumed starter, with junior Pitt transfer Eli Holstein set to back him up.

Hillman is likely to introduce himself quickly — and loudly — to Virginia football fans. The former Wolverine more than earned a reputation as one of the Big 10’s hardest hitters across his past two seasons at Michigan.

Elliott retained almost the entire offensive line and brought in nearly 30 players for a top 30-ranked transfer class in the country by most evaluators. Virginia is set up to compete at the top of the ACC for years to come — they flipped a four-star 2027 cornerback from Penn State earlier this month, offering a peek at potential for more sustainable roster-building in the future.

If Elliott’s portal performance was impressive, Odom put on a masterclass. He retained all players with eligibility remaining — not a single player elected to transfer away from the program. Between sophomore guard Chance Mallory, senior wing Sam Lewis, sophomore power forward Thijs De Ridder and sophomore center Johann Grünloh, Odom already had most of his starting lineup sorted out without any external additions.

Odom, of course, still added plenty in the portal, including veteran guards Jurian Dixon and Christian Harmon. Both are threats from beyond the arc and should see plenty of minutes this upcoming season. Four-star freshman center Favour Ibe adds immediate depth behind Grünloh and shows immense potential as a future starter, given his 7-foot-1 frame.

In a sport filled with revolving door rosters across the nation, Odom mostly maintaining the same roster from last year to this one is nothing short of miraculous — if he can manage remotely similar effort year to year, the Cavaliers will enter each season under his tenure among the most cohesive squads in the country.

Fans should be excited at the pros-

pect of Virginia becoming one of the privileged few schools that can field competitive teams in both football and basketball. However, the programs that have consistently delivered this decade deserve recognition.

Virginia has 37 NCAA championships across team sports. The 2025-26 academic year alone featured two championships — one tennis, one swimming — as well as top 10 rankings for 18 of 27 programs.

Women’s swimming is particularly dominant. Arguably, the program under Coach Todd DeSorbo has been the true flagship for Virginia this decade. With six straight NCAA women’s titles — an unparalleled achievement — the Cavaliers have staked a strong claim as one of the most inevitable teams across collegiate and professional sports.

The University has plenty to offer for its students, and excellence in many athletic programs has been part of that deal for decades. With the best set-up for sustained success in recent memory, football and basketball have begun to catch up with the pedigree of other programs. Brighter days lie ahead in Charlottesville for the Class of 2030.

## How former Cavaliers stack up so far in the 2026 MLB season

As the MLB season approaches the halfway mark, here’s a check-in on Virginia alumni in the majors

Drew Dillman | Staff Writer

As the 2026 MLB season approaches the All-Star break, several former Cavaliers have made waves, both on the field and from the bench. Although the names below are not an exhaustive list of the exploits of Cavaliers in Major League Baseball, the players mentioned have distinguished themselves over the course of the season.

### Ernie Clement, Toronto Blue Jays

Ernie Clement is one of the top hitters in the American League by total hits — 86 at present. His Blue Jays currently have a losing record, but sit only a few games outside of a playoff spot.

Clement was drafted by the Cleveland Indians in 2017 following three years at Virginia, the first of which saw the Cavaliers’ first national title in baseball — and an All-College World Series nod for Clement. Although he is now more than a decade removed from the College World Series victory, he still feels the ties to Virginia and his championship-winning teammates.

“It’s so special,” Clement said in an interview with 1186 The Podcast in 2024. “It has gone by really fast. It feels

like just yesterday I was getting yelled at to get a bunt down. But it’s crazy, it’s awesome.”

He credited the Virginia coaching staff for taking him from a multi-sport high school athlete juggling baseball, football, hockey and soccer and developing him into a Major League-caliber player.

“The coaches did such a good job at getting the best out of me,” Clement said in the same interview. “[I was] just a kid from Rochester, N.Y., who never played baseball for more than two [or] three months out of the year. I was a perfect fit to come in and improve. I never thought I would play. I had no expectations of getting drafted or playing, I just wanted to help that team win.”

That winning mindset instilled in Clement carried the Blue Jays to the doorstep of a World Series victory, although the team ultimately fell short against the Los Angeles Dodgers.

As the season heads toward the All-Star break, Clement may not have as much of a break, with his hitting production putting him in pole position to be named to the American League All-Star team.

### Zack Gelof, Athletics

Zack Gelof was a Cavalier for three seasons from 2019 to 2021, starting every game at Virginia. He was drafted by the Oakland Athletics in 2021 and exclusively played second base in 2023, 2024 and 2025, where he saw limited time and poor production due to injuries.

In 2026, though, he has seen his batting improve, at the same time as his fielding has been shaken up. He has been yanked all over the field in his fourth campaign, playing at third base, center field and right field, in addition to a smattering of games at second.

“[Gelof]’s been an infielder the majority of his life,” Athletics manager Mark Kotsay said to reporters ahead of their May 13 matchup against the St. Louis Cardinals. “The opportunity arose to utilize him in the outfield because of his athleticism and, quite frankly, because he could play pretty well.”

Gelof, adapting as he did, undertook the various position changes despite little previous experience.

“Growing up, nothing,” Gelof said to Chris Townsend of “A’s Cast Live” April 29 when asked about his experience in the outfield. “My first game

in the outfield in my life was in Double-A in 2022.”

In a single game June 8, Gelof showed off his utility — and the resurgent offense that has come along with him. Gelof started the game at second base, but played at right field and third base before the night was over. He also pulled a ball out of the park, smacking a home run over the left field wall. Even though the Athletics lost that game 15-14 against the Milwaukee Brewers, Gelof’s performance cannot be easily forgotten.

### Sean Doolittle, Washington Nationals

Sean Doolittle played for Virginia nearly two decades ago, pitching and playing first base for the Cavaliers in the mid-2000s. Along the way, he posted a .312 batting average across his three seasons in Charlottesville, a mark that is only surpassed by three qualified hitters. While a Cavalier, he majored in psychology, and thinks he might have been a sports psychologist had his athletic career not taken off.

A 10-1 pitching record and a 1.90 ERA in 2006 led to him being named ACC Player of the Year for the 2006 season, and he was drafted by Oakland in 2007.

Although originally playing as a first baseman and outfielder for Oakland, he eventually underwent a switch to pitcher following several injuries, and was traded to the Washington Nationals in 2017. He won a World Series with that team in 2019 before retiring with the Nationals and transitioning into a coaching role, where he serves as an assistant pitching coach.

Doolittle has seen much, from being on a Virginia squad that made it to the NCAA Tournament all three years he was present — only to flame out in the regionals each time — to conquering the mountaintop as a closer on the championship-winning Nationals. He believes his experience has made him a better coach to his players.

“I try to show compassion in everything that I do,” Doolittle said on The 11th Inning podcast March 14, 2025 to Dan Kolko and former Cavalier Ryan Zimmerman. “On some level, I have a lot of empathy for what they’re going through. I can relate to a lot of what they are going through because of my experiences in the game ... there’s not a whole lot I didn’t experience.”

# OPINION

## LEAD EDITORIAL

### EDITORIAL: Welcome to a U.Va. reshaped by the past year

*A year of federal overreach and community strength transformed this institution, and that resilience is yours to carry forward*

To the Class of 2030, welcome to the University. As you will encounter, orientation is a medley of introductions. However, one of the most complex introductions rarely makes it into orientation. As the Editorial Board, students who commentate weekly on University affairs, we seek to introduce you to the University — a space shaped by the balance between institutional autonomy, political turbulence and shared governance over this past year. We hope this introduction will empower you to represent our University and its values whenever they are threatened.

Before the University's leadership made national headlines, rifts developed between former Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin and the University. In Virginia, the governor appoints members to the governing boards of universities. The University's Board of Visitors has 17 voting members with four-year terms, led by the rector and vice rector. By January 2025, Young-

kin appointed a majority of members of the Board, and by July, all were appointed under his remit. Friction arose between Republican-appointed Board members and Democrat-appointed former Rector Robert Hardie, as Youngkin's involvement with the Board heightened.

The Board entered 2025 facing multiple Youngkin-supported resolutions drafted by his office. In one instance, the University dissolved the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion March 7, 2025, in accordance with federal law. On the horizon of threats to DEI offices across higher education, the University community broadly supported the functions of its own office and regularly invested in its resources. Thus, this dissolution was met with significant backlash by the University community. This remains an early example of the Youngkin-appointed Board's interest in ignoring community input to appease leadership.

Former University President Jim

Ryan — a president engaged with the University community and focused on the institution's long-term success — navigated changing tides. Starting April 2025, the University began to receive letters from the Department of Justice demanding evidence of its compliance with civil rights law. According to an account from Ryan, contested by former Rector Rachel Sheridan, this pressure intensified across weeks of collusion between members of the Board, legal counsel and the Justice Department, wherein Sheridan operated outside of her capacity to advise Ryan to step down. Ryan then resigned June 27, 2025, the most public exemplification of federal overreach.

Students, faculty, staff and community members condemned the actions of the Justice Department. The Cavalier Daily received dozens of letters interrogating what this action meant for our University's stability. The Student Council and Faculty Senate passed significant votes of no

confidence. These demonstrations empowered shared governance and community output necessary in an era of institutional instability. When the future of this institution was uncertain, several members of our community fought for a stronger University.

Ryan's resignation was followed by former Interim President Paul Mahoney. Mahoney received the Trump administration's "Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education." This treatise would bind any agreeing university to a limitless set of the President's expectations. Mahoney refused to sign the Compact. However, days after, Mahoney signed institutional autonomy off in a different way — consenting to compliance reports and placing our institution at the command of the Trump administration's political whims through the threat of legal action. The University continues to publish these reports, and they are a not-so-distant reminder of the work still necessary to protect our

institution's autonomy.

Following an unpopular, expedited presidential search, University President Scott Beardsley was appointed as the University's 10th president Dec. 19, 2025. At convocation, you will meet Beardsley and learn about his perspective on University leadership. Now, you have the opportunity to engage with this information further. To understand the intersections between University president, Board member and governor is to equip yourself with the ability to lead informed advocacy — sustained with true curiosity for this University's future.

**THE CAVALIER DAILY EDITORIAL BOARD** is composed of the Executive Editor, the Editor-in-Chief, the two Opinion Editors, two Senior Associates and an Opinion Columnist. The board can be reached at [eb@cavalierdaily.com](mailto:eb@cavalierdaily.com).

### CLIPPINGER: Embrace rigor in the humanities

*In an educational landscape marked by incomplete readings, artificial intelligence use and career panic, it is time to rethink our approach to rigor in humanities courses*

The humanities have been the target of numerous attacks over the past decade. The field that includes history, philosophy, literature and the arts, to name a few subfields, has been criticized as politically motivated, non-lucrative and, therefore, useless. Of course, these concerns are bolstered by the ubiquity of artificial intelligence in colleges, such that humanities work appears capable of being completely outsourced.

In response, defenders of the humanities often point to the empathy garnered by literature and cultural studies, how the humanities make us human and how art enriches the soul. It also seems clear that much criticism decrying the humanities as politically motivated tends to be, ironically, politically motivated. But defending the humanities from external attacks should not prevent us from examining them internally. It is important to look inward at the question of seriousness — humanities education has a rigor problem.

This is not to say that the humanities are intrinsically easy — the questions they pose about life are among the most timeless questions we can tackle. But professors nationwide have lamented students' inability to read and analyze assigned texts. In-

deed, some studies — including one by Mary Hoeft, professor emeritus of Communication Arts at the University of Wisconsin-Barron County — suggest that students frequently neglect readings within humanities courses. Facing this barrage of issues, how might students and instructors alike remind themselves of the humanities' potential for not just compassion and cultivation of the senses,

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Interpretation demands attention, patience and judgment, skills that cannot be outsourced without losing the very exercise the discipline is meant to cultivate.”

but academic rigor?

Neglecting readings is the first issue from which many others follow. In math courses, students complete problem sets, and in science courses, pre-labs. For humanities students, the bulk of labor is reading, interrogating and writing. These readings can often be summarized, be it by AI, entire sites dedicated to written summaries or video content — but there is value in the act of reading. The aim of assigning readings is not to merely understand the texts' conclusions but to think along with

them, to wrestle with their arguments, nuances and ambiguities. Interpretation demands attention, patience and judgment, skills that cannot be outsourced without losing the very exercise the discipline is meant to cultivate.

At times, discussion sections can mask this failure. Who has not sat in an early morning discussion, pained by its repetition, points that

discussions focus and deepen in evaluation.

Subjectivity also poses challenges in addressing the problem of rigor. The subjectivity of the humanities means that discourse and competing perspectives will prove a fair share of course and discussion content. Open dialogue is necessary for intellectual exploration and growth, and disagreement should be encouraged.

Courses can place more emphasis on in-class writing, close textual analysis and oral arguments, which make thinking visible in real time. If the lack of deadlines creates the perception that readings are nonessential, then courses can utilize reading checks and in-class, written responses on set dates. This is not a call for more work, but one for greater accountability. Yet, challenges cannot fall solely on instructors. It is also up to students to decide whether we would like to meaningfully engage with the work that defines a humanities education.

The preservation of rigor is essential. It is not merely a matter of what we memorize, but how we think and put our learning to practice in shaping the world around us. If the humanities are worth defending, they are also worth taking seriously. It is time we reaffirm the demanding intellectual practices that make them so valuable in the first place.

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Yet, openness to multiple interpretations should demand more, not less, evidentiary rigor. If any interpretation is potentially defensible, then students must learn to defend theirs through close reading, textual evidence, historical context and logical argument. Rigor is necessarily relocated, not eliminated.

It is also understandable that AI use should change how professors assign work. However, if students can complete a class without any close textual engagement, AI has exposed a pedagogical flaw, not created one.

# HUMOR

## The five people everybody meets in their first year

*Navigating the world of social relationships at the University — no borax, no glue*

*Editor's Note: This is a humor column.*

First year is like a box of chocolates — you never know what you are going to get. Thanks to those summer training modules, the only things I thought I was going to get were run-hide-fight alerts and Narcan. If you're down on your nepo luck like I was, you may not have had somebody to prepare you for all the different kinds of people you'll find at the University. So just call me Ishmael because I'll guide you through the tempestuous social voyages of first year as I reflect on my experiences.

### Conversing with a Trin Trekker

"My roommate and I were PUBSIng last night, but if you haven't puked in an ambulance at least once, did you even have the college experience?" said the guy next to me in my 8 a.m. lecture. After he told me that, I naively suggested Alcoholics Anonymous. "Don't bother calling yourself a Wahoo. You bring shame to our University!" he exclaimed in shock at my suggestion.

I later learned this guy was a Trin Trekker. Trin Trekkers love to go out.

You see, here at the University, we work hard and play hard. But some people play harder than others. They love Trin but you'll also see them at Ellie's, Coupes and, of course, the frats — at least the ones for which they have a DoorList.

### Surviving my fall semester situation-ship

Entering the fall season, I thought I would find take soft-launch lawn picnic photos with. But now, like many others, I lie awake at night, shivering over the supervillains I met during fall semester and praying I never run into them at Newcomb.

We fell in love in October? More like we both had commitment issues in October. The fall semester is the worst limbo for hopeless romantics. Everybody wants to experience, but nobody wants to commit. Maybe you will meet them in the beer-littered front yard of a party, or lock eyes in the romantic atmosphere of O'Hill — it doesn't really matter how it began because the ending is always the same. All the passion and suffering comes to

an abrupt end when you finally block them while sobbing in the bathroom on Clem four — of course, the night before your final.

### Escaping the McIntire mad men

Everybody comes to the University with a dream. For some people, that dream is discounted cash flow valuation and maximizing shareholder value. Although I didn't share this dream, I couldn't deny I felt something creeping onto me. Like a bug ready to infect me with venom — a venom that I had seen others infected with.

You see, McIntire mad men may have appeared to be ordinary guys, and one of them could even be a friend of yours. Maybe he was pursuing a passion in the humanities or engineering. Then one day, he'll get bitten. It starts when you see him creeping around Robertson Hall. Shortly afterward, you see him take COMM 1800 "just to try it." Finally, one day he just cracks. "Philosophy won't get me a job ..." you'll see him saying, as he rocks back and forth in his Barbour jacket.

### Befriending the a cappella baddie

Surprisingly, I didn't meet this girl in the middle of the dorm showers. Rather, I met her when her a cappella group came to perform at my building. "Dear God, if I should do my homework please, just give me a sign ..." I prayed in my dorm. Two seconds later I hear "The Sign" by Ace of Base being sung across the hall.

A cappella baddies are notorious for saying "aca-scus-me?" in inappropriate situations and having an unwavering love for their semesterly concert. If you're unfamiliar with college a cappella, it may seem a bit unusual at first. But you'll quickly notice that many of the members are quite friendly. If you have nobody show up to your birthday, you can count on an a cappella baddie to roll in singing, "Girl you know I-I-I girl you know I-I-I ... ooh it's the best day of the year girl."

### Tolerating the Loaded Lad

For broke law-abiding citizens like myself, meeting Loaded Lads can feel like a bit of a culture shock. "You ... don't have a fake because you're scared

of getting in legal trouble? Can't you just call up your family's lawyer?" one said while striding down University Avenue.

It's no secret that the University has its fair share of wealthy students. Loaded Lads may wear Barbours, McQueens and a bunch of other brands that you've never even heard of. But who needs chuddy designer things when Walmart actually has the most aura? Those buy-one-get-one-free succulents are priceless! Or I guess less-priced.

I think everybody at the University can agree that first year can be a bit of a challenging adjustment period. But as long as you have persistence — and the patience of a Trin Trekker waiting in line for a party on Halloweekend — you too can survive your first year.

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## Top 10 facts you probably didn't know about Thomas Jefferson

*99 percent of The Cavalier Daily's readers are not aware of all of these facts. Are you?*

*Editor's Note: This is a humor column.*

Thomas Jefferson was a complicated man. Was he intelligent? Of course. Was he a ginger? Most people seem to think so. But what motivated him? And was he ever interested in freeform jazz? Seeing as we are approaching 200 years since the life of Jefferson, there are many indie and underground facts about good ole Tommy's life that The Cavalier Daily hopes to illuminate. Thus, and without further ado, here are 10 fun facts that you may not have known about the United States' third president!

### 1. He died on the Fourth of July

Jefferson died on the Fourth of July in 1826, exactly 50 years after the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. Thus, while you're outside eating your hot dog, celebrating the United States' 250th and watching grown men beat each other up, be sure to pour one out for Tommy Jefferson.

### 2. He never actually met George Washington in person

Despite having the most heat-

ed political rivalry of their time, Washington and Jefferson never met one another, likely as a result of how little time each actually spent in the nation's capital. Thus, historians who suggest that their animosity may have been a cover for a more amorous, private relationship are, unfortunately, incorrect. Unless Jefferson was into pen pal stuff. I'm not really sure.

### 3. He's buried under the United States Capitol Building

The United States Capitol Building serves as Jefferson's final resting place, with his body remaining in the basement crypt originally intended for George Washington. Thus, even in death, Jefferson triumphs over his greatest rival. Or his truest partner. It depends on who you ask.

### 4. He was orphaned at a very young age

As a baby, Jefferson was discovered on the steps of the loneliest orphanage in all of Albemarle County, a reflection of the deep hardship that he would face throughout his childhood. His cradle did not contain a name or

any other identifying information, and given his status as the second-most-famous ginger orphan, all of Jefferson's fellow orphans bullied him mercilessly. As he later recalled in his memoirs, "the other boys used to pour milk all over me and call me 'Milk Boy.' I didn't like that at all."

### 5. He was named after Thomas Edison

The young boy was eventually adopted by local patriarch, Justin Jefferson, who gave him the surname that we all know and love. What many people don't know, however, is that young Thomas was named after Thomas Edison, the greatest inventor of their time. This is why Jefferson made it his life's work to surpass Edison as the greatest inventor on earth. But did you know that this wasn't always Jefferson's dream?

### 6. He wanted to become an actor

During his time at the University of Virginia, where he spent his formative years, Jefferson explored a litany of intellectual interests. As many know, these interests included eugenics, the life and times of the American

mastodon, inventing and even architecture. However, for a brief time during his second semester at the University, Jefferson considered a career in acting, claiming he wanted to be "just like Shakespeare." However, he could never bring himself to commit to it, as theater class warmup exercises made him feel "unbearable discomfort."

### 8. He invented the lightbulb at age 19

After Ben Franklin invented electricity, the doors were thrown wide open for aspiring inventors across the United States. This was Jefferson's chance! After many days and nights spent toiling away in Clemons Library — or, as it was called by the school's British administrators, the Royal Clementious Library — Jefferson succeeded in creating the lightbulb at the astonishingly young age of 19. What a feat!

### 9. He did not care for Jared Leto's portrayal of the Joker

Jefferson watched a theatrical troupe's production of "The Suicidal Squadron" when it came to a local theater in 1816, sparking

what contemporaries describe as "a furor not seen since the eruption of Mount Vesuvius." Writing under a pen name, Jefferson produced an 8,000-word article denouncing actor Jared Leto's portrayal of the Joker as "base" and "uninspired." Sounds like somebody's a Heath Ledger fan!

### 10. He probably smelled really bad

He lived on a farm at the turn of the 19th century, so this guy probably stank! Maybe he should have invented the shower.

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