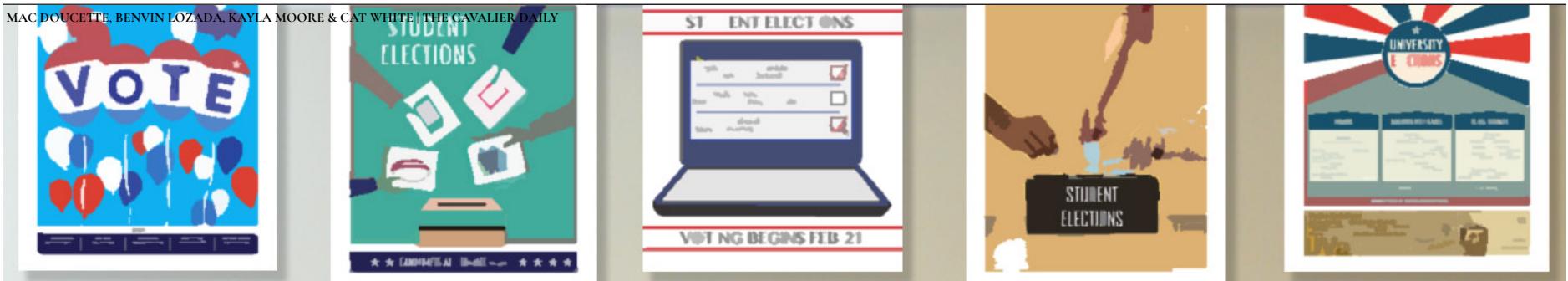


THE CAVALIER DAILY

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Raising Student Voices

Starting Feb. 24, students can cast their ballot to shape the University in the year ahead



NEWS

This week in-brief

CD News Staff

Spanberger signs executive directive terminating active ICE agreements with Va. officials

Gov. Abigail Spanberger (D) signed an executive directive Feb. 4 to terminate all standing 287(g) agreements within the Commonwealth — partnerships between local officials and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to perform specified immigration officer functions. In a press release, Spanberger explained that state and local law enforcement should be committed to building trust within communities, rather than the enforcement of federal civil immigration law.

"Today, Virginia is taking important steps to both reaffirm the core responsibilities of our officers and help build public trust in Virginians who wear the badge," Spanberger said.

This executive directive follows Executive Order 10, signed by Spanberger Jan. 17, which rescinded former Gov. Glenn Youngkin's (R) order in February 2025 to establish 287(g) agreements in Virginia. Spanberger's Executive Order 10, however, did not terminate existing agreements — it only outlawed the formation of future partnerships between Commonwealth officials and ICE.

This follows a resolution passed by the Charlottesville City Council Monday which expressed disapproval of federal ICE practices in Charlottesville, and noted that ICE enforcement can affect the "willingness" of residents to engage with and put trust into the local government.



Second-years reflect on experience in McIntire's new three-year commerce program

Beginning this past fall, second-year students became the first cohort to enter the McIntire School of Commerce under its new three-year undergraduate program, a shift that moves the application process to the spring of first year instead of January of students' second year. Students have expressed their appreciation for the extra year in the program to have time to better grasp foundational skills, but some say that it was slightly difficult to be the first class to adapt to the new three-year program.

According to the McIntire website, the three-year program allows students to begin Commerce courses earlier and build foundational skills before entering advanced coursework. Under the previous model, students entered McIntire in the fall of their third year after completing prerequisite courses and applying during their second year. The website further explained that the shift aligns with earlier finance and consulting recruiting timelines and gives students more room to explore other academic interests and professional opportunities.

With the program now starting in students' second year, applications are due at the end of students' first year and include written essays and a HireVue video response.

Applications for current first-year students are due April 30, and the school has not announced any changes to this year's process compared with last year.

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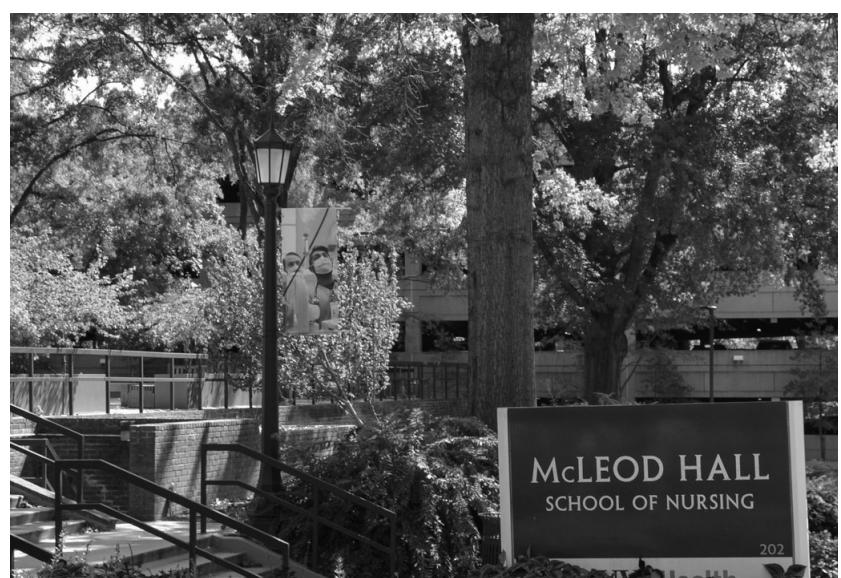
UVa. Dine reopens former Cafe McLeod with its rebrand as Daily Dose

Daily Dose officially reopened in McLeod Hall Jan. 14, replacing the former Cafe McLeod with a rebranded, grab-and-go focused dining concept intended to serve students in the School of Nursing. Many Nursing students have expressed mixed reactions to the rebrand, noting that Daily Dose now offers fewer heartier and varied meal options than former Cafe McLeod.

Daily Dose occupies the same space as Cafe McLeod, which was a previous dining option for Nursing students, faculty and staff that offered coffee, pastries and build-your-own bagels. While the location remains unchanged, the name, branding and official menu have been updated as part of the transition.

Cafe McLeod previously offered build-your-own bagels served with either a 16 ounce coffee or a fountain beverage through the meal-exchange option. Currently, the only meal-exchange option available at Daily Dose is a small hot coffee paired with a pastry.

Despite these updates, Student Council Nursing Rep. Deeya Rajashekara said students' reactions to the rebranding have been mixed. She noted that while students were initially optimistic, many nursing students were dissatisfied once the menu for Daily Dose was announced.



A preview of the upcoming University student elections

Students can vote for representatives across student self-government organizations from Feb. 24-26

Abigail Larkin | News Staffer

In this spring's student elections, students will be able to vote for Student Council president as well as over 80 other positions across the Student Council, Honor Committee, University Judiciary Committee, College Council, Architecture Student Council, Engineering Student Council, class councils and trustees.

Unlike elections in recent years, no referenda have been submitted yet for this year's ballot. A referendum typically proposes changes to the internal structure of a University organization put to a vote by the whole student body, or the students in relevant schools. Previous years have seen referenda on reinstating historical tours by the University Guide Service, adding a student-athlete representative seat to the Student Council body, reapportioning representative seats in the UJC and extending the UJC Statute of Limitations from 45 to 90 days.

Students are only eligible to vote in elections for representatives of their own schools — ballots for each student are personalized to include elections for their school of enrollment.

Abby Nickelson, UBE chair and fourth-year College student, said that UBE is also overseeing elections for the first time for several organizations on the ballot this year that had previously run their elections internally, such as the Batten School Undergraduate and Graduate Councils. As a result, more positions will be on the ballot Feb. 24-26 than in previous years.

Nickelson noted that while UBE has not received any referenda submissions yet, the window to submit will remain open until Feb. 19, when referenda petition signatures are due. To submit a petition, any individual student or student organization who wants to sponsor a referendum can download and complete the Referenda Proposal form available on the UBE website, and submit it via email to ube-referenda@virginia.edu from their University email address. If the constitution of the governing body of the student organization sponsoring the referendum does not indicate a required number of signatures, the UBE shall require a petition signed by no less than 1,250 students.

Nickelson also said that while the majority of the elections on the ballot are currently contested, there are some positions that do not have registrants. The UBE opened up a late registration window for the few positions without registrants, however, they only received additional registrants for Batten Undergraduate and Graduate Councils. If no one runs for a position, the organization will follow their internal procedures for filling a vacancy, such as through appointments or dual office holding.

There are currently two candi-

dates for the roles of Student Council president, vice president for administration, vice president for operations, Second-Year Council president and vice president, and the majority of Honor and UJC positions.

In previous years, student elections have had low voter turnout — Nickelson said that last year's turnout for UBE-administered elections was around 23 percent, which was slightly lower than the previous year, and only 12 percent of the student body voted in the Student Council presidential election last year.

Student Council

Candidates for Student Council president, VPA and VPO candidates all require 100 signatures to be on the ballot, while Class Council and school representative candidates need 25 signatures, with just 10 signatures needed for Batten and Architecture. Candidates' signature petitions are due to UBE by Feb. 13 to be eligible to run.

As of Feb. 10, the two candidates for Student Council president, Micah Andrews and Michael Mitchell, the candidates for VPO, Harper Tran and Benjamin Lawrence and the candidates for VPA, Saehee Pérez and Emily Frost, have all reached the required 100 signatures.

Campaigning officially begins Feb. 15 and will continue until the voting period, during which candidates typically use methods such as creating Instagram accounts to promote their platforms, writing campaign slogans in sidewalk chalk and putting up signs around Grounds.

Clay Dickerson, Student Council president and fourth-year College student said that he expects candidates to address several issues in their campaigns this year. These include issues related to confidence in the Board of Visitors and the University administration and navigating the first full academic year with the new leadership of University President Scott Beardsley's administration.

In particular, Dickerson noted that candidates will likely discuss capitalizing on the funding extension that Student Council recently received from Beardsley for the Support and Action Services Branch of the University. Additionally, Dickerson said that candidates will promote their strategies for fundraising towards Student Council's current goal of \$5 million to be able to successfully continue the services of the Support and Access Services Branch in the long term.

He also emphasized the important role of the Student Council president in representing the student population in an era of increased government involvement with the University.

"I hope that candidates are interested and able to transparently and

openly communicate student needs and interests regarding the continuing trend of federal overreach," Dickerson said.

In addition to issues specific to the University, Dickerson said that he thinks candidates will address several issues on the national scale, such as affordability — which he described as a "national crisis" — free speech and concerns with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Dickerson said he hopes the interactions between Student Council and the administration over the past year that have frustrated many will inspire more students to vote in the elections, and that students will realize the power they have through voting to make changes in the University.

"The strength of the Student Council lies in those who fill it," Dickerson said. "Students can't afford silence, particularly from an elected voice. Transparency and a willingness to be vocal, even when it hurts to do so, is what's best for the students, and thus it is what is necessary for the leader."

The Student Council Presidential Debate will take place Feb. 15 at 6:30pm in the Newcomb South Meeting Room. It is open to all students and will be livestreamed on The Cavalier Daily's Instagram. Students may submit questions for the candidates via a form on The Cavalier Daily's Instagram.

University Judiciary Committee

In this year's elections, there will be 33 UJC representative positions up for election across the University's 12 schools, with the most coming from the College of Arts and Sciences — eight positions.

To run for UJC representative, a student must register with the UBE to be voted by the student body of their school. There are no prerequisites to run for a representative position, and the student does not need to have had previous membership in the UJC.

Allison McVey, UJC Chair and fourth-year College student, said that the biggest responsibilities of the representatives is to serve as an "empathetic" and "discerning" judge in the UJC's trials. She said that representatives serve as ambassadors that can bridge the gap between the UJC and their respective schools.

"Anyone who's considering being a representative is probably going to be someone who would hopefully be thoughtful in asking questions, have a degree of natural curiosity and be able to do that in an empathetic way," McVey said. "You can be discerning while at the same time recognizing and respecting the individual in front of you or the group that's in front of you."

McVey said that currently, the UJC has not decided to sponsor any referendums. However, the executive committee is continuing to keep the possibility open. McVey said that the committee has undergone significant institutional change since their successful referendum last year, and is therefore refraining from sponsoring any referenda this year. Last year's referendum expanded the UJC's representative pool from five to eight in the College of Arts and Sciences and from two to three in the School of Engineering, in order to more proportionally reflect the student body sizes of each school.

McVey believes that the student referenda is a great tool for University organizations, but she said that using it every election year may not be a good choice for institutional stability.

She emphasized the importance of students voting in these elections, as the organizations with positions up for election play an important role in shaping life in the University. She also stated her appreciation for the unique level of student self-governance that the University allows.

After the school-wide, UBE-administered elections, the UJC has its own internal election process for the Chair or one of the Vice Chair positions that will take place April 1.

Honor Committee

There are 29 Honor Committee representative positions on the ballot for this spring's elections.

During elections in the spring of 2023, the Committee introduced large institutional change via student referendum, including the introduction of the multi-sanction system which was a topic of discussion among Committee candidates in last year's elections.

After the school-wide elections, the Committee will hold internal elections for the chair and vice chair positions in late March. Thomas Ackelson, Committee chair and fourth-year Engineering student, noted that he believes candidates will focus on addressing a variety of issues central to the mission of the Committee.

"I'm hopeful future Honor representatives will always focus on improving our system, and I think opinions changing is a natural, expected and healthy part of that process," Ackelson said. "I expect candidates will choose to continue focusing on fairness in our process, efficiency in processing cases and protecting the rights of accused students."

How to Vote

Every degree-seeking undergraduate student at the University is eligible to vote in the elections, and graduate students are able to vote in the grad-

uate races in Honor, UJC, Student Council and the Student Bar Association. An email will be sent Feb. 24 to the University email address of every eligible student with a personalized link. The student can click on the link, sign in through Netbadge and vote for every position they are allowed to vote for based on the student's year and school. The link will stay active from Feb. 24 at 8:00 a.m. until Feb. 26 at 4:00 p.m.

The ballot will use a ranked-choice voting system for student government positions, where voters can rank any number of candidates by their preference. If one candidate receives the majority of the top-choice votes, they will be declared the winner of the election.

While voter turnout in student elections has historically been low, Nickelson said that the UBE's numbers are similar to other state universities.

"We are pretty much on par with what I would describe as peer schools ... looking at Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan — usually their turnout for the [student council] president or their student body president equivalent, it's usually around 11 to 16 percent," Nickelson said.

Nickelson said UBE aims to increase voter turnout. In pursuit of this goal, UBE hosts events including the upcoming Student Council Presidential debate co-hosted by The Cavalier Daily Sunday and coffee tabs during the voting period co-sponsored by the Honor Committee.

However, Nickelson said she believes the primary factor driving students to vote in the elections is belief in a candidate's platform, and she said that the UBE aims to amplify candidate voices.

"It's [the students'] belief in the efficacy of the candidate's platform that matters most," Nickelson said. "Providing candidates with the tools and the information they need to go out and share their message with the University, that's really the most meaningful thing we can do at the end of the day."

Nickelson also said that she believes the interactions between the Board, Student Council and University administration through several changes in administrative leadership in the past few months — such as the appointment of Beardsley and the resignations of former Board Rector Rachel Sheridan and former Vice Rector Porter Wilkinson — may inspire increased voter turnout due to increased awareness of the role of student leadership.

Rosner, Beardsley and Ryan with top three 2026 salaries

The top 10 highest-paid employees of the University for fiscal year 2026 earn between \$700,000 and \$1.63 million, and four employees earn over \$1 million

Grace Little and Lauren Seeliger | News Editors

The University's top three highest-paid employees include University President Scott Beardsley, Jim Ryan, tenured Law professor and former University president, and Mitchell Rosner, UVa. Health chief executive officer. According to data obtained by The Cavalier Daily through a Freedom of Information Act request, Beardsley, Ryan and Rosner collectively earn \$4.14 million for fiscal year 2026 — which was effective Jan. 1.

All but one salary included in the obtained data is above \$1,000, and in total, the University's payroll is over \$2.2 billion. There are 25,600 individuals on the payroll with jobs including, but not limited to, tenure-line faculty members, pharmacy technicians, bus drivers, administrative operations employees and research associates.

The average for CEOs of non-profit health systems across the United States — which includes Rosner — is approximately \$1.3 million, according to a study by Rice University in 2019. Eight public university presidents in the United States had salaries exceeding \$1 million in 2025.

Rosner earns \$1.63 million, Beardsley earns \$1.30 million and Ryan earns \$1.21 million.

Top 10 highest-paid University employees

In sum, the University's top 10 highest-paid employees make approximately \$10.1 million, which is approximately 4.5 percent of the total payroll.

The employees earning the 10 highest salaries — in descending order — include Rosner, Beardsley, Ryan, Paul Mahoney, tenure-line faculty member and former interim president, Jennifer Davis, executive vice president and chief operating officer, clinician physician Philip Smith, Vice President of Advancement Mark Matthew Luellen, Stephanie Schnittger, Chief Financial Officer of UVa. Health, Christa Acampora, dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and three employees earning the same salary for the tenth highest-paid position — Jason Lineen, UVa. Health Chief Strategy Officer, Mark Esser, chief scientific officer and head of the Manning Institute of Biotechnology, and Presidential Darden Prof. Michael Lenox.

The top 5 percent of earners at the University earn 15.1 percent of the total payroll, and the bottom 50 percent of earners at the University earn 30 percent of the total payroll. The top 10 percent of

earners make 45.4 percent of the total payroll, and 27 employees of the University earn over \$500,000 for FY2026.

Beardsley earns a starting salary approximately \$500,000 higher than Ryan's in 2018

The University president is consistently one of the highest earners of all University employees, but Beardsley — who assumed office Jan. 1 — has a much higher starting salary compared to Ryan's starting salary, from when he was hired by the Board of Visitors in 2018.

Ryan earned a base salary of \$750,000 in FY2018 upon assuming office, and his contract stated he could earn up to \$100,000 per year in bonuses. In 2024, Ryan's base salary was raised to \$912,200, and in 2025, his salary was raised again to \$1.1 million. However, in June 2025, Ryan resigned following pressure from the Justice Department regarding what they claimed was noncompliance with dissolving diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

In comparison, Beardsley's starting salary for FY2026 is \$1.3 million. Beardsley additionally received a signing bonus of \$125,000, and according to his contract, he is eligible for annual bonuses of up to \$250,000.

CEO and executive vice president of UVa. Health receives highest University salary

Rosner, with the highest University salary for FY2026, earns approximately the amount former UVa. Health CEO Craig Kent earned in 2024 — Kent's last full year before resigning. Kent assumed his position in 2020 and his starting salary was \$950,000. He earned just over \$1 million in 2022 and in 2024, his salary was again increased to \$1.6 million.

Following Kent's resignation, Rosner served as interim UVa. Health CEO and assumed the permanent position in September 2025 with a salary of \$1.63 million.

Kent resigned following a letter of no confidence in September 2024 from 128 health-affiliated employees. The signatories asserted Kent and Melina Kibbe, former School of Medicine dean, had allowed "egregious acts" to persist within the health system and a later 239-page report revealed allegations that Kent and Kibbe hired unqualified surgeons and turned patients away from the emergency department.

Health CEOs and presidents at peer universities receive compa-



OLIVIA THOMPSON | THE CAVALIER DAILY

table salaries to Rosner. Johnese Spisso, University of California, Los Angeles, Health president and CEO of the UCLA Health hospital system, earns \$2.1 million. UNC Health's CEO earned a base salary of \$2.3 million in 2023, Michigan Medicine's CEO earned a base salary of \$1.64 million in 2023 and UT Southwestern Medical Center's president earned \$2.5 million in 2023.

Faculty salaries

There are 1,551 members of General Faculty — non-tenure-track faculty members — on the University's FY2026 payroll, and there are 3,653 members of total faculty, including tenured and non-tenured members.

Within the FY2026 payroll, 672 individuals are employed as "temps," or temporary employees. These roles can be full or part-time, and the average pay is \$35,887. Additionally, within the payroll of 25,600 employees, 1,551 individuals earn salaries below \$30,000 — which reflect a mix of student employees and other part-time workers.

According to the FOIA data, on average, a University faculty member earns an annual salary of \$144,240 for FY2026. Members of the General Faculty make, on average, \$106,387, or just approximately \$38,000 less than all faculty averaged together.

Additionally, the third highest paid employee at the University is a faculty member — Ryan — making \$1.2 million.

Faculty members can reach tenured status, which comes with a higher salary, by completing a successful multi-year probationary period that may not exceed seven years as an assistant professor. In addition, candidates for tenured status are reviewed for their research, service, publications and peer review, among other work. The decision moves through several levels — a department, school and University-wide review with the provost before final approval. There are 1,915 tenured faculty at the University as of FY2026.

According to data from the American Association of University Professors, University salary trends demonstrate a 3 to 5 percent increase each year, which is due to state funding, the University's endowment and demand for top talent.

Nationally, U.S. public university professors for the year 2023-2024 made approximately \$127,000 for full professors, \$95,000 for associate professors and \$83,000 for assistant professors, showing that University salaries are on par with higher education institutions across the country. However, data from the National Education Association shows that average salaries vary widely by state, institution and discipline.

Student-held jobs on Grounds

Several student-held jobs are also included in the data obtained via The Cavalier Daily's FOIA, given the salary was above \$1,000

for FY2026.

The University's Federal Work-Study program is one way in which students can hold jobs on or off Grounds — students' earnings from these jobs go towards financial aid. Participating students are eligible to earn between \$1,000 and \$4,000 per year, and students are automatically considered for the program if their completed documents — including FAFSA — show they qualify for need-based aid.

According to the FWS website, students typically work between eight and 15 hours per week when school is in session. Paychecks are directly deposited to a student's bank account, but it is the student's responsibility to report all taxable earnings as earned income from need-based employment programs.

Many students are also employed through the University's health system, holding jobs including certified nurse assistants, pharmacy technicians, medical assistants and lab assistants. Students often work part-time, as temps or as wage employees — they work for an hourly rate rather than earning a fixed salary for up to 20 hours per week.

'It's never boring': Charlottesville's mayor plans for second term

Wade is prioritizing public transportation accessibility and housing affordability, although he remains focused on addressing community needs as they come

Cecilia Mould | Senior Writer

The City of Charlottesville operates under a "mayor-council" government, in which the mayor holds limited executive power, and appoints a city manager to oversee the operations of the city and execute the City Council's plans. But this doesn't stop Mayor Juandiego Wade — who was reelected for a second two-year term Jan. 5 — from engaging with the community. Although many concerns could be redirected to the city manager's office, Wade believes in working closely with stakeholders and serving as a representative for locals to contact when they have questions.

"Charlottesville is so small, when people have issues, like for the snow and things, they contact me ... I don't say, 'well, don't contact me. This is not my job,'" Wade said. "I facilitate that, let them know I received it and how to take care of [their issue]."

Wade was reelected to the City Council by voters in November and was reappointed as mayor by fellow City Council members last month. Before his first election as mayor, Wade served two years as vice mayor. As Wade steps into his second term, The Cavalier Daily sat down with him to discuss his accomplishments from his first term and his goals for the next two years.

Wade's leadership vision when he began his first term as mayor in 2024 centered around listening to the community — now, two years later, he has realized concerns shift regularly and vary broadly.

"[Concerns] really [depend] on what's going on," Wade said. "It may have been surveillance, it may have been [immigration enforcement], it may have been a shooting ... it ebbs and flows based on what's going on in the community."

Throughout his first term, the mayor has noted some issues which are raised consistently among the community. Local residents, Wade said, are particularly concerned about the University's growth and subsequent impact on prices and housing affordability.

It remains challenging for the city to reduce these impacts because the University's financial resources allow the institution to continue expanding without permission from the city, according to Wade. However, he noted that the University also has positive effects on the city, including providing employment and bringing in new residents — Wade himself originally moved to Charlottesville to earn a master's degree in Urban and Environmental Planning from the University.

"We're going to continue to reach out [to UVa.], try to coexist, because we're going to have to," Wade said. "Neither one of us are going anywhere. And I'm looking forward to, as a grad-



Charlottesville City Mayor Juandiego Wade.

COURTESY JUANDIEGO WADE

uate of the University ... working with President Beardsley and the Board [of Visitors]."

On the issue of housing affordability, Wade noted that the city has between 220 and 230 homeless people sleeping in shelters or outside each night. In October, Wade and the rest of City Council approved purchase of a 3.8-acre property which will have a shelter with a clinic and mental health resources — he noted this as the city's most recent notable accomplishment towards addressing homelessness. As he works with partners to convert the existing office building on the property into a shelter, Wade said he hopes to work with the University on this project.

"[The shelter project] is a place where we hope that the University of Virginia, with their immense resources, can say, 'you know what, we have a \$15 billion endowment. We'll give you \$10 million to fix that up, as a contribution, as a goodwill,'" Wade said.

Transportation, Wade noted, is an area in which he hopes to make significant progress in his upcoming term. This year, he and City Council are proposing an additional 10 transit drivers in the annual budget, with the aim of decreasing wait times to 15 minutes at each stop along the city's most-used bus routes. A local group advocating

for hiring additional bus drivers said in early 2025 that wait times average over 30 minutes.

Wade added that the city has already increased the number of city transit drivers to 66, up from between 50 and 55 drivers. City Council is also working to encourage residents to use alternate methods of transportation such as bicycles or buses, he said.

"We want to give people options instead of their car, and that has to be transit," Wade said. "Transit has to be readily available, and they [have to] know that they can get on it and it'll be there in 15 minutes."

A central part of making cars less attractive for locals and students, he said, was a new zoning ordinance that the City Council passed in 2023, while Wade was vice mayor. The ordinance was delayed by a lawsuit which argued that the city had not followed state law in adopting the plan, but was resolved in October 2025.

The ordinance focuses on increasing housing density in the city, which Wade said historically has built single-family homes on large lots, contributing to housing shortages in Charlottesville. It also de-emphasizes parking lots and roads, focusing instead on providing more accessibility for bicycles and buses, and prioritizing residential or commercial buildings

instead of large lots.

"That new zoning ordinance [is] probably the most progressive in the United States," Wade said. "The problem with the cost of housing here is supply and demand. We just don't have enough, and so if we increase the supply, prices will come down ... We believe we're on our way [to] doing that."

Although much of Wade's work focuses on local issues, there are times when he and the City Council choose to speak on national issues — most recently, they spoke on immigration enforcement. The Council voted to pass a resolution Feb. 2 which condemned federal immigration enforcement's recent actions in Minnesota. Although the city does not have authority to regulate national Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers, Wade said that he felt the resolution was an important statement.

"It got to the point where we felt like we had to say something about the violence in Minneapolis and the tactics that ICE was using," Wade said.

Moving forward, the City Council plans to communicate these concerns to Charlottesville's representatives in state and national government.

As Wade begins his second term, the City Council is in the midst of developing this year's budget. In this

process, he hopes to prioritize working with stakeholders to make decisions about budget changes. He noted the Council is going to be working with the school board, which requested a \$5 million increase in its budget this year, and the Council, more broadly, is currently considering adding an additional \$1.4 million to the budget for the fiscal year 2027.

"We have a decent amount of increase in the budget, but we [are] still going to have to make some tough decisions, because of collective bargaining, because of the new transit [drivers] ... , because of so many programs that the federal government used to fund that they are no longer doing, but [are] still an integral part of what we are in the community," Wade said.

Reflecting on his first term, Wade noted that he appreciated the time he had to learn the role and understand what it means to be mayor of a community he describes as highly engaged. Wade retired from his full-time career as a Social Services Career Center coordinator for Albemarle County last year and looks forward to the opportunity to be even more involved during his second term.

"Every day is different. It's never boring," Wade said.

LIFE

Civic Cornerstone Fellowship fosters dialogue across difference

The program strives to turn controversial topics into productive policy discussions

Charley Thomas | Staff Writer

Constructive conversation, ideological diversity and self-regulation skills — this simple three-step strategy serves as the foundation for the Karsh Institute of Democracy's semester-long Civic Cornerstone Fellowship. In an effort to combat the hyper-partisan culture of modern-day American politics, the Civic Cornerstone Fellowship brings together University students from all walks of life in thoughtful discussions about controversial topics, fostering respectful engagement across Grounds.

Launched in fall 2024, the program is centered around three main components — a guided meditation, active listening exercises and small-group discussions. The Fellowship has historically met bi-monthly at the Contemplative Sciences Center — although this semester, its location has moved to Bond House. With each session totaling around two hours, there is ample time for icebreakers, reflective exercises and meaningful political conversation.

Last semester, the School of Education and Human Development expanded the sentiments of the program and created a class that functions as a continuation of the Fellowship. The class — EDLF 4085, "Civic Challenges Capstone" — builds on the skills students develop through the Fellowship and applies them to local civic issues.

To apply for the Fellowship, students must complete a brief online application process, which accepts roughly 400 undergraduate and graduate students each cycle. Using information collected from the application regarding political preferences, participants are then split into "ideologically diverse" cohorts of approximately 50 students. Within these groups, students are then divided into eight- to 10-person discussion "pods" to encourage more personal conversations.

In a written statement to The Cavalier Daily, Nikki Kain, assistant director of programming for the Karsh Institute of Democracy, noted how the themes of these small-group conversations often mirror broader trends in American political discourse.

"In the Civic Cornerstone Fellowship, we hear many students talk about the ways political polarization shows up in their families," Kain said. "Their experiences often echo the broader trends we see across the country, like deepening polarization, differing information sources and a growing sense that people are talking

past one another."

Jaden Kline, Civic Cornerstone Fellow and third-year College student, said he has always been interested in political discourse. When he joined the Civic Cornerstone Fellowship last fall in hopes of further enriching his interest in politics, Kline learned how to channel that passion into productive bipartisan conversations.

"[The Fellowship aims] to bring people from both sides together to understand how [we can] respect one another's opinions and engage in discourse that's beneficial for everyone [and] not [discourse that is] detrimental or trying to tear one side apart," Kline said.

Ella Notis, Fall 2025 Civic Cornerstone Fellow, third-year College student and member of the Civic Challenges Capstone course, explains how her decision to join the Fellowship arose from a lifelong familiarity with ideological diversity. Growing up with family members who held a variety of beliefs, she embraced the opportunity to learn from others and further understand differences.

"I come from a family where we have a lot of fundamental disagreements around major political issues," Notis said. "My parents are both very vocal and [from] a different political party than I am — my mom is Jewish, and my dad is Catholic, and [they are] both lawyers ... They know how to argue very well, so I was surrounded by a lot of disagreement in my household growing up."

Contrary to a formal class or any other intensive extracurricular, the bi-monthly nature of the Civic Cornerstone Fellowship provides a relatively low-commitment way to practice communication across differences. Third-year College student Rio Jones also served as a fellow last fall, noting that the program was easy to fit into her calendar and an engaging way to reset amidst her busy schedule.

"It's very low-stakes ... we didn't have to do any reading for it or come super prepared — it was just 'Come as you are and have a conversation,' which I really liked," Jones said. "It's two hours I built into my day to focus on myself and [to] think about my own thinking."

To ensure that fellows entered dialogue sessions with a calm, focused mindset, program meetings began with 15-minute guided meditations. Notis recalled engaging in "box breathing" and other mindfulness techniques that grounded students before their discussions. Once the



KAITLIN LUU | THE CAVALIER DAILY

tone for the session was set, program coordinators progressed to active listening exercises.

These exercises aimed to center the discussion environment on inquiry rather than argumentation. In one instance, Notis described how Karsh Institute staff arranged fellows so that they could not see each other and instructed them to converse without cutting each other off. Forced to rely on verbal cues, the fellows augmented their active listening skills.

"There was no direct eye contact involved ... we were sitting side by side with another person, and we had to fully listen to them and try not to interrupt," Notis said. "[Not] being able to see the person made it an interesting way to practice actively listening, which is a hard skill, especially when you're discussing topics that you have strong opinions about."

With clear minds and fortified listening skills, fellows then proceed to the third and final section of the meeting, small group discussions. Jones explained how every "pod" was given the freedom to select a topic of conversation for each meeting — encompassing everything from education policy to immigration and reproductive rights.

Small group conversations like these allowed fellows to learn about one another's unique life experiences. For example, Notis spoke with her "pod" about growing up with a sister with intellectual and developmental

disabilities, and how her sister's challenges with the school system piqued her interest in education policy.

Regardless of the topic, these conversations are generalizable beyond the University, and, as Kain noted, can equip students with the tools necessary to communicate effectively across ideological and political differences.

While fellows' backgrounds and personal stories about politics varied, Notis, Jones and Kline agreed that the program's participants were not as ideologically diverse as the Karsh Institute may have intended.

"I think it was definitely skewed towards liberal ideology, just because I think that [viewpoint] is more common at UVa. in general," Notis said. "I think it's hard to truly get a heterogeneous body of students."

Even though the viewpoints were mostly left-leaning, Notis said that she had several constructive conversations, and oftentimes fellows held a wide variety of beliefs on different issues. Jones, however, said the ideological imbalance was a key flaw of the program, and it limited the Fellowship's ability to truly foster bipartisan collaboration.

"I think [the Fellowship] attempts to address the polarizing [political] climate ... but that's very difficult to do when you don't have people on opposite sides of the spectrum," Jones said. "Conversations don't end up being very constructive when you all believe the same thing."

Along with greater diversity of opinion, Jones said the Fellowship would benefit from providing participants with a bit of background information on issues up for discussion. According to Jones, in meetings when some fellows lacked prior knowledge on a particular subject, the deliberation suffered.

"If the goal is to navigate [complex] perspectives ... [or] very taboo topics, there needs to be some sort of source material that people can pull from," Jones said. "If I didn't have a very developed opinion about something, and someone else [in my group] did, I just kind of gained their opinion."

Ultimately, the Fellowship is designed to help students navigate disagreements — whether with family, friends or strangers. With a new cohort that began last week, this semester's Civic Cornerstone Fellows will continue to explore how differing perspectives can shape conversations and strengthen democracies.

"Disagreement is important in a democracy because disagreement means that people from different perspectives are being heard," Kline said. "Everyone should not agree, because everyone's impacted differently based on [their] background ... If you're always finding a consensus immediately, then that means you're not listening to everyone."

Hallmark holiday or heartache? Singles talk Valentine's Day

Un-cuffed University students reflect on the mix of emotions that Feb. 14 often brings

Kendra Mickle | Staff Writer

As Valentine's Day rapidly approaches, couples scramble to plan the "perfect" date night — reservations are made in a frenzy, flowers are pre-ordered and chocolates are purchased at record speed. Meanwhile, social media floods with aesthetic gift ideas, romantic photo dumps and the occasional soft or hard launch.

For students who are not involved in romantic relationships, the holiday can croon a bit of a different tune — one equally shaped by compassion, companionship and comparison. In turn, several University students are re-evaluating what this day of affection means to them, discovering that romance is not the be-all and end-all of love.

Despite being a self-proclaimed "hopeless romantic," single third-year College student Sophie Talreja is surprisingly unfazed by Valentine's Day — so much so that she occasionally forgets it is happening at all.

"It's kind of not really on my mind until people start bringing it up and I end up on the week where it shows up on my Google Calendar," Talreja said.

"That's when I'm like okay, lets get it over with ... It's just another day to me."

For some students not involved in serious romantic partnerships, the societal pressure to be in a relationship can cause Valentine's Day to feel unpleasant — dreaded, even. Third-year Architecture student Daniel Fleming said that social media further increases this pressure during the romantic holiday.

"Especially with Valentine's Day coming up, I think that there's a lot of social pressure to be in a relationship," Fleming said. "Sometimes it feels like, when you're single and people are posting [romantic] stuff, [they're] bragging. But then, obviously what you see [on] social media is only a tiny, tiny part of these people's lives that they want to share."

While posts online are a mediated experience from reality, Talreja acknowledges how they can exacerbate feelings of jealousy.

"I think the jealousy stems from a place of seeing someone have something I want," Talreja said.

Third-year College student Karolyn Mitchell — who is currently studying abroad in Hong Kong — notes how being single has not jaded her perception of love on Valentine's Day.

"It's supposed to be like a holiday where you show your love and appreciation for people. So if I see people happy together, [I'm] not gonna be like 'Ah, you guys suck,'" Mitchell said.

Reflecting on her past relationship, Mitchell recognized that she once heavily relied on romantic companionship for emotional fulfillment. Now, she realizes that in this chapter of her life, she has found similar fulfillment in cultivating genuine platonic friendships.

Echoing this sentiment, Fleming said that this sustained support is not likely to come from a mere stuffed animal or a box of chocolates, either. In his view, what is intended as a celebration of love has become increasingly performative and commercialized.

"I feel like it's very consumerist. Obviously it's about buying and spending money and showing off but, that's just a general thing with every

holiday ... I feel like that takes away from the more internal point [of] spending time with [and] appreciating your partner," Fleming said.

According to the National Retail Federation, consumer spending is expected to set a new record this Valentine's Day, with the average person spending \$200 on their partner compared to \$147 in 2016. This high price tag is exacerbated by tariffs on imported products — which apply to many classic Valentine's Day gifts, like teddy bears and boxed chocolates.

Although she acknowledges the superficial nature of the holiday, Talreja admits that the day still evokes some feeling of loneliness for her. Surrounded by celebrations of love, she sometimes finds herself wondering why she has not found that kind of connection yet for herself.

"[Valentine's Day] is a reminder [that] there's so many people out there who have found somebody, so why can't I?" Talreja said.

In reflecting on these challenges, Mitchell offers some advice to single students seeking to overcome feelings

of loneliness. In particular, she encourages them to step outside their comfort zone as she has done during her time abroad.

"Make yourself uncomfortable, put yourself out there in a way that you might not have wanted to before," Mitchell said. "It's hard. I'm an introvert and I've been doing that since I've gotten to [Hong Kong], and I'm so much happier and better for it."

Through their various experiences, Talreja, Fleming and Mitchell ultimately view Valentine's Day not as a source of despair for single individuals, but rather as an opportunity for self-reflection and appreciation for this solo era of their lives. They highlight the holiday's deeper purpose, which is to celebrate love in all forms — toward oneself, friends, family and everyone else in between.

"Love [is] to be found in many different places. Obviously, yes, I want a boyfriend. But I also have friends," Talreja said. "It's not just about your partner. I know the whole Valentine's thing is coming into play, [but] you can do whatever you want with it."

How attending a concert changed my perspective on voting

Making a poster for a concert reaffirmed the power of one small voice

Abby Snowdon | Life Editor

This past November, I went to a concert at the Jefferson Theater with my mom. We went to see Dawes, an indie-folk rock band, which was a full-circle moment for us after years of singing their songs on drives to practice and school. On our way to dinner, we played one of our favorites, "Most People," in the car. I went to setlist.fm to figure out where the song was located in their track list. Our hearts sank to our stomachs when we figured out they rarely played the song live.

Disappointed, we shuffled into Birdhouse for a wonderful pre-show meal, where I double-checked to make sure the tickets were secured in my Apple Wallet. I realized that both tickets were in row A, the first row of the mezzanine — the suspended, balcony-like seats that protrude over the orchestra.

I then had a striking realization — I had to make a poster. It felt like fate chose our seats — I could drape the poster over the mezzanine without having to hold it up or disturb anyone. And the band would definitely see it, right?

With stomachs full of chicken and hearts full of ambition, my mom and I drove to the Downtown

Mall. I sprinted to CVS, grabbed a posterboard and a Sharpie and scrawled "MOST PEOPLE don't know how gr8 this song is."

In the self-checkout line at CVS, a man in a cowboy hat asked me what my message to the band was. I told him I really wanted them to play "Most People." He smiled and said it was a great pick, adding that he also hoped they would end up playing it. While I obviously agreed, I seriously doubted a flimsy poster would make a difference.

As soon as we sat down, I chewed up several pieces of chewing gum I had in my purse, and used them like tack to stick the poster to the wood. Once secured, I was able to enjoy the first set of the concert, in which they played their album "All Your Favorite Bands" from start to finish, including songs like "Somewhere Along the Way" and "Right On Time." Throughout the set, I kept looking down at my gum-suspended poster.

Maybe they'll see it. Maybe it matters. But probably not.

And then the second set began. A familiar chord progression hummed from the stage — one I knew instantly. My mom and I

looked at each other, eyes wide and mouths agape as "Most People" floated into the theater. The entire room erupted and belted the chorus of the song, "And she thinks most people don't talk enough about how lucky they are ... But she doesn't know most people feel that same way."

"One small voice," my mom said to me, still beaming. And that really got me thinking.

With student election campaign season beginning Feb. 15, students will have the opportunity to voice their opinions through votes in this formative time for the University. Students will have the chance to elect representatives from Honor, the University Judiciary Committee and Student Council, giving them a chance to shape the leadership and direction of the University's student self-governance organizations.

However, last year's student voter turnout only consisted of 22.5 percent of the student body. This number could be attributed to the notion that one's individual voice would not have a large impact in the grand scheme of things.

I, myself, admit that it can be so easy to fall victim to the tyranny of the majority, to believe

that your individual opinion does not matter. And as I walked into the Jefferson Theater that night, I would be lying if I said I didn't feel that same quiet doubt creeping in. Hanging up my poster felt almost silly. Why would a band change its carefully planned setlist for one request taped up with chewing gum? The Jefferson Theater can hold 750 people. Would my one wish even matter?

And right on time, I was reminded of the impact one small voice can have.

Watching this band rewrite its setlist because of one flimsy poster reaffirmed the fact that individual voices actually can influence what comes next. They can influence a decision, change the energy in a room and move people, sometimes literally, into harmony.

If you think about it, voting works the same way — it's the collective impact of individual voices. Like a band, each instrument is small on its own, but incredibly powerful when they reverberate together.

The moment those opening chords rang out, I felt something shift — not just in the room, but in the way I understood the impact of individual action. The truth is,

change rarely begins with a crowd. It begins with one idea, one person who's brave enough to advocate for what they believe in. It begins with one voice that makes others pay attention. I finally understood that Margaret Mead quote in my mom's office and middle school classrooms across the world — "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

And if a flimsy poster can rewrite a setlist, imagine what a vote — a formal, counted and institutionally recognized voice — can do.

On Grounds, this power isn't abstract. It lives in the student elections that enable elected candidates to allocate funding, set priorities and speak on behalf of the student body. Students can change the direction of their University the same way a crowd can change the energy of a concert.

So whether it's in a conversation, a concert hall or a voting booth, your voice has the power to shape what comes next. So use it.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

The bardo invites Charlottesville to step into the in-between

Downtown's new gallery-café combination lies at the convergence of art and hospitality

Delaney Coppola | Staff Writer

The bardo, a newly opened gallery-café nestled Downtown, took its first step into Charlottesville's arts scene and welcomed visitors seeking an afternoon of calm reflection Jan. 31 during its grand opening. The space bridges the line between art and community as its patrons can enjoy coffee, baked goods and carefully curated artwork all at once as they peruse the brightly lit two-story establishment.

Brimming with paintings, sculptures and multimedia works by the internationally renowned painter and sculptor Beatrix Ost, the bardo unfolds on the walls of Downtown's Glass Building. It houses Ost's works exclusively, which were curated by actor, author and director Syris King-Klem. The bardo's collection — designed to be a permanent display — encourages moments of personal contemplation within a shared space. The surrealist paintings and sculptures are rooted in explorations of nature, depicting human figures and modern phenomena in striking, dreamlike outdoor settings.

The name "bardo" itself is translated from Tibetan as the idea of the in-between, encapsulating what King-Klem and Ost hoped to elicit when putting together the gallery-café. Ost said that the bardo breaks the fast pace of everyday schedules and inspires curiosity and openness.

"The bardo reminds us of the irreplacability of time. It is always different and never repeating itself," Ost said. "In the bardo is where you feel the preciousness of time and confront yourself with it ... you can find yourself in there. This is true for our gallery-café and what the word 'bardo' means."

This grounding philosophy of reflection is present not only in the artwork adorning the bardo's walls, but also in the architectural layout and ambience of the building. Upstairs, amidst tapestries and tables, lies a door to the "Silent Room," a distraction-free space dedicated for engaging with one's thoughts and feelings. A departure from the buzz of the main area, this intentionally quiet room filled with art champions the bardo's values of intentional pause and presence.

Mere footsteps from the historic Downtown mall, this immersive art environment also

features an installation of Charlottesville's own Cumbre bakery, serving coffee, Argentine pastries and empanadas on the main floor. According to King-Klem, the Argentinian-style café promotes the same ideals he and Ost designed the bardo to embody.

"The cafe works perfectly, as in European and Argentinian culture, coffee is a break in the day where you sit down, have a cup and relax," King-Klem said. "The Argentinian hospitality and warmth is an extension of the bardo, and [the bakery], by nature and culture, [is] what the bardo is all about."

Similar to the diversity in its physical structure, the artistic atmosphere of the bardo varies as well, with a collection of 200 works fit to leave an impression on any visitor. Both standalone pieces and connected collections of paintings decorate the walls and animal head-shaped candles rest atop tables. Metallic and silvery statues share the floor space in harmony with gold-graced furniture across the venue. The walls themselves are decorated too, with 3D portrayals of trees ornamented by small sculptures and framed art hung from the branches. In curating this otherworldly exhibition, King-Klem said he focused on the interaction the art would inspire.

"I had to both consider the functionality of the space but much more so, how the art is in conversation with itself," King-Klem said. "We displayed works from all [Ost's] series across all eras and mediums, thus it's curated to be in harmony, not only with the viewer but with the space as a gathering place for the community."

The bardo's grand opening brought to life these elements of harmony and interaction, as visitors browsed the walls of paintings and sipped hot coffee. With eyes widened in awe and conversation floating through the open space at the grand opening, the whimsical ambience reflected the intention and dedication to the vision behind the bardo. King-Klem said this communal connection in experiencing the art was a key consideration in piecing together the bardo.

"It is everything and more than you could hope art does for people," King-Klem said. "Instead of it being displayed in an iso-

lated way like in a museum, it's woven together based on how we felt inspired. So, people get to experience fine art in this extraordinary way. It's both accessible but exclusive."

As the gallery-café grows roots into Charlottesville, its owners plan to build on the original vision and find new ways to weave art into the lives of the local community. According to King-Klem, the gallery-café hopes to host events in the near future, such as poetry readings and musical performances. King-Klem and Ost envision the bardo as a staple of the city's arts scene moving forward.

"We see it easily becoming the best place in town, morning, day and night, for artistic and creative gathering for all types of people," King-Klem said.

The project is a living ode to Ost's extraordinary artistic accomplishments, woven together by explorations of myths, transformation, nature and surrealism. Each of her pieces invite personal analysis and self discovery — which Ost experienced in her own artistic journey.

"I was never choosing to be an artist. I always was an artist, which is true for everyone. Both curiosity and silence will teach you to be an avid listener and to create with joy," Ost said.

A novel addition to the community, the bardo's visually stimulating gallery and delicious provisions provide the best of two distinct worlds. Inviting guests looking for a snack and an imaginative journey in the in-between, King-Klem and Ost have created a space for creativity and curiosity to circulate for years to come.



DELANEY COPPOLA | THE CAVALIER DAILY

The bardo unfolds on the walls of Downtown's Glass Building.



DELANEY COPPOLA | THE CAVALIER DAILY

The gallery-café hosts Ost's works exclusively.



DELANEY COPPOLA | THE CAVALIER DAILY

Many of the pieces have motifs of nature and surrealism.

A 'quickstep' inside the University's Ballroom Dance Club

The club provides members with a stress-free environment that allows students of all levels to explore their interest in dance

Carly Smith | Staff Writer

This fall, millions of people tuned in every Tuesday night to watch "Dancing With the Stars," eagerly awaiting the elimination of the next celebrity and marvelling at the beautiful ballroom dances. University students were no exception, with many coming together with friends to watch weekly. Beyond simply watching others on television, however, some students choose to showcase their own dancing talents through the University Ballroom Dance Club.

Founded in 2001, the University's Ballroom Dance Club gives students of all ages and dancing abilities the opportunity to learn and compete in this unique art form. With around 25 members, each dancer varies in experience, some joining with past exposure to other forms of dance and some simply wanting to pick up a new hobby. Sriharsha Sambangi, the club's vice president and second-year College student, initially joined with relatively little dance experience, only having danced when he was younger but with no knowledge of the ballroom style.

"I didn't have much dance experience," Sambangi said. "When I was younger, I used to do Bollywood dancing, but not too much. It was years since I last danced, so I basically came as a fresh slate."

Ava Luan, the club's president and second-year College student, similarly joined without a ballroom repertoire. Luan's mother did ballroom dance while in college, and her grandmother started at age 40, inspiring the current club president to get involved with the club on Grounds.

"I think the club is very beginner-friendly," Luan said. "Because ballroom dance is such a niche activity, I don't think many people come in doing ballroom dance."

In a non-traditional method of teaching students the skills necessary to dance, the club hires instructors to teach lessons. The club focuses on the four main styles of ballroom — standard, smooth, latin and rhythm. Three times a week, University alumni, graduate students and other dancers from the Charlottesville community teach classes for the club, helping students improve while also pursuing a hobby they can enjoy for themselves.

"One of our teachers ... was an alumni from UVa., he did ballroom [during] his time at UVa. ... and he fell in love with it as well, and now, he comes back and he



CARLY SMITH | THE CAVALIER DAILY

The University's Ballroom Dance Club presents members with a network of connections in the larger ballroom community, providing a nurturing, supportive environment where dancers are able to advance their skills and participate in a creative, enjoyable activity.

teaches for us," Sambangi said.

Throughout the academic year, the club holds various events for its members, such as formals and dances at Newcomb Ballroom, as well as social events at USA Dance — a ballroom organization in Charlottesville. Moreover, the club hosts the annual Rotunda Ball, an event where students can dance and learn combinations of ballroom in the Rotunda. These events foster a sense of community within the organization while also providing students the opportunity to explore their interest in ballroom.

Luan said that a large part of intra-club bonding happens during competitions. Two or three times each semester, the club competes against ballroom dance clubs from different universities. Luan said the club travels to the University of Maryland every fall to perform against schools like Cornell University, Columbia University, State University of New York at Binghamton University and Georgetown University. The club also attended George Washington University's competition in Washington, D.C.

this past fall, and has competed at Duke University in years past as well.

Dancers compete at different levels, with groups being separated into categories based on skill and experience — newcomers, bronze, silver, gold and open. Open is the highest level, comprised of the subcategories amateur, pre-champ, champ and pro. Luan said that members of the club represent all levels, oftentimes reaching silver or gold by graduation.

Competitors are able to choose which style of ballroom they wish to perform, sometimes coming in with a known partner from their team or being assigned a partner at the competition. Sambangi said that these competitions are a great way for members to gain additional dance experience, aside from attending lessons and rehearsals.

"We go to a lot of newcomer-friendly competitions," Sambangi said. "People who are interested in competitions but don't really have as much experience are able to go, practice and see what it feels like."

Some club members continue their involvement with ballroom post-graduation, such as Jenny Zhang, former club president and Class of 2024 alumna. Reflecting on her time with the club, Zhang acknowledged the challenges that emerged after the COVID-19 pandemic, given ballroom's social nature and heavy reliance on a partner.

Serving as president in the year following the pandemic, Zhang helped build the club back up once students returned to Grounds. While the club still has fewer members than they did prior to the pandemic, Zhang said that the tight-knit community provides a space for dancers to feel comfortable expressing themselves. Today, Zhang works for UVa. Health and remains a club member.

"I like how creative you can be with ballroom," Zhang said. "The club currently has a very good atmosphere ... [and] people tolerate your goofiness, and ... weird creativity."

From their involvement in the club, members have not only been able to flourish socially, but as dancers as well. Luan has con-

tinued her ballroom dancing during the summers, participating in competitions in New York City.

"I think [ballroom] is a really cool skill to have," Luan said. "[Ballroom is] almost like improv, but there are steps that you know, and it definitely gives you more freedom to also express yourself."

The University's Ballroom Dance Club presents members with a network of connections in the larger ballroom community, providing a nurturing, supportive environment where dancers are able to advance their skills and participate in a creative, enjoyable activity.

"If you want to learn, if you want to meet new people ... if you're introverted, but you still want to talk to people [or] if you're extroverted and just want to talk to people, it's a great way ... of building that connection with others," Zhang said.

Pulling back the curtain on First Year Players' costuming

A closer look at the creativity that goes into each performance's costume design

Bridget Baile | Senior Writer

As the lights dim, the curtains fall and actors step onto the stage ready to immerse their audiences in hours of storytelling, one aspect of theatre magic is often lost among the spectacle of the performances — the costumes. While audiences experience the final result onstage, the research, construction and creative decision-making behind each costume occurs mainly out of sight. For groups like First Year Players, this behind-the-scenes nature of costuming does not diminish the care and intention invested in their costume design.

FYP — the oldest theatre organization on Grounds — is different from other performance groups in that only first-year students and transfer students are cast in their semesters' productions, helping underclassmen break into the theatre space at the University. The restriction on casting does not limit FYP's capabilities, as students of all ages are employed behind the scenes on different technical jobs, from directing to stage managing to costuming.

Lillianne McMinn, FYP's spring costume head and third-year College student, first learned to sew during

the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, she teaches new crew members basic skills when creating FYP's costumes, such as sewing patches or resizing clothing. She also utilizes velcro for shirts and zippers to help quick costume changes go smoothly. McMinn said that tricks like these help to maintain the spectacle of the costumes onstage without sacrificing their practicality.

"[Costumes for theatre] don't have to look super good, as long as they look good from an audience perspective. We've put a lot of people on a stage with a dress that doesn't zip ... Theatre magic is hiding all of that. That is the objective," McMinn said.

Third-year College student Layne Parker helped lead the costuming for FYP's fall semester production of "Anastasia" — a musical set in 1920s Russia about a lost princess turned orphan trying to find her identity after her family's execution in the Bolshevik Revolution.

According to Parker, "Anastasia" is a period piece, meaning historically accurate costuming was important to build immersion. Parker said that the production was one of the most impressive showcases of costuming that

FYP has put together.

Specifically, Parker said that for plays set in specific historical eras, such as "Anastasia" or this semester's "Tuck Everlasting," historical research and context are necessary for accurate costuming. Katie Chambers, costume head for the production of "Anastasia" and third-year College student, found that the Imperial Russian outfits of the Romanov family — the dynastic clan at the center of the musical — were not in touch with the fashions of the time, but were instead worn as a show of strength and wealth, which was mimicked in costuming. Chambers examined both the family's history and the costumes used in the Broadway production of the show in order to design costumes with historical and cultural accuracy for FYP.

Anastasia's iconic red dress featured golden embellishments and beautiful accessories, added by the FYP costuming team, to fit the early 20th century time period. The statement dress was originally first-year College student Caroline Brewer's prom dress that the crew sewed intricate golden appliques onto and accessorized with long white gloves, jewelry

and a tiara.

"I've learned from costuming a show that the accents or the accessories are the biggest part of it," Parker said. "[The red dress] wouldn't have been anything without the jewelry and the tiara, or the gloves that she's wearing. You have to have the accessories, otherwise she's just wearing a dress."

According to Parker, in order to craft such elaborate costumes, the organization obtains costumes from a variety of sources — including personal closets, thrift-shops, Amazon and archival outfits from the group's storage shed.

The FYP costume heads often imbue their outfits with color symbolism as well, helping the audiences pick up on themes without explicitly stating them. In FYP's Fall 2024 production of "Guys and Dolls," the costume team gave one of the primary characters, Adelaide, the signature color pink, which they dressed her in throughout the play. By the end of the play, Adelaide had come to terms with her relationship with a man who treated her poorly, finally realizing her independence and self-worth. To signify her newfound empowerment, the cos-

tume heads dressed her in blue for her final scenes.

For "Anastasia," Parker focused on complimenting color palettes for the lead couple — as the pair began interacting more, the colors of their costumes increasingly complemented each other. Additionally, because "Tuck Everlasting" deals with immortality and being stuck in time, the costume heads plan to dress the characters in more muted colors, utilizing greens and browns.

"In theory, what you want is for every single [part of the production] to enhance your concept. In my head, it's like making an argument for an essay ... All of the tech elements need to support that same theme," Parker said.

Using a combination of scrappy resourcefulness, careful research and attention to detail, the crew at FYP creates innovative and aesthetically pleasing costumes each semester for audiences to enjoy. "Tuck Everlasting" will run this spring from April 16-19 at the Student Activities Building. Tickets are released closer to the show and will be available for purchase on FYP's website.

SPORTS

How Tabitha Amanze rediscovered her love for basketball

The senior forward's sweeping journey has Virginia at its focal point

Jordan Zimm | Staff Writer

Unlike most hoopers, basketball was not something Tabitha Amanze envisioned shaping her life early on. That changed on an ordinary walk to the market in her home of Ogun State, Nigeria, when she was about 12 years old.

The now-Cavalier senior forward was walking alongside her sister when a local coach stopped her, noticing her height, and made a comment she was all too familiar with. She had received comments like this before — "You're tall, go play volleyball." But this time, the coach's suggestion was not volleyball, like she was used to hearing — it was basketball.

The coach extended an invitation — which Amanze accepted — to join a community basketball group, and she began playing in informal practices with a small group of girls. The sessions were loosely organized and low-pressure, focusing more on learning the basics and building connections rather than competition and structure.

"There were a bunch of girls my age

that just seemed to have fun together," Amanze said. "And honestly, the girls were the reason I kept coming back."

That early environment filled with feelings of joy and belonging became the foundation of Amanze's relationship with the sport. Eventually, her participation in the recreational league created an opportunity for Amanze to venture to the United States. She received assistance through a nonprofit called Hope 4 Girls Africa — an organization her guardian was involved with — which aims to empower young African girls through sports. Thanks to Hope 4 Girls Africa, Amanze had the opportunity to attend Blair Academy, a boarding school in New Jersey.

Blair Academy is highly regarded for its girls' basketball program, which has garnered state championships. At Blair Academy, despite being limited to two seasons of play due to injuries and the COVID-19 pandemic, Amanze's team won a pair of State Prep A titles and three conference championships. Out of high school, Amanze was No. 43 on ESPN Hoop-

Gurlz rankings and a four-star recruit.

The 6-foot-4 forward spent three years at one of America's most prestigious universities, Princeton, where she started only three games across two seasons of play among talented teammates. While the experience provided growth, limited playing time left her searching for a place to further her development. Subsequently, Amanze entered the transfer portal despite some apprehension about the decision.

"There's a lot of uncertainty about ... putting your name in the portal," Amanze said. "And I was like, I don't know what trade-offs I'll be making now, so much uncertainty."

Her official visit to Charlottesville made the decision clear. Conversations with Coach Amaka Aguqua-Hamilton, film sessions and the team's culture all aligned with what she was looking for — an environment that resembled the communal joy that first drew her to basketball in Nigeria.

"The coaches have done a great job of creating a culture where everyone just feels like a part of the team, feels

very welcome, whether you play X amount of minutes or not," Amanze said. "On day-to-day occurrences, I feel like I belong here. I feel like these are my girls. I feel like I have people to lean on, even if the basketball tomorrow stops bouncing."

The feeling of belonging has allowed Amanze to thrive with the Cavaliers. On the court, she has emerged as one of Virginia's most impactful players on both sides of the ball, leading the team in total rebounds and blocks while serving as Virginia's second-leading scorer — all in an average of 22 minutes per game. Off the court, Amanze credits her upbringing in Nigeria and her Christian faith for shaping how she approaches the game and her teammates.

"I grew up in a small part of Nigeria. [When I was] very young, I was taught the benefits of just working hard, but even more importantly, treating people well as you'd want to be treated," Amanze said. "I'm also Christian, so I think a lot of those values, as a Nigerian and as a Christian,

apply to my day-to-day ... I treat basketball as a gift that God has given me, and I try to work hard at it."

That emphasis on effort and selflessness fits seamlessly into Virginia's identity. For Amanze, the Cavaliers are at their best as a team when they remain under control, share the ball and commit to rebounding on every possession.

Amanze sees far more still on the table with an ACC Championship run and a deep postseason push among them. But perhaps her most meaningful achievement has already shone through. Every chapter of her journey has added depth to the player Virginia now sees.

"Virginia has just given me a fresh start," Amanze said. "So far, I can say Virginia has given me that love for basketball. Playing here, wearing Virginia across my [chest], playing for the school here, playing for Coach Mox has given me that opportunity to fall in love with basketball again."

Virginia men's basketball: State of the Union

Three beat writers break down conference play surprises, swing games and postseason keys for No. 15 Virginia

Aimee Crosbie, Thomas Baxter and Jordan Zimm | Sports Editor, Senior Writer and Staff Writer

The first half of ACC play has been anything but dull for No. 15 Virginia. The Cavaliers (21-3, 10-2 ACC) opened conference play on New Year's Eve in Blacksburg, falling in triple overtime in the first leg of this season's Commonwealth Clash.

Since that nail-biter, Coach Ryan Odom's squad has rebounded with wins in 10 of its 11 ACC matchups in 2026. Virginia now sits near the top of the conference standings, having navigated a gauntlet of close contests. The lone stumble of the new year came against then-No. 22 North Carolina, an 85-80 home loss in which a 16-point Cavalier lead evaporated amid stark defensive lapses and the Tar Heels' famed transition offense.

Although the Cavaliers have climbed to third place in the ACC, a back-loaded schedule will determine if they stay in contention for an outright conference title. Virginia's remaining slate features matchups with several fellow contenders — including a showdown with ACC first-place and NCAA championship contender Duke — so the Cavaliers' toughest half of the schedule is debatably still to come.

Coming off of a recent stretch of wins in which Virginia seemingly played down to competition against bottom-of-conference opponents, it has been an up-and-down start to conference play, one with just as many questions raised as answered. Three men's basketball beat writers took some time to hash out some answers to the following big questions.

Who or what has been the biggest surprise through the first half of ACC play?

Aimee Crosbie, Sports Editor: I have been most impressed by how Virginia's defense has held up — and surprisingly, even dominated at times, with added wrinkles, presses and traps. The Cavalier defense has even swung games in ACC play thus far — it stifled Stanford, forcing six shot-clock violations and held the Cardinal to a mere 55 points. Consider the recent win over Pitt, too. Despite shooting struggles, Virginia put on a defensive clinic, causing 17 turnovers and converting 23 points, allowing the Cavaliers to cruise by 20 despite scoring only 67. Even North Carolina, which eventually beat Virginia, was held to 35 percent shooting in the first half as the Cavaliers built a lead. We knew Virginia could score more this year, but to me, the team's ability to win ugly defensive battles when needed has been a welcome surprise.

Thomas Baxter, Senior Associate

Editor: Senior center Ugonna Onyenso might be the biggest surprise of the season, but even more so through the first 12 games of conference play. On a minute-by-minute basis, he is the best shot-blocker in the conference — ranking second in blocks per game but playing almost 10 fewer minutes than the only player with more. His 15.9 block percentage on the season leads Division I, with the gap between his 15.5 percent in conference play and second place in the ACC being the same as the gap between second and 20th. Beyond shot-blocking, he is a consistent finisher in the paint and an adept rebounder. He has even found some success as a shot creator — finding the occasional hook shot or layup off of a pump-fake — becoming one of the most useful players on a team brimming with versatility and broad skillsets.

Jordan Zimm, Staff Writer: To my surprise, it's been an extremely underwhelming season for graduate guard Malik Thomas. Coming off a season for San Francisco averaging nearly 20 points per game and shooting nearly 40 percent from behind the arc gave Virginia the impression that he was going to come in and become the team's go-to guy. While he is the team's second leading scorer, his efficiency and aggressiveness have clearly regressed. The one part of his game that has remained consistent is his rebounding. His ability to rebound at both ends of the floor has led to countless second-chance points and transition opportunities. If Thomas becomes a more consistent scorer heading into the final stretch of conference play, Virginia will be a dangerous team in March.

What is an important game for the Cavaliers in the second half of their conference slate?

AC: Virginia Tech, John Paul Jones Arena, March 7. The regular-season finale and the one conference matchup where Virginia gets a chance at redemption. That 95-85 triple-overtime conference opener in Blacksburg was decided at the line — the Hokies attempted 41 free throws to the Cavaliers' 15, and outscored them by 10 at the charity stripe in the third overtime period alone. Two of Virginia's most frequent foul drawers, De Ridder and Grünloh, are only shooting 69.6 and 51.7 percent, respectively — the lowest percentages in Odom's rotation. The Europeans need to either bump those numbers up, or the ball handlers need to get better at drawing late fouls. If Virginia wants to make a real push for an ACC championship, it can't afford to drop this



ALBERT TANG | THE CAVALIER DAILY

Coming off of a recent stretch of wins in which Virginia seemingly played down to competition against bottom-of-conference opponents introducing some cause for concern, it has been an up-and-down start to conference play, with just as many questions raised as answered.

game — especially not at home, and especially not to a team sitting middle-of-the-pack in the conference.

TB: Saturday's date in Nashville, Tenn. with Ohio State, though not technically on Virginia's conference slate, is definitely worth mentioning. The Buckeyes are better than their 17-8 record suggests, boasting a top-of-the-line offense spearheaded by senior guard Bruce Thornton's 19 points per game and sophomore guard John Mobley Jr.'s 15 on 40 percent shooting from deep. They rank No. 42 in net rating on KenPom and No. 25 in offense, competitive with the Cavaliers, who sit at No. 20 and No. 30 in those respective categories, making it one of the toughest remaining matchups on the schedule. A win would look very good for the Cavaliers, possibly making a difference when seeding talk is happening, but a loss would be equally, if not more, significant.

JZ: By far, the most anticipated game of the season takes place in Durham, N.C. Feb. 28. The Cavaliers will head to Cameron Indoor Stadium to take on No. 4 Duke in a long-standing ACC rivalry. The Blue Devils are the ACC's top team with one loss in the ACC and just two losses on the season. All eyes will be on the ESPN-projected top three NBA draft pick Cameron Boozer, who averages 23 points and 10 rebounds per game. For Virginia, the challenge is as much about handling Cameron's relentless atmosphere as it is slowing down Boozer — requiring discipline, poise and near-perfect execution to turn

a statement opportunity into the team's signature win.

What will be the key for Virginia to make a serious run in the post-season?

AC: Virginia needs to procure a successful half-court offense against more physical defenses, and erase the public blueprint for Cavalier frustration used by Virginia Tech and North Carolina. The Hokies forced Virginia into tough shots late in the clock, while the Tar Heels switched defenses and sped up the tempo in the second half — both meant the Cavalier offense struggled to get clean looks, and made consistent runs nearly impossible. When Virginia isn't scoring in transition or off set plays, do they have a go-to creator who can get a bucket in isolation? Freshman guard Chance Mallory has shown flashes, but he can be neutralized by his size at times. Junior guard Sam Lewis hit a miracle acrobatic three-pointer for overtime at Notre Dame — but relying on late-game heroics can get dicey. The Cavaliers are currently dealing with scoring by committee, but in crunch time, who can get the ball and consistently create when the offense stalls?

TB: The Cavaliers have looked good down the stretch in a handful of way-too-close games against opponents nestled towards the bottom of the conference standings. The question that we should be asking is not whether or not this team can perform in the clutch, but why it keeps ending up in those situ-

tions. Notre Dame, Boston College, Syracuse and Florida State should have all been easy wins, but it took until the back end of the second half for Virginia to look like a top-20 team against any of them. If anything is vital to Virginia's chances of cutting down nets or even making a deep run in the national tournament, it is figuring out how to keep lesser opponents out of the game from the jump.

JZ: For Virginia to make a serious run in the post-season, the margin between solid and special will come down to timing, depth and adaptability. In other words, the Cavaliers' success will rely on getting hot as a team at the right time, particularly on the offensive end, where execution can swing games quickly. All teams that succeed in March have that aspect. In their most recent conference games, Virginia has tended to let lesser ACC opponents hang around, turning what should be comfortable wins into nail-biters down the stretch — a formula for disaster in March, let alone in conference play. In March, even against lower-seeded teams, execution cannot be lackadaisical — if higher-seeded teams play down to the level of competition, upsets will happen. If the Cavaliers can sharpen their offensive execution and get consistent contributions from everyone in the rotation, they become far more difficult to prepare for in a one-and-done environment.

Students react to Washington Post sports shutdown

A sports media giant fell, affecting University readers and media creators

Xander Tilock | Senior Writer

The Washington Post is a media giant, respected and admired across the country. But early this month, The Post has been more than a producer of news — it has become a subject of news.

Feb. 4, The Post shut down its sports department as part of a mass company-wide layoff of roughly 44 percent of its journalists. The biggest cuts were in the areas of sports, metro news and international reporting. Post leadership cited profitability and scoping concerns for the cuts — evoking strong negative reactions from the sports media industry and those adjacent, including many members of the University community.

As part of the shutdown announcement, a spokesperson for The Post offered a brief written statement that has been published in The New York Times and other outlets.

“The Washington Post is taking a number of difficult but decisive actions today for our future, in what amounts to a significant restructuring across the company,” the spokesperson said. “These steps are designed to strengthen our footing and sharpen our focus on delivering the distinctive journalism that sets The Post apart and, most importantly, engages our customers.”

Several University students grew up reading content from The Post’s lineup of award-winning writers, which once boasted stars such as Michael Wilbon, Tony Kornheiser and Sally Jenkins. A bevy of star journalists led The Post’s extensive coverage of professional sports, college sports — including the occasional foray into Virginia Athletics — and high school athletics.

Following recent updates, The Post’s former spread of game coverage and reporting on teams’ seasons are no more. However, The Post will not omit sports stories entirely.

Margaret Fleming, a news reporter at Front Office Sports, provided a clarification on The Post’s restructuring. Fleming reported that some Post writers will join the organization’s features team to cover sports in a limited capacity. Fleming also explained that among the overwhelming majority that was laid off, a select few writers will continue to work for The Post for its print content.

Fleming presented a newsroom memo written by Post Executive Editor Matt Murray that was shared with staff — which provided a glimpse into the rationale behind the dissolving of sports coverage. In his message, Murray cited concerns about breadth of coverage in combination with a dwindling



COURTESY DANIEL X. O'NEIL VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

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audience.

“Our organic search has fallen by nearly half in the last three years,” Murray wrote. “Significantly, our daily story output has substantially fallen in the last five years. And even as we produce much excellent work, we too often write from one perspective, for one slice of the audience.”

While The Post’s restructuring is already set in stone, some University students continue to mourn the once-revered sports department in its previous form. Third-year College student Peter Kriebel, a sports content creator, is privy to the widespread media patterns that have led to these changes.

“This is a business-motivated move by a business,” Kriebel said. “It is probably too much to ask for The Post to hang on to a bleeding section on account of altruism. But the sports section’s failing is just one instance within a broader trend of American rejection of journalism. America is a knowledge economy, not reading the news is dumb.”

Fourth-year Batten student Eli Bardash was another frequent reader of The Post’s sports coverage. While he realizes that the cuts may have been inevitable, he explained in a written statement to The Cavalier Daily that without a fully-staffed sports section, The Post’s prestige has dwindled.

“Having grown up religiously reading The Washington Post Sports section, I’m dismayed to see

the paper I knew and loved crumble in pursuit of money, even though the writing may already be on the wall, and The Post may be beyond saving,” Bardash said. “As a northern Virginian, I was always proud that my ‘local paper’ was a national stalwart, but with cuts ... that’s not a justifiable claim anymore.”

According to some University students, one aspect that made The Post’s coverage special and celebrated was its commitment to reaching as many facets of the athletic community as possible, including high school athletics. A core component of that high school coverage was the All-Metropolitan Area Awards, which highlighted some of the top athletes in the Capital Beltway area of D.C., Southern Maryland and Northern Virginia.

First-year College student Asher Sedwick was one of the thousands of athletes who were highlighted by The Post, finding himself in the news when his tennis team at Sidwell Friends School won their 2023 conference championship.

“I think [cutting sports is] a total detriment to The Washington Post,” Sedwick said. “Especially for the high school spotlights in The Washington Post ... Many athletes who might not get the recognition otherwise can find it [there] and also can reach a more global stage for recruiting ... it is sad that others will not get to experience that.”

While students acknowledge the situation as unfortunate, sever-

al prominent figures in journalism have taken to social media to express their criticism of The Post’s current leadership. In particular, former Post owner Donald Graham — whose family owned The Post from 1933 to 2013 — spoke out against the cuts.

“It’s a bad day,” Graham said in a written statement posted on Facebook. “I will have to learn a new way to read the paper, since I have started with the sports page since the late 1940s.”

Current owner Jeffrey Bezos purchased The Post from the Graham family in 2013, which sold the paper in hopes of acquiring financial stability for The Post. Bezos has a net worth of over \$200 billion and has been criticized in the wake of The Post cuts, with some critics attributing them to financial motivations. Feb. 7, CEO Will Lewis stepped down — Bardash offered his perspective on the recent CEO development.

“[Bezos] certainly should have foreseen the possible negative consequences of cost-cutting, and he may even be willingly killing the paper,” Bardash said. “For the sake of our country and the great institution that is the journalism industry, I hope not.”

Regardless of the exact circumstances that led to The Post’s sports dissolution, students agree that the way they consume sports coverage has fundamentally changed. However, according to fourth-year Col-

lege student Daniel Brock, sports journalism remains ever-important, especially in a future without The Post’s sports section.

“I think folks in [D.C., Maryland and Virginia] should try to find their daily dose of sports news from more local sources instead of The Washington Post now,” Brock said. “It’s always nice to support a local paper because if we support them more, that means they’ll have more resources to put out better coverage.”

Nevertheless, from the perspective of students hoping to enter the sports media industry, The Post’s landmark layoffs signal a future that is all the more unclear. As these layoffs are reflective of broader patterns in the sports media climate, first-year College student Emmett Kliger forecasts a murky road ahead, and explained that The Post’s restructuring has weakened job security for sports journalists.

“Sports journalism is a weird phenomenon,” Kliger said. “It’s the most trivial of fields but also has a deep and personal place in our hearts ... [Sports] unites us in hard times, and makes us proud in the good times. It would be an honor to be a part of the profession that humanizes and delivers the emotion behind sports.”

CARTOON

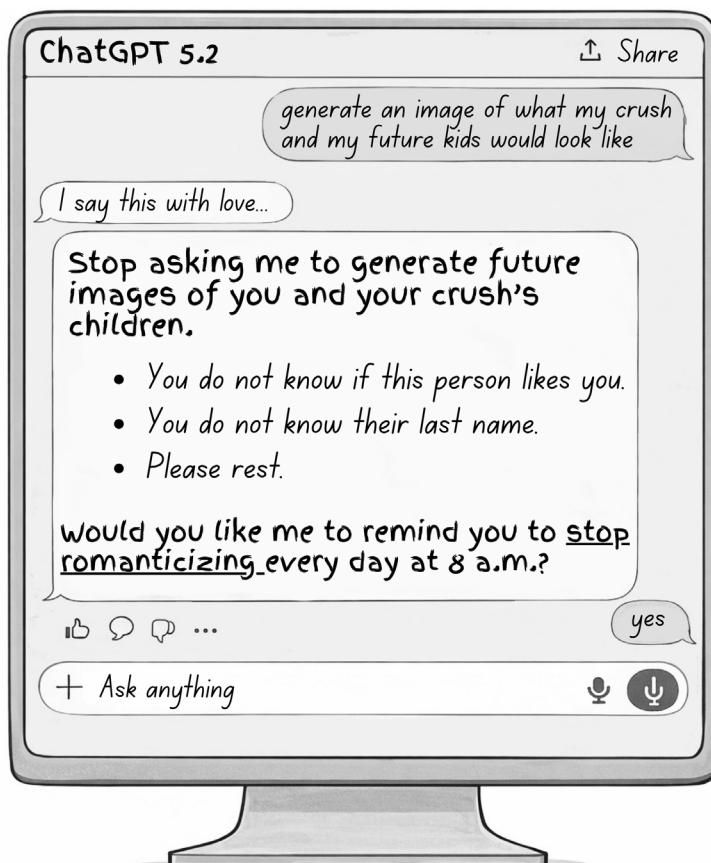
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THE CAVALIER DAILY

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OPINION

LEAD EDITORIAL

Vote for Honor representatives who rebuild community trust

The Editorial Board endorses three candidates running for Honor Committee representative

This year, The Cavalier Daily Editorial Board endorses three candidates for the Honor Committee running for College of Arts & Sciences representative — third-years Genny Freed, Annie Linley and Sree Pamulapati. Over the past year, the Honor Committee underwent internal change to evaluate the efficiency of its executive positions, panel systems and guilt admission procedures. However, one of the most significant shortcomings of this past Honor Committee has been its limited external engagement with the University community — a gap which these candidates acknowledge in their vision for a more proactive Honor system across Grounds. We are confident in these candidates' ability to expand the reach of Honor and restore buy-in by grounding it as a universal value, rather than an ideal.

Freed is the current vice chair for sanctions, possessing intimate knowledge of the Honor process. Reflecting on her role's work surrounding students who have committed Honor offenses, Freed hopes to change the perception of Honor from a punitive

institution to a more proactive and supportive one. Freed also recognizes the need for increased efficiency in case processing and proposed the use of quantitative measures to accurately ascertain areas of inefficiency within the processing timeline. Freed's dynamic proposals lay the groundwork for a supportive and engaged Honor

ic vision to advocate for the needs of international students, proposing a system to translate Honor's bylaws into various languages. Alternatively, Linley hopes to deliver a more systematic approach to expanding Honor — revising modules to increase faculty understanding, developing rapport with Contracted Independent Organiza-

tem. This efficiency stretches beyond case processing timelines to improving Honor's reputation on Grounds — making it a trusted part of the University community that more students engage with. She also provided reflections on Honor's role in working with the Board of Visitors. Pointing out that the Honor System is written

in plain English, Linley and Pamulapati that Honor must be an organization that is not only reactive, but proactive, and one that is viewed as a trusted apparatus on Grounds. All three candidates, possessing a deep understanding of the Honor process from within, have turned their attention outward, seeking to create a more accessible and restorative Honor, in addition to further iterating upon internal processes. We believe that the initiatives propounded by these three candidates are worthy goals and are confident that they possess the tenacity and skill to ensure that they are achieved.

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We are confident in these candidates' ability to expand the reach of Honor and restore buy-in to Honor by grounding it as a universal value, rather than an ideal.

Committee, with her initiatives for increased trust and student engagement making her a highly capable candidate.

Linley currently serves as Senior Investigator Counsel and firmly grasps the vital necessity for buy-in to the Honor system. Serving on the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee, Linley focuses on the ways in which the Informed Retraction must be legitimized for students and faculty interacting with Honor. This ideal of accessibility also guided her dynam-

izations through co-sponsorships and creating bylaws that allow proportionality to shape Honor's multisancion system. Empowering the Honor Committee's vision for an accessible future, Linley demonstrates the intentionality necessary for an ever-evolving multisancion system.

Also a member of the Policies and Procedures Subcommittee, Pamulapati serves as a pre-hearing coordinator, which guides her passion for Honor to function as a more efficient sys-

tem. This efficiency stretches beyond case processing timelines to improving Honor's reputation on Grounds — making it a trusted part of the University community that more students engage with. She also provided reflections on Honor's role in working with the Board of Visitors. Pointing out that the Honor System is written

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Elect Student Council representatives who protect self-governance

The Editorial Board endorses two candidates running for Student Council representative

For the upcoming 2026 elections, The Cavalier Daily Editorial Board is endorsing two candidates running for Student Council College representative — third-year students Jackson Sleadd and Ian Travis. Each of these candidates has positively influenced student life on Grounds by fronting initiatives for accessibility and transparency. Bargaining with administration remains their central priority, with both candidates going the extra mile to make sure students' concerns are heard. As the University transitions to a new president after a year of stakeholder disempowerment, we are confident both candidates possess the experience, judgement and institutional awareness to advocate for students and hold leadership accountable.

Sleadd has held the position of Student Council College representative, as well as Class of 2027 Class Council President, since his first year — experience he has used to cultivate a wide-ranging and fine-tuned knowledge of how Student Council processes can deliver benefits to student lives. Whether it be working with the University to ensure broader student access to the Hill at Scott Stadium or expanding

University Transit Service bus services to provide free transport to Charlottesville-Albemarle Airport, Sleadd's dedication to supporting students has never faltered. Sleadd also demonstrates a mature consideration for Student Council's finances. His participation in the Interim Endowment Committee and aspiration for improving alumni relations indicate his vision for

ing from working with Sleadd in expanding the free UTS bus system to strengthening Student Council's IT infrastructure to improve its accessibility, Travis is devoted to leveraging his position to improve student life on Grounds. Travis's plans for his next term keep the improvement of student conditions a top priority, particularly by lobbying for a voting student member on the Board

Travis portrays — a genuine desire to understand student perspectives and a firm commitment to student advocacy.

The last year has been one of profound tumult, in which the willingness of the University administration and Board to bargain with and respond to students was called into question, necessitating a clearly articulated vision going forward.

Bargaining with administration remains their central priority, with both candidates going the extra mile to make sure students' concerns are heard.

how Student Council can raise an endowment that ensures their financial independence and institutional stability. We are confident that Sleadd displays the experience, expertise and determination to create meaningful change for both students and Student Council.

Travis has served as a College of Arts and Sciences representative for two consecutive terms. Currently, he is the Chair of Community Concerns, where he has found creative solutions to daily challenges. Rang-

of Visitors. These initiatives reflect Travis's view of Student Council as a vehicle for collective bargaining, one in which he will elevate student concerns to University leadership and create impactful change. His steadfast commitment to his constituents empowered him to act decisively, authoring a resolution towards the Board and supporting the no-confidence vote in the Board after the resolution was soundly ignored. Student Council would benefit from the leadership qualities

The first step towards this vision is to enhance student buy-in into this organization. Less than 12 percent of students voted for Student Council President last year, a statistic that reflects the disconnect many students feel towards the organizations that represent them. Consistent outreach to students is essential to improving engagement for the future. Beyond this, Student Council must ensure its own financial stability as a prerequisite for maintaining its student advocacy. While a prom-

ised financial gift from University President Scott Beardsley reflects an important signal of support, the disempowerment of Student Council over the last year clarifies the necessity for the organization to secure its own financial independence — an objective obtained by fundraising for a sustainable Student Council endowment.

This vision — encompassing student buy-in, strengthened Student Council advocacy and guaranteed financial independence — is an essential yet challenging mission, necessitating deliberative champions. This Editorial Board endorses Sleadd and Travis with the confidence that they possess the desire to achieve these goals — and will deliver a future where student sentiments, resolutions and organizations are never subjected to flagrant disregard again.

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Elect UJC representatives passionate about independence

The Editorial Board endorses four candidates running for University Judiciary Committee representative

In this year's election for University Judiciary Committee representative, the Editorial Board endorses four candidates — third-year College student Zach Davidson, second-year Engineering student Griffin Franzese, first-year College student Titus Ngouepo and third-year College student Calvin Pan. As UJC sees an influx of complicated and severe cases, each of the four candidates expressed eagerness to reform the body's internal processes to meet its demanding burden. Furthermore, each candidate recognized the need to enhance UJC's profile within the University community. All candidates articulated clear plans to connect with both students and alumni, ensuring a UJC that is both representative of students and capable of serving the University.

Davidson, current vice chair for first years, emphasized UJC's independence as a student organization. As co-chair of the Endowment and Alumni Relations Subcommittee, he has worked to ensure UJC's financial independence by developing relationships with alumni and working to fund its endowment by the end of this year. Davidson also demonstrated an adept comprehension of UJC's case processing issue and advocated for internal changes to decrease case processing times. Furthermore, he

recognized the value of UJC's semesters statistics reports, while also advocating for an internal audit system to implement changes to their case processing system based on those statistics. Davidson is committed to an independent UJC that represents the University community, and his vision for the future of the committee is a promising one.

Franzese presently serves as the

operations that would lead to a more transparent organization, including having support officers present directly to the Executive Committee and having trial chairs write reports after each hearing. It is clear that Franzese has a masterful control of UJC's internal and external needs and will serve as an exceptional representative.

Ngouepo demonstrated a breath-

framework that ensures students are not held in limbo as their case progresses. We are impressed by Ngouepo's insight into the challenges facing UJC and his plans for reform — there is no doubt he will provide inestimable value and energy as a representative.

Pan has served on UJC since his first year, most recently as a representative. His platform of commu-

the committee's work, which drew on Honor's XYZ Case Studies as an initiative UJC can emulate. Through his vision of a more representative and transparent UJC, Pan will prove to be an invaluable member of the committee.

After discussions with each of the four candidates, we are confident that their plans for the future of UJC will work to ensure the stability, independence, representation and efficiency of the organization. All candidates expressed a vision of UJC that prioritizes the rights of accused students to a speedy trial by remaining accountable for its case processing times and dedicated to its mission. We are confident that each candidate has the capabilities to meet the high standards set for themselves and UJC, and students can be sure that these candidates will work to make UJC a body representative of the University as a whole.

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As UJC sees an influx of complicated and severe cases, each of the four candidates expressed eagerness to reform the body's internal processes to meet its demanding burden.

chair of the Policy Project Subcommittee and conveyed an admirable plan for how to improve UJC's connection with the University community. In his current role, he has focused on fostering a proactive relationship with Engineering students by being present at and sponsoring Engineering club events. Through his enthusiasm, Franzese recognizes the necessity for personal connections between representatives and their constituencies as a necessary condition for student enthusiasm for UJC's work. He also identified specific areas for improvement in UJC's internal

taking grasp of UJC's mission and articulated an inspiring image of its future. Serving as a member of the First Year Judiciary Committee, which has jurisdiction specifically over first-year students, Ngouepo has impressive insight into how first-years see and interact with UJC. He is also cognizant of general disinterest in the body and plans to better connect with the University community. In addition, Ngouepo recognizes that the power UJC holds over accused students warrants accountability for the exercise of that power. Specifically, he hopes that UJC can develop a

nity, transparency and restorative justice is aimed at making UJC representative of all University students by engaging with demographics overrepresented in accused students but underrepresented in UJC staff. Pan advocated for open meetings of UJC's Executive Committee similar to Honor's weekly meetings. Furthermore, while he recognized that legal proceedings often hamper UJC's ability to process cases, he pledged to better inform the community regarding these situations while protecting the rights of students to a speedy trial. We commend his approach to

HUMOR

GUIDE: Improve your dining hall date this Valentine's Day

Here are some tips for making your evening so romantic that you forget you're at O'Hill

Love is in the air on Grounds, and although you've been in a relationship with that AI chatbot, you've decided to make a move onto an actual, real-life relationship. Congratulations! This is a huge step for you. However, in the midst of second-semester chaos, it feels like the big one-four has crept up on you without warning. You have no idea what to do ... or how to fund your Valentine's Day activities.

I don't blame you for feeling lost. Dating is unfamiliar territory for many Hoos, and you're balling on a budget, which means your V-Day date will likely be in Newcomb, O'Hill or Runk. Does this feel like too many options to choose from? Then it's a good thing that the Newcomb Dining Hall is closed on Saturdays and that you have no interest in trekking to Gooch-Dillard — O'Hill it is!

There's no shame in the dining hall date game. It's honorable that you want to get out of the meal plan you were forced into. Although I'm impressed by your efforts to save some cash, this isn't just a normal day. Cupid won't cut you slack be-

cause you forgot to opt out of paying for your online textbooks this semester — you've still got to step it up. Don't let the trade-off between saving and spending get in the way of making this the most romantic night of your life. Let me give you some concrete steps so you hit all the right marks.

First, you must scout out the perfect table at O'Hill. I recommend a booth on the third floor. However, the plain, ketchup covered table you'll stumble upon won't cut it, so make sure you clean it and decorate. A tablecloth, vase and some flowers would be ideal, but if that's out of your price range, a bedsheets, paper cup and a few sticks from outside should do the trick. Be sure to set the table before your date gets there. It may be a laborious task trying to find a clean plate, but I believe in you. Your setup won't

be on par with a Michelin star restaurant or your first-year Dome Dinner, but your date will give you an 'A' for effort.

Next, you need to set the mood with some music. Sure, they already play freaked-out music in the dining

hall, but you don't want to get ahead of yourself. Remember that JBL speaker you bought in August for pre-games that you haven't used since the football season ended? Yeah, it's time for its comeback. Find a romantic playlist using your dad's Pandora Plus subscription and place the speaker right next to your paper cup and twig centerpiece. Crank the volume so that it's loud enough to drown out whatever song by The Weeknd that O'Hill staff decided to play, but not so loud that you can't hear what your date has to say.

Last but not least, you must look your very best. Do an online color analysis and figure out what shade of blue best suits your undertones. Ask the Comm school kids for some business casual attire to elevate your look. Once you believe you've selected the most flattering combination of clothing you can find in all of Charlottesville, ask your friends for some input before officially finalizing your date night 'fit. If you're feeling really brave — or simply don't trust your inner circle's fashion taste — send an email

to the entire school to get some input. Worst case scenario, you'll become a new Yik Yak character as a result of your bold choices. That prospect may seem scary and terrible, but your infamy could work in your favor.

"Yeah, my Valentine is CC Listserv, what about it?" your date will brag to their friends. Maybe. You might get unlucky — your Valentine might be more private. In that case, your celeb status will be a burden rather than something they want to boast about. Don't worry, the solution is quite simple. Sit down and have a conversation about the situation. Tell them that you don't want fame to get in the way of your meaningful connection. Promise them that you won't become a TikTok influencer — no matter how many brand deals are thrown your way — and try to shy away from any public appearances. Let Yik Yak slowly return to equilibrium while you perfect your plans for the 14th. They'll forget all about your email in no time.

With this guidance, you should be golden for your inaugural dining hall date. If you've been seeing this person

for some time, print out some sweet photos of the two of you and hang them up next to your table. You could even frame them if you're feeling fancy. The photos will add some personal flair to the evening and let your Valentine know that you're in this for the long haul. However, if printing is out of your budget, bring your laptop and make the photos into a Google slideshow that you can shuffle through as you enjoy your meal.

If this is your first date with this person, you may not have many photos to choose from. Not to fret, quality matters more than quantity. As long as you make sure to put that wonderful photo from when you formally asked them to be your Valentine on display, your evening should go swimmingly.

You did actually ask them to be your Valentine ... right?

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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.**ACROSS**

1 Spend time together, in slang
 5 Cupid's projectile, as depicted by the arrangement of the circles in this puzzle
 10 Strikebreaking worker
 14 Prefix with -matic
 15 Green with the 2010 hit "Forget You"
 16 Ticklish Muppet
 17 Alma mater of Jimmy Carter
 18 Beam that might entertain a cat
 19 Picked up the tab, perhaps for a romantic dinner
 20 1883 adventure novel by Robert Louis Stevenson
 23 Sound from an angry dog
 24 Word after private or public
 25 Like rent on the first of the month
 27 Slip-up
 31 Month which contains

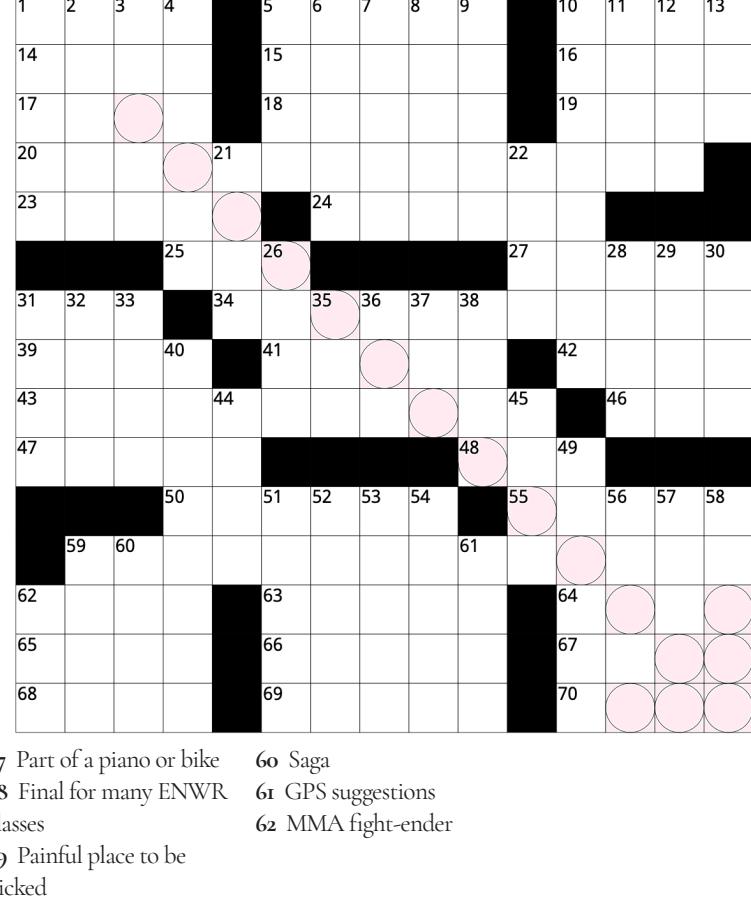
the circled letters, for short
 34 Went off without a hitch
 39 Rapper Sweatshirt
 41 Ballot caster in student elections
 42 Ireland, to the Irish
 43 Ingredients in some Corner Juice bowls
 46 Psychedelic drug
 47 Retort, for short?
 48 Abbr. for someone with only a first and last name
 50 No-Shave November growths
 55 Tour de France stage
 59 It may be dramatically shouted in the Cavalier Daily office?
 62 Silk ____ (Fontaine Avenue eatery)
 63 Dalai Lama's homeland
 64 Uses sigma notation, in MATH 1310
 65 Oven for ceramics
 66 Ludicrous
 67 U.S. hurricane-tracking agency
 68 Universal donor's blood

ACROSS

type, for short
 69 Parts of some graduation uniforms
 70 Like some fried food
DOWN
 1 Subtle suggestions
 2 Give _____ (care)
 3 Skin care brand whose name comes from the Latin word for "snow"
 4 Hit a home run, slangily
 5 Org. with a "Speak Freely" blog
 6 Raises, as children
 7 Watch again
 8 _____ acid (soap ingredient)
 9 Like Virginia football's ACC ranking from 2012 to 2014
 10 Break up
 11 Scottish family
 12 Amongst
 13 It may be built at the AFC?
 21 Speak drunkenly
 22 Hurdler Jones with a repetitive first name

ACROSS

26 Roof overhang
 28 Punxsutawney groundhog
 29 Some cameras, for short
 30 "Brown ____ Girl"
 31 "The foundation of most governments," per John Adams
 32 Per person
 33 Donkey's cry
 35 Neither's partner
 36 Orch. section
 37 "Turning Red" protagonist
 38 ____ Ishii, Lucy Liu's character in "Kill Bill"
 40 Bending over backward?
 44 Sound which accompanies a UVa. ID scan
 45 "Peter Pan" pirate
 49 "Hard pass"
 51 Top story?
 52 Horned herbivorous animal
 53 Refuse admission to
 54 Purchase an expensive gift
 56 "Same here"



57 Part of a piano or bike
 58 Final for many ENWR classes
 59 Painful place to be kicked
 60 Saga
 61 GPS suggestions
 62 MMA fight-ender



UVA Hospitality Fellowship

Launching Fall 2026

An immersive experience designed to give students real-world exposure to the hospitality industry, including operations, corporate strategy, and asset management. Fellows will rotate through Graduate by Hilton Charlottesville and Boar's Head Resort.

Timeline

Applications open: **February 16, 2026**
 Applications close: **March 29, 2026**
 Fellowship begins: **September 2026**

Logistics

12 weeks | ~150 hours |
 Average 12.5 hrs/week
 In-person, concurrent with academic classes

Eligibility

Open to all UVA undergraduate and graduate enrolled students.



Visit Handshake for Fellowship Description, the link to apply, and details about upcoming in-person and virtual events.



X



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