

THE CAVALIER DAILY

Vol. 137, Issue 3

Thursday, September 24, 2026

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

A NEW COURSE CODE

As the digital landscape transforms learning, the Student Technology Council aims to bring student perspectives into University discussions

NEWS

This week in-brief

CD News Staff

U.Va. climbs in FIRE free speech rankings, but fails to regain top spot

The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression released its 2027 college free speech rankings Sept. 9. The University rose to No. 9 from last year's No. 21 ranking. Still, the University was not able to fully recover its No. 1 ranking from the 2025 rankings.

The University's single-year tumble of 21 spots a year ago is not unique for FIRE's rankings. This year, the University of California, Davis rose over 200 spots to the No. 24 position — nearly traversing the entire list of 261 institutions. On the other side of the fluctuation, Texas State University fell 147 spots to No. 259.

The debate over free speech on college campuses has grown to be highly polarized. The federal government has threatened revocation of funding against institutions over speech and demonstrations it finds inflammatory — contributing to what some students are calling a “chilling effect” on campuses.

9.14

9.16

9.19

9.20

9.21

At first Council meeting since Free Bridge clearing, residents' and City officials' accounts differ

The City of Charlottesville cleared an encampment of unhoused residents along the Rivanna Trail Sept. 1, marking the final stage in a controversial facilitated transition process that saw the opening of an emergency homeless shelter at 2000 Holiday Drive for many displaced residents.

Seven days later, the Charlottesville City Council convened for a regular meeting Sept. 8, where residents and City officials presented accounts of the clearing and subsequent early operations at the emergency shelter that diverged considerably.

“When the City says that things went smoothly and without incident ... clearly you mean without incident to yourselves,” local advocate Isis Neumann said. “You were not hurt, so therefore it was incident free ... You probably don't understand why I am so infuriated at your actions because you do not truly see the people you are oppressing as fellow people ... These people mean nothing to you, but they mean everything to me.”

Board of Visitors discusses the implementation of AI in research and academics

The full Board of Visitors convened Sept. 18 to discuss the University's developing strategy for artificial intelligence with a presentation from Brie Gertler, interim executive vice president and provost. The Board also heard a presentation on research funding from Vice President for Research Lori McMahon, received updates to the strategic planning process from University President Scott Beardsley and reflected on the Board's June retreat.

The Board also received an orientation on changes to NCAA athletics, completed its annual Atlantic Coast Conference certification, heard a report from Aaron Bloomfield, Faculty Senate chair and engineering professor, and discussed the University's ongoing searches for a provost and several deans.

Gertler presented the University's developing strategy for AI, outlining efforts to incorporate AI into research, teaching and healthcare while preparing students and employees to use the technology responsibly.

“AI touches virtually everything that we do, and it's not possible for us to give an exhaustive account of everything that's happening with AI,” Gertler said.

U.Va. and United Way of Greater Charlottesville launch ‘Give Where You Live’ donation partnership

The University launched the Give Where You Live partnership with United Way of Greater Charlottesville Wednesday, giving University employees the opportunity to donate to local nonprofits from their own paychecks.

The program is set to run through Dec. 18, and its start date coincided with United Way's 35th annual Laurence E. Richardson Day of Caring. Day of Caring is Greater Charlottesville's largest single-day volunteer event, with thousands of volunteers coming together to complete various service projects at non-profits, schools and community organizations. Employees have until Dec. 18 to browse the participating nonprofits and decide how they want to give.

Ravi Cooper, United Way of Greater Charlottesville CEO and president, said that the chapter's partnership is built on the organization's more than 80 years of experience managing workplace giving campaigns in a written statement to The Cavalier Daily. This partnership is set to connect more than 24,000 University employees to volunteer and give opportunities across the region, according to Cooper.

Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett discusses legal doctrines, emergency docket

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett spoke at a sold-out University event Sept. 17 in Culbreth Theatre. She reflected on how the role of the Supreme Court Justice has evolved since she clerked for former Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and how she approaches legal issues.

Barrett published her memoir, “Listening to the Law: Reflections on the Court and Constitution” in 2025. In the memoir, she shares her story of what it is like being a Supreme Court Justice and how she approaches interpreting the Constitution. Throughout the conversation, Barrett referenced her book and expanded on its contents.

“One thing I wanted to communicate [in my book is that] you may disagree with the Court's decisions, and surely you will disagree with some, or maybe even many,” Barrett said. “Before you disagree with the Court, I really think you have to look at the Court's reasoning. Look at the opinion that the court has written and ask yourself, ‘Does this logic hold up?’”

STC aims to represent students on tech issues

Inaugural chair Kayla Kim said she hopes to establish the STC as an additional Student Council branch to give students a larger role in shaping technology policy

Solomon Ross-Milligan | Staff Writer

As technology becomes an increasingly important part of student life, the University and organizations across Grounds are finding ways to adapt. The Student Technology Council is one of these organizations, and fourth-year Data Science student Kayla Kim was named its inaugural chair at the beginning of the academic year.

STC is currently a 20-member council and includes students from across schools and organizations within the University. It was originally founded as a collaboration between the Sloane Lab, the Karsh Institute of Democracy and the Digital Technology for Democracy Lab. Its founding mission was to serve as a legislative body where students can elect fellow students to represent them in discussions surrounding technology on Grounds. Originally intended to be an individual Special Status Organization, Kim said it has since shifted its goals to incorporating with a larger overarching SSO, such as Student Council.

STC is divided into two teams, the Policy team and the Projects team, with each working together to best represent the student body, Kim said. The Policy team is headed by third-year Batten student Hafsa Zaman, who explained it as the “backend” part of STC, which works to provide recommendations and policy memos to University administrators based on student opinions.

“What we’re trying to do going forward is [make] a standard for a lot of different tech policies [for] what we think should happen [at the University],” Zaman said. “That’s taking student feedback, and also looking at what other schools are doing in terms of a bunch of different things like [artificial intelligence], data privacy concerns, things like that.”

On the other side, the Projects team is led by third-year College student Rishi Chandra, who said they provide more direct dialogue with administrators and University technology partners. Chandra said the team works closely with the Policy team’s recommendations to accurately represent the student body.

“We’re going to be coordinating with our administrative partners, making sure student voice is translated from the actual student body and then presented to the administrators,” Chandra said.

One of the main advantages STC has, Chandra and Zaman

agreed, is its diverse nature. They said that not only do students represent many of the University’s different schools and majors, but they are also in many different extracurricular clubs and organizations. They explained this can further increase STC’s outreach efforts and bring a unique perspective to general body meetings concerning technological issues at the University.

“The cool thing about STC is all of the students were selected from many different departments and different fields. We have a lot of artistic students, and so we’re trying to balance that idea of art and data with AI,” Chandra said.

Currently, STC’s focus has been on traditional issues such as AI and data protection. However, it is also using a sandboxing process, where new technologies such as apps and websites are tested to make sure of their usefulness. He said the two teams work closely together to make decisions on these issues, with Policy focusing more on research and Projects on front-end interactions with administrators and partners. However, he described this structure as fluid, with both teams taking note of what works and what does not for future cohorts of STC leadership.

Kim said her original interest in chairing STC stemmed from noticing a lack of student input when the University launches new technology products. Notably, many students expressed dissatisfaction with Wahoo Eats, which was an online food ordering application released in the fall of 2025 to replace Grubhub. The University has since switched back to Grubhub, but Kim said decisions like these are ones she hopes STC can be a part of before problems arise for students.

But first, Kim said, students need to know that STC exists in the first place. Zaman views this as one of the chief goals of the Policy team during her year as lead and said she has several ideas for the year on how to increase this outreach to the community. Some of these are traditional — such as student surveys and town halls — and some are more innovative — like creating a Substack to explain University-wide technological changes to students in a digestible format.

“Not creating what we think the issues are, but actually gauging what the students think the issues are ... We actually will need to ask the students, ‘What do you guys think are problems in terms



COURTESY THE STUDENT TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

The Student Technology Council is currently a 20-member council and includes students from across schools and organizations within the University.

of technology at U.Va.?” Zaman said.

Another goal of Kim’s during her year as chair is to integrate STC as a branch of Student Council, as she said she believes it could provide STC with immediate benefits.

Kim said that incorporating STC into Student Council would allow STC to report directly to students through Student Council general body assemblies, which would give students immediate access to STC and their current discussions as well as providing them with structural benefits such as the Student Council newsletter.

“The ... branch idea ... [is that] there will be public immediate access to what the STC is doing,” Kim said. “A set Technology Council representative at the [Student Council] general body meetings ... would get our voice out there.”

STC operates as a hybrid organization, with the students working in tandem with University administrators and professors to develop recommendations and policy memos for technological decisions. One of these faculty advisors, Data Science Prof. Aaron Martin, said he believes STC can give students a voice when it comes to the technology the University uses.

“The idea that students can engage more closely on [technological] issues to provide their perspectives and student body perspective more broadly, I thought was something innovative and different,” Martin said.

Martin described his role as a support position, where he leverages his experience in technology policy to provide STC guidance on the most pressing technology-related issues facing American universities, and society more generally, today. Additionally, he explained that he counsels students on what is achievable within an institution such as the University when it comes to policy change and advocacy. Still, he said he wants to maintain the students’ independence when it comes to STC and not have it be something professors take over.

“I was keen to get involved, but also mindful that this is their thing, not mine. I’m happy to take a backseat role and ... provide some steering, but I really want this to be something that they drive and take ownership of,” Martin said.

Kim also explained that the long-term goal for STC is still student self-governance despite this current hybrid model, which involves students, professors and administrators working together to provide recommendations to

the University. One of the main challenges during her first term, Kim cited, will be demonstrating that despite this hybrid model, the STC does actually represent student voices.

“The hybrid model of our organization in its early infancy phase might seem like an issue to people, and I’m hoping to communicate with others that yes, we are hybrid right now. We’re working with ... other faculty,” Kim said. “I feel like people will push back on that, saying, ‘This is not student self-governance,’ but I want to remind them that ... we’re right now [just] starting out.”

Ultimately, Kim said that as technological decisions gain more importance in students’ lives, she said she hopes that the STC can continue to protect and prioritize student voices.

“I would like the students to see [themselves] as the ... guardians of their technological rights ... as their voice, their direct voice, with administrators on what they believe should be implemented around them,” Kim said.

How is U.Va. preparing for its accreditation reaffirmation?

The University submitted its Compliance Certification in September and will undergo an off-site SACSCOC accreditation compliance review in November

Jaylynn Perez | Senior Writer

The University is preparing for its 2027 reaffirmation of accreditation — a decennial review that will evaluate whether the University continues to meet standards for academic quality, faculty qualifications, student support, governance and institutional effectiveness. The University submitted its Compliance Certification in September, according to University Spokesperson Bethanie Glover.

The accreditation review is conducted by the Commission on Colleges and Universities, which recently rebranded from its title as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. However, the Commission continues to use SACSCOC for accreditation purposes.

The certification documents the University's compliance with the Commission's accreditation standards and is reviewed by peer evaluators as part of the reaffirmation process. The University has been accredited by SACSCOC since 1904 and its reaffirmation is scheduled to be completed in 2027.

Brie Gertler, interim executive vice president and provost, wrote in an email statement to The Cavalier Daily that preparing for the accreditation review required coordination across the University and expressed her gratitude to those involved.

"I'm grateful to our colleagues in the Office of Academic Compliance and across the University who have played a part in preparing for our SACSCOC decennial reaffirmation review," Gertler said. "It is a substantial undertaking and requires coordinated efforts across central offices and all 12 schools."

How the University prepares for the accreditation review

The reaffirmation process is coordinated by the University Office of Academic Compliance — which is part of the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost. The Office of Academic Compliance works with schools and other University units to ensure compliance with accreditation standards as well as federal and state academic requirements. Aleina Herklotz currently serves as the office's director and SACSCOC liaison.

Glover said the preparation is an institutional effort involving academic and administrative units across the University. The process includes reviewing policies, procedures, institutional data and supporting documentation related to academic quality, faculty qualifications, student support, governance, institutional effectiveness and financial stewardship.

The first step in the reaffirmation process is the University's Compliance Certification — a document in which

the University assesses its compliance with the SACSCOC's accreditation requirement, which was submitted in September.

In November, a committee of peer evaluators will conduct the University's off-site reaffirmation review. The committee will review the University's Compliance Certification and determine whether it appears to comply with the accreditation standards. The committee will then prepare a report outlining its preliminary findings, which will be forwarded to another committee conducting an on-site review.

According to Glover, the University is also scheduled to submit a "Focused Report" in January 2027 that will address issues identified during the off-site review. An on-site committee will conduct a focused evaluation of the University in February 2027. That report — along with the University's response — is then forwarded to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees' Committee on Compliance and Reports will review the on-site committee's report before making a recommendation to the Executive Council of SACSCOC. The Executive Council then recommends an action to the full Board of Trustees — which makes the final decision on an institution's reaffirmation of accreditation. According to Glover, the Commission's Board of Trustees is expected to make a final decision on the University's reaffirmation in December 2027.

No Quality Enhancement Plan was required for submission to the SACSCOC

According to Glover, unlike in previous affirmation cycles, the University was not required to submit a Quality Enhancement Plan as part of its compliance certification. A QEP was previously required under Standard 7.2 of the Commission's accreditation standards and asked institutions to develop a plan focused on improving specific areas of student learning or success.

According to Gertler, the University had planned to develop a QEP focused on "experiential learning." In June 2025, Gertler told the Board of Visitors' Academic and Student Life Committee during its meeting that the planned QEP would focus on expanding opportunities that connect classroom learning with experiences such as research, internships and community engagement. Gertler said that experiential learning and internships were identified as an area of growth for the University.

Although the University did not have to submit the QEP, Glover said that the University continues to pursue experiential learning. The Uni-

versity's current initiative includes internships, undergraduate research, study abroad, community engagement, project-based learning and leadership development, according to the Sept. 17 presentation at the Board's Academic and Student Life Committee meeting.

How are University deans preparing for accreditation in 2027?

According to the University Faculty Handbook, while the University undergoes accreditation as an institution through the SACSCOC, some schools and programs within the University also undergo separate reviews by specialized accrediting agencies. Specialized accrediting agencies evaluate specific academic fields or professional programs based on standards for education in those fields.

The School of Engineering and Applied Science's undergraduate engineering programs are accredited by the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology. ABET is a nonprofit organization that accredits academic programs in engineering, engineering technology, computing and applied and natural sciences.

The School of Law's J.D. program is accredited by the American Bar Association — whose Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar establishes the standards law schools must meet to obtain and retain accreditation. The School of Nursing's programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education — a national accrediting agency that evaluates baccalaureate, graduate and residency programs in nursing — and the Virginia State Board of Nursing for pre-licensure programs.

The Psychology department within the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences is listed as the only department with an additional accrediting agency, according to the University Faculty Handbook. The Psychology department's Clinical-Ph.D. program is accredited by the American Psychological Association and the Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System.

According to Luke Anderson, senior associate dean and chief communications and marketing officer in the College, the Office of Academic Compliance coordinates the SACSCOC decennial reaffirmation process for the College. Anderson did not provide additional information about the College's preparation for the review.

In an email statement to The Cavalier Daily, Christopher Elliot, assistant dean of academic and faculty affairs in the McIntire School of Commerce, said that McIntire maintains accreditation through the SACSCOC and the Association to Advance Colle-

giate Schools of Business. The AACSB specifically accredits business and accounting education — including the Darden School of Business Administration. Elliot said that McIntire has maintained AACSB accreditation since 1925 and extended its accreditation in both business and accounting in 2024.

At the same time, McIntire is a part of the University's institutional accreditation process with the SACSCOC, contributing information regarding its academic programs, faculty qualifications and student outcomes.

Elliot said that McIntire's most recent AACSB reaccreditation in 2024 — under the 2020 accreditation standards — focused on areas including strategic management, faculty resources and qualifications, curriculum learning, assurance of learning, intellectual contributions and societal impact.

As part of its own assessment practices of its programs, McIntire conducts annual performance reviews for faculty that track teaching, scholarly and academic leadership activities. For both SACSCOC and AACSB, Elliot said that McIntire also identifies student learning outcomes, provides learning experiences designed to achieve those outcomes and uses the results to improve courses and programs.

Elliot reported no recent accreditation related challenges to The Cavalier Daily. Instead, Elliot described the AACSB accreditation process as an ongoing opportunity to evaluate and improve its programs.

"The AACSB accreditation process [is] a continuous-improvement process that helps us strengthen our curriculum, and adapt to the evolving needs of business and society," Elliot wrote. "Ultimately, it supports our commitment to delivering a world-class, innovative business education that prepares students to lead in a dynamic global environment."

Accreditation amid changes in higher education policy

In April 2025, President Donald Trump issued an executive order directing the U.S. Department of Education to take action against accrediting agencies that engage in "unlawful discrimination" in accreditation-related activities and directing the Department to streamline the accreditation process. The order specifically called for action against accreditation requirements that, according to the Trump administration, promoted diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

In his email statement to The Cavalier Daily, Elliot said that McIntire has not changed its accreditation on

assessment practices in response to Trump's 2025 executive order on accreditation.

"McIntire has long measured and published program-level information about graduation, internships, employment and career preparation," Elliot wrote. "These are also long-standing metrics for AACSB accreditation. We did not make any changes because of Executive Order 14279."

Glover said that the University is monitoring potential federal changes to higher education accreditation. At present, she said, those developments are not expected to affect the University's current reaffirmation process. The University's upcoming reaffirmation also follows questions raised last year about whether external pressure on the University could affect its accreditation. Following the presidential resignation of Jim Ryan, former University president and School of Law professor, in June 2025, questions arose about SACSCOC standards concerning "undue external influence" on universities.

Under Section 4 in the SACSCOC's accreditation principles, the SACSCOC requires governing boards to protect institutions from "undue influence by external persons or bodies" and to maintain the governing board's authority over the institution. Dr. Janea Johnson, public relations and data specialist at SACSCOC, previously said in a written statement to The Cavalier Daily July 28, 2025 that a change in university leadership does not automatically constitute a compliance concern.

In 2012, following the resignation of former University President Teresa Sullivan, SACSCOC placed the University on warning for one year after finding that the University violated two accreditation standards. The University was found out of compliance with its Core Requirement 2.2 — which addresses the Board of Visitors' authority. Additionally, the University violated its Comprehensive Standard 3.75 — which requires institutions to define the faculty's role in institutional governance.

What happens next?

The next step in the University's reaffirmation timeline includes the submission of the "Focused Report" in January 2027, which will respond to any issues identified during the off-site review. The "Focused Report" will be followed by an on-site committee visit in February 2027. The Commission's Board of Trustees is expected to issue a final decision in December 2027.

Professors reflect on formative decade since Trump's election

University faculty describe a decade shaped by Unite the Right, the removal of Confederate monuments and federal intervention on Grounds

Komal Reddymachu | Staff Writer

Since President Donald Trump's first election in 2016, Charlottesville has seen a white supremacist rally, the removal of its Confederate statues and federal pressure influence the University's governing body. Politics Prof. Larry Sabato, Assoc. Politics Prof. Rachel Potter and Media Studies Prof. Aniko Bodroghkozy each described how the City and the University have changed since the 2016 presidential election.

The beginning — Trump's election in 2016 and Unite the Right

Potter, who has taught at the University since 2014, said Charlottesville was never friendly towards Trump. Only about 13 percent of City voters chose him in 2016. Eight years later, he won 14.63 percent of the City's vote in the 2024 presidential election to Kamala Harris' 82.94 percent.

Nine months into Trump's first term, on the night of Aug. 11, 2017, white nationalists carrying tiki torches marched across Grounds to the Thomas Jefferson statue north of the Rotunda. Fights occurred that night between nationalists, students and counter-protesters, and the police response was largely deemed as slow. The next day, as the Unite the Right rally dissolved into street clashes, James Alex Fields Jr. drove his car into a crowd of counterprotesters, killing 32-year-old Heather Heyer. Fields was sentenced to life in prison in 2019.

The rally drew hundreds of white nationalists, neo-Nazis and members of the alt-right — a loose movement that promotes white identity and rejects mainstream conservatism — to Charlottesville. Organizers said they were protesting the City's plan to remove its statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee.

Bodroghkozy, who joined the University in 2001 as one of the founding faculty members of the Media Studies Program, was among the counterprotesters that weekend. Her 2023 book, "Making #Charlottesville: Media from Civil Rights to Unite the Right," compares events of that summer to the 1963 Birmingham and 1965 Selma campaigns of the civil rights movement. In the civil rights movement, organizers staged demonstrations that drew national television coverage of violence against peaceful Black protesters and built public pressure for federal civil rights legislation. Bodroghkozy said the Unite the Right rally's organizers deliberately borrowed from that movement's media strategy.

"The civil rights movement [used the media] to shake the conscience of the nation around the evils of segregation, African American disenfranchisement and the wrongs of racial discrimination," Bodroghkozy said. "The alt-right wanted to use that same media playbook to reverse basically all

the gains of the various social justice movements from the Black freedom movement, to the women's movement, to gay rights, immigrant rights, etc."

Bodroghkozy said the tiki-torch march on Grounds was planned in a way that recognized that the event would be filmed and broadcast, and that the images it produced would spread beyond Charlottesville.

"The tiki-torch parade on UVa. Grounds fit the strategy really well," Bodroghkozy said. "We still see those images to this day. If it wasn't for the mayhem and chaos the next day with the terrorist car attack, the tiki-torch parade could have served as excellent recruitment material [for 'disaffected young men']."

She added that the City's debate over its Lee and Stonewall Jackson statues gave organizers an opening, but that the monuments were never the real point of the rally.

"The reason for the rally wasn't fundamentally about the statues but about using Charlottesville as a stage set to build a far-right extremist movement," Bodroghkozy said. "The 'alt-right' had been a growing, but mostly online phenomenon. Unite the Right was about bringing it into 'real life.'"

Bodroghkozy also tied the rally directly to the 2016 election.

"The 2016 election of Trump galvanized the alt-right," Bodroghkozy said. "Organizers like UVa. alum Richard Spencer saw Trump as a kind of ally, with his virulent anti-immigrant statements and his misogyny."

Days after the attack, Trump said at a press conference that there were "very fine people on both sides" of the events in Charlottesville, referring to both the white nationalist marchers and the counterprotesters who opposed them. Potter said this remark was taken poorly in a city that had already shown a distaste for Trump at the polls.

"[The 'very fine people on both sides' comment] did not play well here," Potter said. "Charlottesville is a very blue place and was not primed to be receptive to Trump or his messaging."

The Unite the Right aftermath — community and the Lee statue's removal

Potter said she remembers clearly how residents responded in the weeks that followed the Unite the Right rally.

"In the aftermath of the Unite the Right rally, the community really came together," Potter said. "I recall seeing the 'hate has no home' slogan plastered across the city. The bakery I go to had even printed [the slogan] on the loaves of bread they sell."

Potter said the University itself responded as well, pointing to the Karsh Institute of Democracy. In 2021, the

University announced plans to invest \$100 million in the study and promotion of democracy, backed by a \$50 million gift from Martha and Bruce Karsh. The Karsh family said in the time that followed Unite the Right, they had noticed a rise in misinformation and attacks on the foundational institutions and processes of constitutional democracy.

"[The community response to Unite the Right] was the impetus for the Karsh Institute of Democracy, which has put into place extensive programming to raise awareness of democratic values across Grounds and throughout the broader community," Potter said.

The Lee statue and the Stonewall statue were both taken down July 10, 2021, after years of legal battles and public debate. Months later, a federal jury in *Sines v. Kessler* found rally organizers liable and awarded more than \$26 million in damages to people injured the weekend of July 10.

The Lee statue had stood in downtown Charlottesville since May 21, 1924, when it was unveiled during a reunion of Confederate veterans at which then University President Edwin Alderman spoke. Sabato said that historical events like the statue's unveiling shape how City residents view the past decade differently than non-residents unattuned to this history.

"Where you stand depends on where you sit," Sabato said. "Local folks in Charlottesville have a very different perspective [than non-locals]. They saw the Lee Statue as a continuing insult to Black people that started in the 1920s when President Alderman, along with the president of Washington and Lee, dedicated [the statue] to the Old South and the Lost Cause."

Bodroghkozy said the removal of the Lee statue mattered, and she emphasized that it was the result of years of local pressure rather than a response to national events.

"Symbols matter," Bodroghkozy said. "The monuments didn't come down on their own — this is what's important. They came down because Charlottesville had a powerful and coordinated local coalition of anti-racist and anti-fascist people who pushed for the statues' removal before the Unite the Right came to town."

The Lee statue has since been melted down through Swords Into Plowshares — a project launched after the 2021 removal of the City's Confederate Statues. The Jefferson School African American Heritage Center took possession of the Lee statue and had it melted so that artists could recast the bronze as public art.

Moving forward — recognizing racism's legacy and grappling with Trump's 2024 victory

On July 10, 2026 — the fifth anniversary of the statue's removal — the African American Heritage Center announced that nearly 1,000 residents had ranked three finalist proposals for reuse of the melted bronze, and a design called ROOTED was the first choice of 64 percent of respondents. The ROOTED design, from MASS Design Group and sculptor Dana King, centers on a 27-foot bronze babab tree, a pan-African symbol of resilience and shared knowledge, at the heart of a redesigned Market Street Park.

Bodroghkozy said the project does not mean the City has moved past its history, but that it has changed how residents approach local decisions.

"Does this mean Charlottesville has solved its legacy of racism? Of course not," Bodroghkozy said. "But it means Charlottesville as a community is trying to construct a different narrative — and ... [when] other issues [arise] like ... housing, like okaying a massive student apartment complex in a traditionally African American neighborhood — [these] get a lot more scrutiny."

Residents of Fifeville and the 10th and Page neighborhood, two historically Black areas, have spent more than a year opposing luxury student housing projects they say raise the cost of living and push longtime residents out. In April, the City's Board of Zoning Appeals upheld a decision allowing "The Mark at Charlottesville," a proposed complex in Fifeville, to qualify for student housing incentives, and residents of Westhaven, a public housing community in 10th and Page, continue to oppose an apartment building proposed on West Main Street.

Bodroghkozy said that years after the rally, it seemed that the Unite the Right "lost." Their groups splintered, they lost in court and the statues came down. However, she said the 2024 election changed that narrative of defeat for the right.

"Things changed again, profoundly, when Trump won again [in] 2024," Bodroghkozy said. "His administration's agenda in the second term is even more in line with alt-right policy objectives and philosophies than was the case in the first term."

Trump and higher education — a motivated series of interventions

Trump's second term reached the University through federal civil rights enforcement. In March 2025, the Board of Visitors voted to dismantle Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives following a January executive order from Trump.

Between April 11 and June 17, 2025, the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division sent seven letters to University officials asking the University to confirm that it had ended affirmative

action in admissions and dismantled DEI initiatives, and alleging in some letters that the University had failed to protect students from antisemitism. The letters led to federal investigations into the University's policies and practices.

Jim Ryan, Law professor and former University president, resigned June 27, 2025, under pressure from the federal government. In October of the same year, former interim President Paul Mahoney signed an agreement with the Justice Department. Under the agreement, the University will comply with civil rights laws and report quarterly on its compliance through Dec. 31, 2028, in exchange for the suspension of the government's investigations.

The University's leadership has shifted since the agreement. The Board named former Darden School Dean Scott Beardsley as University president in December, despite a request from then-Gov.-elect Abigail Spanberger (D) to pause the presidential search. Before Spanberger's inauguration in January, five Board members resigned, including the rector and vice rector, and Spanberger made 10 appointments to the Board when she took office.

Sabato declined to comment on the Board composition and recent turnover, but he said the federal government's recent approach to higher education — filing lawsuits, withholding research funding and reaching settlements with various higher education institutions — has no parallel to anything else he has seen in his time at the University.

"The Trump interference in universities all across the nation is simply unprecedented, at least during my time here," Sabato said.

Potter said the federal government's leverage over universities is not new, but the way it is being used is.

"The federal government has vast regulatory powers, particularly when it comes to activities that it is directly funding," Potter said. "Some of the enforcement power it is using today have long been in the books, but have rarely been exercised. Others are new authorities being asserted for the first time."

Almost 10 years out from Unite the Right and nearing the conclusion of Trump's time in office, Bodroghkozy said Charlottesville's name remains tied to 2017, and the national media continues to speak about the City.

"Charlottesville still gets evoked in national media with some regularity," Bodroghkozy said. "It's not clear to me that political commentators are quite making the link from Unite the Right in 2017 to the current Trump administration and aspects of the contemporary Republican party, especially its more youthful wing."

LIFE

Girls Who Lift brings gender inclusivity to the gym

Tired of feeling like outliers in the gym, a group of students created a gym community just for girls

Sadie Adams | Senior Associate

Light weights, lots of reps. Build muscle tone, not muscle mass. Do cardio. Do not do cardio. For those part of the nearly 60 percent of young women who receive health and wellness information from social media, this daunting list of fitness dos and don'ts may sound hauntingly familiar.

Studies have shown that regular weightlifting is tied to numerous health benefits, including increased brain function, a healthier heart, stronger bones and improved overall mental health. However, especially when entering a new gym environment, it can be hard to know how to embark on a fitness journey the "right" way. Add the pressure of being a University student busy with classwork, extracurriculars and resume-building, gym consistency can seem downright impossible.

In 2025, four women at the University identified this problem and created a solution, founding the Contracted Independent Organization called Girls Who Lift. Inspired by their own struggles with consistency and finding a wellness community amongst gyms typically packed with male gymgoers, Riya Soni, Girls Who Lift co-founder, president and third-year College student, said Girls Who Lift strives to build a fitness community exclusively for women at the University.

Soni recalled her first time navigating the Aquatic and Fitness Center as a first-year — an intimidating rite of passage for many University gym-goers. She recalled that many of the machines were occupied, the floor was crowded and most discouraging of all — the patrons were primarily male.

"[The gym is] particularly scary for women because lifting and that aspect of sport has always been a boys' club, and it's really always been for men," Soni said.

The environment, the equipment and the subsequent feeling of disempowerment were all new for Soni, but she was not ready to give up weightlifting. Inspired by her own experience as an intimidated first-year in a new place, Soni wondered if she could transform the gym into an uplifting experience for women at the University, especially for those just starting out.

In the early months of 2025, Soni recruited three of her friends, third-year students Angel Jiang, Jaya Kinley and Katerina Seal, to help bring the vision to life. A couple of months and many conversations later, Girls Who Lift was born.

"I thought [Girls Who Lift] would be a great way to congregate and make new friends, get a group of girls in the gym together and we can inspire one

another," Soni said. "And the utility of it all is also great. We can hold each other accountable, you can stay consistent."

By providing this safe space in the gym, Girls Who Lift encourages more women to take up weightlifting as a hobby. According to CBC, online rhetoric targeting female audiences often focuses on harmful, unrealistic standards instead of emphasizing the physical and mental benefits of exercise.

Expanding on this topic, Soni said that she is tired of seeing fitness influencers using their bodies as "credentials." In the CIO and in the lifts she leads, Soni said she emphasizes lifting for utility and function instead of thinness.

"My philosophy is just to prioritize your health and your emotional well-being as opposed to passing fads and what's chic right now, because if there's one thing we know about the feminine beauty standard, it's that you can never be perfect and you can never keep up with it," Soni said.

Soni said she believes that although fitness communities exist for women, women are not truly able to exist as themselves within them. According to her, fitness and body standards are created by men, for men, and women are expected to conform to those standards. For her, this CIO changes that.

"Just from a health standpoint, having more muscle as a woman is hugely advantageous," Soni said. "What's so fascinating about women in lifting culture is that it fundamentally has misogynistic undercurrents. And even though there [are] female communities or communities for women predominantly on social media, they are still tailored towards men."

In their workouts, Girls Who Lift tries to challenge that narrative. Each week, lift leaders — chosen members with more gym experience — send out when they are going to the gym and which muscle group they are hitting. Each lift leader has different workout styles, priority muscle groups, gym times, exercise orders and a preferred on-Grounds gym. All members are invited to each lift, with group sizes varying drastically based on the time and chosen gym location.

One lift leader is third year College student Angel Jiang, who began lifting after her sophomore year of high school. She shared that at her hometown gym, patrons were split relatively evenly between men and women, but at the AFC, Jiang found that was not the case. She said she wanted to find a group of like-minded women to



COURTESY JAYA KINLEY

In 2025, four women at the University identified this problem and created a solution, founding the Contracted Independent Organization called Girls Who Lift.

make the new gym environment feel less daunting and more fun, and Girls Who Lift was her answer.

When lifting is fun, Jiang said she feels more compelled to go to the gym, a habit that allows her to feel more confident in her own skin.

"I think mental benefits [of lifting] outweigh physical benefits, obviously," Jiang said. "I think if you feel good, you look good. Even if you don't see a change immediately, you still have that accomplished feeling after you walk out of the gym."

Beyond the boost in self confidence, other members flock to the CIO for its "beginner-friendly" draw. At each workout, Girls Who Lift strives to create a safe space for beginners by ensuring there is an experienced lifter always available.

According to Raha Montazeri, lift leader and third-year College student, lift leaders primarily assist in correcting form, explaining machines and answering questions to help beginners feel more comfortable.

"To be able to share something that I have loved doing for so long with a group of girls who haven't gotten the experience ... or haven't had the opportunity to start lifting has been really rewarding," Montazeri said.

Soni said that lifting can be intimidating for beginners, especially for women in a male-dominated space.

"I think there's also a lot of stigma around being a beginner. If you look

like you're a beginner in the gym, people are going to look at you funny," Soni said. "I think that is only compounded for women, right? Because you're automatically going to get looks if you're one of the only women in a very male-dominated space."

Additionally, members can choose to either stick to the lift leader's workout regimen during workouts or follow their own plan and use the meet-ups for familiar faces in the gym rather than instruction. Each day has at least one scheduled lift, and members can attend as many or as few as they desire. According to Soni, this flexibility is the biggest draw for University students.

"I don't want to waste people's time, and I also want to permit people the ability to get in a good workout whenever they want to, however they want to," Soni said. "And so there's no dues, there's no commitment requirement, there's no nothing."

Unlike other on-Grounds group fitness, like UVa. Recreation classes at the AFC and North Grounds that cost at least \$30 a month, Girls Who Lift provides a group fitness environment entirely for free. Occasionally, the club offers group classes at Charlottesville non-University gyms that do cost extra, but all regular weekly lifts are free.

When third year Engineering student Jaya Kinley first arrived on Grounds, the AFC gym environment was uncharted waters. Kinley did

Olympic weightlifting in high school, which requires heavy barbells that are banned at University facilities. Although she was well-versed in free-weight technique, she did not know how to use the AFC machines.

When Soni approached her with the idea for Girls Who Lift, Kinley said she was thrilled to spearhead a space where she could both learn from other women and share her expertise from years of CrossFit and Olympic weightlifting.

For Kinley, Girls Who Lift became an uplifting community that transformed a gym experience that she dreaded because of the intimidating learning curve of navigating how to use machines.

"I was lonely," Kinley said. "I was bored. So going with a group of girls just immediately helped me be so much more motivated, so much more committed to the gym and lifting was so much more fun."

It is this camaraderie, Soni said, that she cherishes about Girls Who Lift. For her, having a gym space that is meant for women is essential to de-centralizing the culture of weightlifting.

For students interested in joining Girls Who Lift, more information can be found on their official Instagram and GroupMe — all fitness levels are welcome.

Play the organ

An ode to the college side quest

Elizabeth Adams | Assistant Managing Editor

Open the door to my closet, and you may very well get attacked by shoes. Housed on an upper shelf, boots, sneakers, sandals and flats teeter precariously. Tucked away, however, in a crisp, white box, is a unique pair, one that won't touch the sidewalk of the Corner or the storied brick paths of Grounds — my organ shoes.

I did not enter my first year at the University with the intent to become a church organist. I had played piano my entire life, so when I arrived on Grounds, I auditioned for private lessons and got matched with a professor who just so happened to play the organ on the side. After three semesters of piano lessons, in which my dear teacher repeatedly referenced her love for the pipe instrument, I took a leap and decided to embark on a college side quest.

To be entirely honest, my choice to play the organ doesn't make much sense in the context

of my classes or career aspirations. The organ is not a part of my five-year plan, nor is playing the instrument a side hustle subsidizing the costs of being a University student. The likelihood of a life performing "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" at Wrigley Field or "Canon in D" as couples walk down the aisle is low. Frankly, I'm not particularly good at the organ either — I stumble over the foot pedals and struggle to separate the varied rhythms vying for my limited number of fingers.

My middling organ talent ties into my general sense of being a bit of a jack of all trades, heavy on the "master of none." Rather than a linear path of pre-professional activities, my resume is a haphazard jumble of side quests — most of which I do not particularly excel at. The organ is an extension of this, an attempt to slot a love of music into my randomness and dispersed interests.

Despite its uselessness as a

bullet point on my LinkedIn, when I slip my feet into my organ shoes — classic Mary Janes with a suede bottom and low heel situated for reaching notes on the pedal keyboard — and practice the simplest of songs, I feel a sense of peace. I need not think about my course load, club meetings or that essay I have yet to write. Instead, I simply need to work on rhythms and notes, to count beats and press keys.

This, I believe, is the value of the college side quest. The unplanned adventure that takes you away from the pressures and fears baked into University life, the passion with no relation to career or academic goals that inspires growth in a way that economics courses and business fraternities fail to do.

The organ lets me detach myself from the rat race of daily University life, but it also lets me expand my horizons in a new way. When I play, I learn — about tempos and chords, sure, but also

about myself, the emotions and ambitions that drive me to painstakingly carve out time in my schedule to sit at the keyboard and practice.

The college side quest does not need to be the multi-semester jaunt that my organ adventure has become, and it certainly doesn't have to make sense. It doesn't have to align with your major, or your future career. It definitely does not have to check a box on your five year plan. Rather, the art of the college side quest is its randomness. In a land of opportunity as vast and varied as the University, the college side quest can be as simple as saying "yes" to that club meeting, or stopping by that absurd-sounding event. The college side quest is a mindset, a willingness to embrace the unexpected, to gain a new hobby at best, and a fun story at worst.

College is a fleeting few years of freedom, an expected time to do the unexpected. There is no

rulebook, no strict plan, no requirement that you complete steps A, B and C. Sure, in a place where every student clutches an impressive resume and a plethora of accolades, the side quest can feel unnecessary, like a waste of time that could be spent honing a marketable skill. However, these few years are uniquely situated for randomness — the endless fields of opportunity combined with newfound freedom make the University the ideal place for a detour from daily life. There is no better time to try — and maybe even fail — at something new.

In just a few short years, you will no longer be surrounded by the acclaimed organ professors, free concerts or exciting events the University has to offer. The least you can do is take the leap and embark on a college side quest — and hey, you might even get a new pair of shoes out of it.

Delicious on a dime: Charlottesville's best restaurant deals

These five spots cook up the perfect excuse to indulge without breaking the bank

Lucy Larson | Staff Writer

Editor's note: The author of this article is over the age of 21.

It's no secret that most college students struggle with their spending. Between the morning coffee that becomes a daily ritual, the cute blouse you see in the Finch window and the never-ending need for paper towels, it's easy for small purchases to accumulate a large bill quite quickly.

While I try to be conscientious about my spending, to me, there is nothing better than a nice meal out with friends. As a food writer, I have had the opportunity to explore Charlottesville's robust restaurant scene, but can rarely leave an eatery spending under \$20.

Through menu sleuthing and boots-on-the-ground taste-testing, I've compiled a list of five of my favorite restaurant deals in Charlottesville. These are the perfect spots to treat both your taste buds and your wallet for under \$25.

Wing Wednesday at Asado Wing & Taco Company

Starting out with my personal favorite, Wing Wednesday at Asado has become my go-to weeknight dinner spot when I want to dine out without

venturing too far from Grounds. The deal includes half-off of your choice of bone-in chicken wings or their cauliflower veggie wings, which normally cost \$7 and \$9, respectively. As a 10-year-long vegetarian until this past summer, the cauliflower wings were a delicious substitute, and surprisingly filling — especially given what you pay. There's also the option to double the amount and get 10 of each, which totals at \$16 for bone-in and \$13 for the cauliflower wings.

Asado offers 12 different wing sauces with varying flavor profiles, including pineapple teriyaki, old bay hot honey and lemon pepper. My personal favorites are the honey barbecue and the spicy garlic, which fall in the middle of the spice spectrum. The best part of this deal is that the wait time for a table, as well as for your meal, are surprisingly quick. The wings are just as good quality as their full-price nights, even though the boneless wings — my personal favorite — do not qualify for the discount.

Trinity On The Corner's Wrap Wednesday and \$5 Thursday

Another Wednesday night favorite of mine is Trinity Irish Pub's Wrap Wednesday — the perfect dinner deal

to enjoy while sitting outside with friends as a mid-week treat. Trin offers any of their wraps or salads, which are normally \$12, for just \$5. The deal also includes a side of your choosing, with fries or a \$3 mac and cheese upgrade.

If you do happen to miss out on their Wednesday night deals, Trin has your back on Thursdays as well. For just \$5, you can get a cheeseburger with fries, saving you over \$6 from their normal pricing. For students over 21 who are ready to ring in the weekend, Trin also offers a \$10 natty light pitcher deal on Wednesdays and \$10 off Bold Rock pitchers on Thursdays.

\$19 Happy Hour at Black Cow Chophouse

For a more upscale happy hour venture, Black Cow Chophouse offers their signature Steak Frites, which consists of their cut-of-the-day and a generous helping of twice-cooked Belgian fries with aioli for \$19. For an additional \$3, diners can enjoy a house salad with their meal, which is topped with pickled onions, radishes, cucumbers and a white wine vinaigrette. While Black Cow features a wide variety of daily steaks, most of their cuts fall between \$30 and \$60, making their weekly happy hour deal quite the steal.

Happy hour runs Wednesday through Sunday from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. With five nights to choose from, college students have plenty of chances to treat themselves to a steak dinner without blowing their budget, even if it means moving dinner plans a little earlier.

Wednesdays at Bang!

One of my favorite restaurants in Charlottesville is Bang!, an Asian-style tapas restaurant. While their dishes are fantastic, the small plate nature of the meal can make it easy to rack up a substantial bill quite quickly. Thankfully, I discovered they have some great tapas deals on Wednesday, which takes a few dollars off of many of their menu favorites. Some items to note include their Chilled Sesame Cucumber Cashew Noodles, Tempura Sweet Potatoes and Firecracker Shrimp. Instead of spending around \$15 per shareable, which adds up quickly when dining with a large group, these rotating menu items are reduced by about \$5 a piece. For great quality food and creative combinations, Bang! is the perfect group-outing with options for nearly every palette.

Wine Tuesday at Tillman's

For students 21 and over, Tillman's

on the Downtown Mall offers half-priced bottles of wine from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays, taking most of their bottle prices down to roughly \$25. Known for their quality wine offerings and tasty charcuterie pairings, Tillman's is a great date night spot to split a bottle and some small bites for an excellent price. The restaurant offers indoor seating, as well as tables on their patio on the Downtown Mall. If you are going on the earlier side, Tillman's has Afternoon Aperitivo deals on weekdays from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., including \$6 bar bites to pair with their discounted wine. Whether you are planning to stay and linger, or just stopping by for a drink before dinner elsewhere downtown, this wine deal is hard to pass up for your Tuesday plans.

While Charlottesville has no shortage of spots offering weekly deals, these restaurants stand out for delivering both quality and value. Next time you are looking to treat yourself on a budget, stop by the Corner or venture downtown for one of these delicious meals that prove that eating well and spending less do not have to be mutually exclusive.

SPORTS

Trevor Dunbar is building his team the ‘right way’

Dunbar discusses his new role as interim coach of Cross Country and Track & Field

Caroline Wulff | Staff Writer

Why exactly should a top track and field athlete come to the University of Virginia? This is the question Interim Coach of Track and Field Trevor Dunbar answers each time he pitches the program.

“Every program that’s offered is phenomenal, and we have a top caliber, not just ACC-level athletic department, but [a] nationally competitive athletic department ... [Virginia] is a premier destination for prospective student-athletes that want to achieve their fullest academically and athletically,” Dunbar said. “Once you get here, you understand what makes it so special, and not only is it a beautiful place with so much history, a great academic reputation, but the people here make the place.”

Dunbar is a coach focused on his people — developing not only a highly competitive team, but a holistic and connected one.

He has spent the past five years working with Virginia, first as an assistant coach and then was promoted last year to become associate head coach under his old college coach and Virginia’s former Head Coach Vin Lananna.

However, July 29, Dunbar received a call from Lananna, telling him that he had accepted a position as the Chief Executive Officer of USA Track and Field and that Dunbar would be promoted to interim head coach for the year.

“[I] didn’t have a lot of time to think [and] process it, but it’s been a great transition so far,” Dunbar said. “I feel very confident in my coaching staff and the team that we are going to continue the momentum and provide a great experience for the student-athletes.”

Dunbar himself has lived in the running world for a long time. He is the son of two collegiate distance runners, Marcus and Kathleen, and his high school running career took place in Kodiak, Alaska, overseen by his father. Kodiak, though, was not set up to make his path into collegiate running easy due to the lack of competition and harsh environmental conditions.

“We’re dealing with rough climates ... and we have the winters [where] it’s not a lot of daylight,” Dunbar said. “You [do not have] much competition. It’s a sparsely populated state, so we had to travel a lot as I started to get to a different level [of competition].”

When Dunbar eventually joined the University of Oregon’s track and field program as a junior, the traditionally rainy weather in Eugene,

Ore., was a remarkably positive change. For one, there was significantly less snow. But also, the competition at the DI level was much fiercer than in the Last Frontier.

Dunbar went on to become a five-time All-American athlete in events like the 1,500-meter, 3,000-meter, 5,000-meter and 10,000-meter at Oregon while being coached by his future boss, Lananna. He then sought a career as a professional runner, but according to Dunbar, he struggled to achieve results he was happy with and started to miss the team environment. This became the impetus for his interest in coaching.

“I always knew ... running wasn’t going to last forever,” Dunbar said. “[I missed] the team during my own training and [felt] like it was just running for myself. [It] wasn’t as fulfilling to me as running for my teammates, running for my coach, running for our university, and [coaching was] a way to channel that competitive edge, but also you know, help others.”

Dunbar then began taking on coaching roles, first at Boston University and later headed to Florida State for a few seasons before ending up at California. Five months into his work there, Lananna reached out to Dunbar to see if he had any interest in coming to Virginia as an assistant coach.

“I knew a little bit about UVa. and ... the trajectory of the program with Coach Vin,” Dunbar said. “[I] knew that this was a chance to pursue something great and be a part of something special.”

Now with his new role, Dunbar has the chance to shape Virginia’s trajectory more than ever before.

Dunbar’s coaching philosophy is — like most college coaches — crafted with an eye toward results. But, he believes that strong results only come from a well-rounded team, one focused on cultivating each runner and each member of the coaching and support staff.

“[I] want to treat everyone as an individual,” Dunbar said. “[I want to] understand their background, have a great experience during their time and build a positive relationship. On top of that, [I want to be] very competitive ... I feel that’s only possible with the right team, the right student athletes and the right coaching staff.”

Outside of this philosophical framing, Dunbar also has a strong focus on structure. He has a clear arc planned for the upcoming cross country season to prepare his athletes once championship season rolls around.



COURTESY VIRGINIA ATHLETICS

Though he is new to the head coach job, Dunbar is not new to being a leader in the program.

According to Dunbar, this past summer was the time to begin to build up mileage and an aerobic base after the conclusion of the outdoor season. Then, the team builds to their maximum volume as school starts and holds that pace for a few weeks as they start to compete at various meets. After mid-October, the workouts become “shorter and sharper,” giving athletes time to rest up to achieve their fastest times for ACC and NCAA Championship meets.

As a coach, Dunbar said he is constantly researching ways to fine tune his training programs to help each individual and the team get better.

“Nowadays ... you can learn what the top American athletes are doing, the top world athletes,” Dunbar said. “So I’m constantly researching and talking to other coaches when I get the chance to, and then putting a program together in a way that fits for University of Virginia and for each individual.”

When it comes to cross country, Dunbar acknowledged mental strength is just as important as physical strength. The standard length for a women’s race is the 6,000-meter, while the men generally run 8,000-meter or 10,000-meter, depending on the meet. Both races entail a considerable period of time to deal with physical pain, demanding a

mental ability to fight off exhaustion.

“You build your physical fitness, but you need the confidence to go in with it to maximize performance, and so we are going to be working on competitiveness, connection and that support with each other,” Dunbar said. “[B]eing able to mentally be ready to battle is something that we’re constantly working on. We can touch on it in our training ... but really, the best practice is our competition.”

Dunbar’s transition to leadership has not come without its challenges and changes. The men’s distance contingent graduated the vast majority of its strongest contributors this spring, such as Gary Martin, Justin Wachtel and Will Anthony, leaving the men’s distance program in need of rebuilding, especially when it comes to cross country.

However, Dunbar is pragmatically optimistic about his younger men’s team.

“I’m extremely excited to see where this group can go,” Dunbar said. “We have to take a little bit of a realistic approach of where we’re at, and know that we have a long way to go, a lot of work ahead of us. But overall, I think we’re looking at the big picture.”

With Lananna’s exit and Dunbar’s promotion, there was a gap in

the distance coaching staff which has now been filled by Sam Bradley, the former head coach of cross country at Radford.

To Dunbar, Bradley exemplified the two key qualities needed in a coach — knowledge and care.

“[Bradley] has just been someone who deeply cares about the student athlete experience and has a great knowledge of the sport, so those are the two things that attracted me most when I was researching this position [and] interviewing different candidates,” Dunbar said.

Dunbar himself is also dialed into those two principles. His sense of care for his athletes particularly comes across when discussing his goals for the cross country season in his new role.

“[I’m] hoping to give it everything I have and be open and honest with the student-athletes, be able to continue to build positive relationships and serve as a leader amongst the athletic department,” Dunbar said. “We’re hunting for ACC titles, but we want to go about it the right way with an emphasis on being well-rounded student athletes.”

SAAC aims to promote citizen-athlete development

President Noah Dyer and External Vice President Elijah Slibeck hope to level the field among student-athletes

Adair Reid | Staff Writer

As the 2026-2027 Student-Athlete Advisory Committee President, Noah Dyer, fourth-year men's swimmer, entered the role this fall with three objectives — facilitating internal and external connection, encouraging self-advocacy and developing citizen-athletes. Alongside Elijah Slibeck, fourth-year vice president of external communications and football team member, Dyer will represent Virginia on the ACC SAAC, interacting with the NCAA on policies and regulations that impact student-athletes.

In a post-House v. NCAA settlement world of limited resources, Olympic and revenue sports occupy vastly different situations. Revenue sports, which primarily refer to NCAA Division I football and men's basketball, are prioritized for their profitability from media rights, ticket sales and licensing. Following the House settlement in 2021, which removed scholarship limits for teams and allowed direct revenue sharing to athletes, Virginia Athletics has shifted to relying on fundraising to help support its other 25 varsity programs that are less self-sustaining.

In helping student-athletes adjust to this new reality, Dyer hopes to formalize an organization that has typically functioned to voice smaller concerns to Virginia Athletics administration, and expand it to provide resources and guidance to student-athletes.

"We're just anchoring on [improving the student-athlete advocacy] this year at SAAC, and hoping that we can continue to improve [the] lives of athletes in a time where ... NIL is changing a lot," Dyer said.

Dyer's leadership, particularly in Student Council after a student-athlete representative seat was created following a University Board of Elections referendum passed in 2025, has given him a unique link to the student body that continues to inform SAAC's agenda.

"[Dyer] brings such a unique perspective," Slibeck said. "Everyone saw him as a student, being on Student Council, and now he's been able to pull those connections into the athletic world and be able to foster relationships from that side."

His time in Student Council led him to work closely with Kyle Montaperto, Class of 2026 alumnus, former SAAC president and wrestling team member.

As a student-athlete representative on Student Council, Dyer helped confront challenges like changes to athletic dining after the former athletic dining hall in John Paul Jones arena closed. Following Virginia's opt-in to distributing the maximum amount of \$20.5 million in payments to student-athletes, which will increase over the coming years, the dining hall's \$1.2 million annual operation quickly became apparent as a financial burden.

With Montaperto, Dyer was able to pass a Student Council resolution in January 2026 to establish a permanent athlete dining option within Newcomb Dining Hall, the PEAK station, which he says Athletics nutrition is currently working on with Aramark to determine offerings.

However, as SAAC president, marketing the organization's resources to more student-athletes is a current problem he wants to tackle, along with lost opportunities for inter- and cross-team bonding and steady meal service the JPJ Dining Hall had offered. For Olympic sports athletes who do not have dedicated dining facilities like football or men's and women's basketball, Dyer is interested in finding ways to replicate that environment.

"There is no long-term plan from athletics in terms of a real capital expense into building a new dining hall," Dyer said. "[The Olympic Sports Center has] meals multiple nights a week for different teams depending on when their seasons are, and that basically combined with just the dining stations at Aramark, particularly PEAK, is the solution now."

For Slibeck — who served in SAAC as a student representative for the football team during his third year — changes like the dining hall closure bred differences between student-athlete experiences across programs.

After adverse reactions to the JPJ closure from peers made him consider more involvement in SAAC, Slibeck is now currently the only revenue sport athlete serving in an executive position. In his view, that distinction gives SAAC more credibility in the eyes of the administration and improves their ability to advocate for all student-athletes.

"With the new revenue sharing, all of the attention is getting put towards men's basketball and men's football ... We're heard more," Slibeck said. "Having a



COURTESY VIRGINIA ATHLETICS

For Dyer, his position with SAAC is a full-circle moment.

voice in SAAC from one of those sports, I think is really important."

Working with Slibeck has also been impactful for Dyer in expanding SAAC's presence for all student-athletes, as gaining traction with over 750 NCAA student-athletes at the University has been a persistent challenge.

"We're grateful for Elijah [Slibeck]," Dyer said. "The difficulty with the revenue sports is just their schedules and the level of commitment that they have. They, more so than others, potentially are operating not necessarily from a schedule side of things, but maybe just through how they're perceived ... one of the biggest goals for us is to engage the revenue-generating sports."

Dyer envisions working to level that field with SAAC's legislative committee, which informs student-athlete members on how guidelines in the NCAA and ACC — often in flux, with drafted legislation like the potential Protect College Sports Act pending in Congress — are changing, as well as what the University's regulations currently are and how NIL collective platforms operate.

"You just need to keep athletes informed, and you need you need them to have a voice and responsibility in the community so that they don't feel disempowered in a situation that can feel very dis-

empowering," Dyer said.

Although some information sessions target Olympic sports student-athletes, Dyer mentioned plans to bring in representatives from football and men's and women's basketball for "crash courses" on understanding University funding related to athletics. By reaching out to Athletic Director Carla Williams and other members of administration, Dyer has been encouraged by their eagerness to collaborate and add their expertise, along with marketing through U.Va. Student Athlete Success and the Virginia Athletics Foundation.

"The team with athletics that supports us is very passionate about SAAC and really [cares] about having student voices heard," Dyer said. "Coaches do a great job in spreading [the] word."

In discussing citizen-athlete development, Dyer and Slibeck emphasized future career readiness, with plans to launch Hoos Helping Hoos, a new platform intended to connect Virginia Athletics alumni with current student-athletes.

"You're not going to be playing sports for the rest of your life, so you need to start buying into these things so that you can take advantage of [for] your job after," Slibeck said. "We have a ton of alumni that have been willing to buy into that."

Committees within the organization plan Hoos Choice Awards, SAAC's flagship event honoring student-athletes. Other top priorities for the year include further integrating student-athletes into the general student body. Although their day-to-day and University experience may be far different from the average student, Dyer and Slibeck see hosting events on the Lawn as a way to increase visibility.

Dyer said he hopes the work he and the SAAC executive board takes on will outlast his tenure as president and prompt future student-athletes to advocate for themselves. Although the nature of being a student-athlete has changed rapidly in the last five years and will continue to evolve, he hopes SAAC will become self-sustaining and show student-athletes that they are stakeholders in their student experience who should be heard.

"I just want to try to leave [the University] a little bit better than I found it," Dyer said. "I'm a very big believer in athletics as a catalyst for broad leadership growth. I think that's what drives me and fires me up about all these different involvements ... because I think they point towards the same end goal of making sure athletics not only one continues, but two thrives and three serves the athletes and the future generations of athletes."

HUFFMAN: The Protect College Sports Act is too ambitious

Though earnest in its attempt, the bill falls short of meaningful protections for student-athletes

Emory Huffman | Sports Editor

On Sept. 12, Republican Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas took to the “College GameDay” desk for 10 minutes to espouse the merits of his bipartisan bill, the Protect College Sports Act. Cruz, who was relentlessly booed by the Austin, Texas crowd, expects that the bill will come to the Senate floor for a vote within the next two weeks.

Cosponsored by Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell of Washington, the bill covers a vast array of issues that the NCAA has failed to successfully regulate.

Too vast, perhaps — at the expense of targeted solutions, the bill is a mammoth framework that tries to fix everything at once. The Protect College Sports Act contains some strong provisions formalizing Name, Image and Likeness policies and combating agent exploitation, but it does not incorporate the concerns of student-athletes about school mobility and caps on earnings. The bill puts strict limits on revenue sharing that could limit the NCAA’s regulatory flexibility and the potential income of student-athletes in the future.

Also worrying is the lack of enforcement initiative, as the bill reimposes limits but does not empower the NCAA or its conferences

to investigate or punish violations any more than it did before the NIL era. Ultimately, it serves the interests of the major conferences and the NCAA before those of the athletes those institutions should seek to elevate.

The bill aims to provide a federal framework for NIL regulation, impose restrictions on transfers and establish regulations and fee caps on agents. It codifies the revenue sharing limits established by the 2025 House v. NCAA settlement — nearly \$21.6 million per school this year — and preserves the athletes’ right to pursue NIL deals under a new framework.

Notably, though, the bill limits NIL deals between athletes and third parties to levels of compensation “paid to individuals with a similar profile, reputation, or notability who are not student-athletes or prospective student-athletes.” In other words, the bill puts an ambiguous limit on how much athletes can earn from NIL deals that are not between an athlete and their school.

For a school like Virginia, where NIL deals are primarily third-party-driven, this could lead to smaller deals for Cavaliers seeking compensation. And given the ambiguous

framing of this limitation, Virginia’s student-athletes could earn far less than their counterparts at other flagship universities purely on the basis of “notability.”

Further, advertising and lobbying disclosures reveal much about the key players in the bill’s development, the stakeholders that helped shape the bill’s most important aspects. Most obviously, ESPN chose to give Cruz 10 minutes of airtime on its flagship college football program. Former Alabama Coach Nick Saban and current Colorado Coach Deion Sanders both appeared in commercials promoting the bill — the former is an analyst on College GameDay. The Walt Disney Company, ESPN’s parent company, mentioned the bill in its lobbying disclosures.

The NCAA’s two biggest conferences, the SEC and the Big Ten, both support the bill, though they opposed it up until late July. The switch came after the Senate Commerce Committee, which drafted the bill, made several key revisions. One of these revisions is the “retention fund,” which allows schools to spend up to \$22.5 million above the revenue-sharing cap to retain their own players. They can also spend an additional \$5 mil-

lion, matching spending from schools to athletes in women’s, Olympic and non-revenue sports.

Smaller conferences — even the ACC and the Big 12 — cannot afford to spend twice as much on revenue-sharing without cutting other programs. Even if they wanted to cut said programs, they cannot, as the Protect College Sports Act requires schools to maintain the overall number of roster spots and scholarships across non-revenue sports.

Is this in the best interest of the athletes? For those who go to the nation’s biggest schools, undoubtedly. They can continually renew deals with their schools worth hundreds of thousands, even millions of dollars.

But for athletes at smaller schools seeking more lucrative opportunities, these rules could unfairly restrict compensation as well as athlete flexibility. The bill codifies the five-year eligibility rule, with a hard cap at age 24. It allows for just one transfer without a one-year penalty, with an exception if the head coach leaves.

This means that athletes seeking opportunities at the best programs could be blocked by transfer restrictions and hamstrung by tight, overprescribed budgets at their home

schools. Late bloomers — Bryce Perkins and Chandler Morris come to mind for Virginia — would not have the chance to earn life-changing money at a better school if they have already transferred once.

The bill is an opportunity for the federal government to claim victory in a battle that threatens to tear collegiate athletics apart. But the bill protects the interests of the NCAA and major conferences before those of the student athletes. It empowers the wealthiest, most powerful conferences and schools to take advantage of the new system and leaves smaller institutions in the dust. And despite the claims of notable public figures, the bill does little to incentivize spending on Olympic sports programs.

By cramming the Protect College Sports Act through Congress, Cruz and company risk boxing college sports into solutions that may breed a host of problems. Legislators should go back to the drawing board and seek out individualized regulations and bills that target key aspects of the issue. Though the bill is undoubtedly ambitious and the status quo is unsustainable, the Protect College Sports Act is not the answer.

THE CAVALIER DAILY

THE CAVALIER DAILY

The Cavalier Daily is a financially and editorially independent news organization staffed and managed entirely by students of the University of Virginia. The opinions expressed and advertisements shared in The Cavalier Daily are not necessarily the views of the students, faculty, staff or administration of the University of Virginia. Editorials represent the majority opinion of the Editorial Board. Cartoons and columns represent the views of the authors alone. The managing board of The Cavalier Daily has sole authority over and responsibility for all content.

No part of The Cavalier Daily or The Cavalier Daily online edition may be reproduced in any form, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the editor-in-chief. The Cavalier Daily is published every other Thursday in print and daily online at cavalierdaily.com. It is printed on at least 40 percent recycled paper. 2026 The Cavalier Daily Inc.

HAVE AN OPINION?

The Cavalier Daily welcomes letters to the editor and guest columns. Writers must provide full name and University affiliation. Letters should not exceed 400 words in length, and columns should not exceed 900. The Cavalier Daily does not guarantee publication of submissions and may edit all material for content and grammar. Submit to opinion@cavalierdaily.com or P.O. Box 400703, Charlottesville, VA 22904-4703

WANT TO ADVERTISE WITH US?

The Cavalier Daily offers print and digital advertising reaching thousands of readers across the University community and Charlottesville. Our advertisements connect local and national businesses with UVa. students, faculty and Charlottesville residents every day. For information on rates, deadlines and placements, contact ads@cavalierdaily.com

MANAGING BOARD

Editor-in-Chief

Leigh Bailey

Managing Editor

Nina Broderick

Executive Editor

Scarlett Sullivan

Operations Manager

Kayla Moore

Chief Financial Officer

Shahnoor Chaudhry

EDITORIAL BOARD

Leigh Bailey

Scarlett Sullivan

Wylie Brunman

Michael King

Joshua Hawkins

Lucy Duttonhofer

Beckett Anderson

JUNIOR BOARD

Assistant Literary Editor

Dana Douglas

Assistant Managing Editor

Elizabeth Adams

(SA) Chris Bordonaro

(SA) Eva Goldrich

(SA) Evelyn Kuzminski

(SA) Alena Martin

(SA) Lillian Smith

(SA) Maddie Weinstein

News Editors

Grace Little

Lauren Seeliger

(SA) Luca Bailey

(SA) Michael Racz

Sports Editors

Emory Huffman

Ryan Weiner

(SA) Michael Liebermann

(SA) Eleanor Lynch

(SA) Margaret Piatos

Arts & Entertainment Editors

Benjamin Apostol

Zachary Geller

(SA) Alena Touve

Life Editors

Ingrid Gay

Abby Snowdon

(SA) Sadie Adams

(SA) Phoenix Banks

Podcast Editors

Anniston Li

Hareem Mubashar

Opinion Editors

Wylie Brunman

Michael King

(SA) Beckett Anderson

(SA) Lucy Duttonhofer

Humor Editor

Clare Pelli

(SA) Nafeesa Naz

Cartoon Editor

Ada Malpani

(SA) Sarah Meisner

Puzzle Editors

Shreyas Agnihotri

Max Goldberg

(SA) Heer Patel

Photo Editors

Mac Doucette

Cat White

(SA) Kennedy Coffin

(SA) Clarke La Serte

Design Editors

Mackenzie Bullock

Eva Creighton

Asma Sanaullah

Chinese Translation Editor

Austin Li

Spanish Translation Editor

Blanly Rodriguez

Social Media Managers

Abby Boursiquot

Lahari Kunapaneni

Video Editors

Arpita Behera

Kate McDermott

Finance Manager

Jake Friedman

Advertising Manager

Russell Fisher

Website Managers

Taylor Petrofski

Kyle Song

Analytics Manager

Sohum Mehrotra

Newsletter Editor

Adair Reid

Archivists

Annabelle Nee

Livia Shrednick

Community Chair

Nat Taylor

Fundraising Chair

Will Peres



FOLLOW US @CAVALIERDAILY

WWW.CAVALLIERDAILY.COM

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER!

Notes from Newcomb

A daily newsletter by The Cavalier Daily



PUZZLE

Ellie Hawkins | Puzzlist

Answers are available on the digital version of this puzzle which is published at www.cavalierdaily.com.

ACROSS

- 1 Smells
- 6 Sailor's "Stop!"
- 11 Initialed sandwich
- 14 Spock actor Leonard
- 15 Cartoon pig
- 16 Yellow Teletubby, when doubled
- 17 Teacher's pets
- 19 Chicago airport code
- 20 Shoppe introduction
- 21 ___ Fru
- 22 UVa. sports manager
- 23 Sony competitor
- 25 Eight in Ecuador
- 27 Squeezing sieges
- 32 Author Ayn
- 34 Labrador or Laptev
- 35 Braid
- 36 "My Chemical Romance" genre
- 37 Ramesses' title
- 40 Hoppy bev.
- 41 o to a programmer
- 43 Ellie's Country Club or

Trinity on the Corner

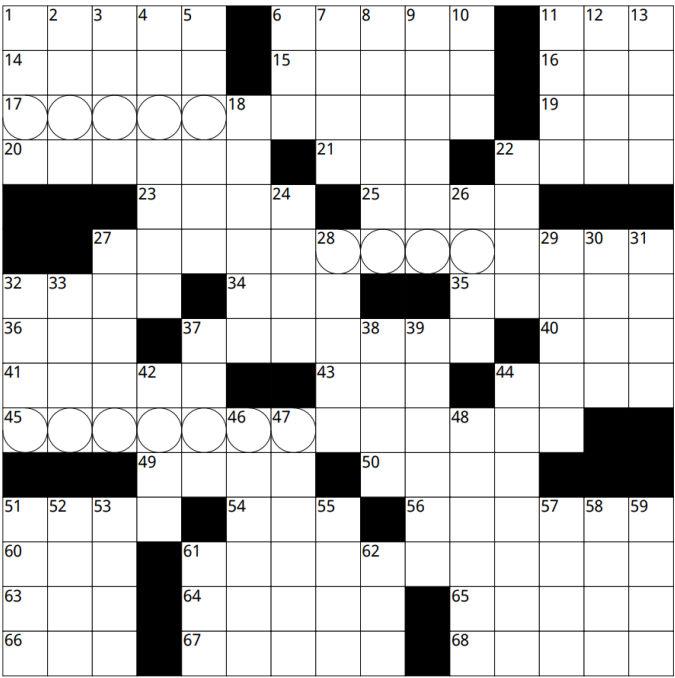
- 44 Zealous
- 45 Retired Bronco tight end and sports media personality
- 49 Name shared by two of Henry VIII's wives
- 50 The beginning of a drive, in Scott Stadium
- 51 Surgeon Cristina in "Grey's Anatomy"
- 54 NYC skyscraper
- 56 French DJ David
- 60 Q&A
- 61 Information hubs at the center of political debate ... or a hint to this puzzle's theme
- 63 Result for UVa. football in the 2025 Gator Bowl
- 64 Nicholas Gage biography
- 65 Name drops
- 66 Pod resident
- 67 Wing & Taco Company on The Corner
- 68 Eye dr. exam

DOWN

- 1 "You just walk ____"
- 2 Like many workloads during midterm season
- 3 "Typee" sequel
- 4 Kelly of "Destiny's Child"
- 5 UVa. Board of Visitors, for one
- 6 Service frat at UVa.
- 7 McIntire attire
- 8 Hugo relative
- 9 Tidy (up)
- 10 Prof. helpers
- 11 Eastern or Western division
- 12 Raj of "Katseye"
- 13 "Voilà"
- 18 Like UVa. first-years after a semester
- 22 Gallagher or Fisher
- 24 Length times width
- 26 "Pshaw!"
- 27 Sherlock's sister played by Millie Bobby Brown
- 28 Runner's load
- 29 Fresh
- 30 Dwelling that inspired

Maslow's hierarchy of needs

- 31 Dutch town
- 32 Scott Stadium whistle blowers
- 33 Asian nursemaid
- 37 Sean of "One Battle After Another"
- 38 Spa sounds
- 39 #E57200, for example
- 42 Jumper's undoer
- 44 "Bon ____"
- 46 Family subject of "Shaq Life"
- 47 Powdered drink brand
- 48 Smut
- 51 Whitman's cry
- 52 D'Artagnan, to the Three Musketeers
- 53 Southern grandma
- 55 No Composure or Birds n the Breeze
- 57 Dome in Dijon
- 58 25-Across menos cinco
- 59 Dep.



61 Javier Peña org.
62 IM basketball or SWAP, to Student Affairs

CARTOON

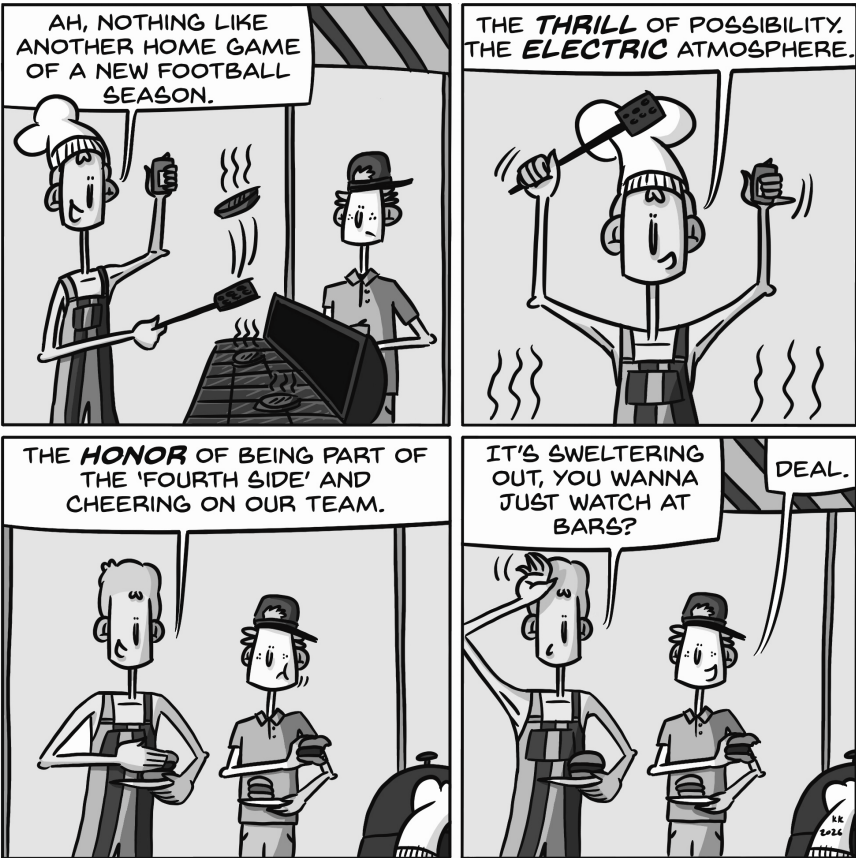
U.Va. Underwater

Sophia Lee | Cartoonist



Growing Pains #16

Keifer Kettenis | Cartoonist



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Sasha Fishman's 'Lemniscata' exhibit flows in Ruffin Gallery

The rhythmic installation transforms water's currents into an evolving sculptural experience

Preet Manukonda | Staff Writer

With the drumming cadence of water enveloping the room in a melodic symphony, the "Lemniscata" exhibition at the University's Ruffin Gallery transforms the space into a celebration of water's rhythm, flow and vitality. On display Aug. 28 through Oct. 9, the fountain-like installation and accompanying pieces by New York-based artist Sasha Fishman explore the circulation of water through both human-made and natural environments, referencing the figure-eight form and continuous motion evoked by a lemniscate, or infinity symbol.

A biomaterial researcher and sculptor, Fishman's work exists at the intersection of craft and science. Her sculptures incorporate marine biomatter, toxicology and engineering, drawing specifically on the structures and systems found throughout the natural world. Across exhibitions at the Indian Ceramics Triennale, various universities and the Jewish Museum in New York City, Fishman has continued to explore the connections between the vivacious energy of the natural world and the engineered structurality of human-made forms. "Lemniscata" is no exception, further touching on the connection between the natural and the artificial.

For visitors entering Ruffin Gallery, the first encounter with "Lemniscata" is not necessarily visual, but auditory. The gentle trickle of water emanating from a sculpture at the center of the gallery surrounds the space in soft, continuous rhythm. Titled "My Lungs," the piece features a large, light-cyan ceramic basin with six petal-like lobed sculptures resting along its edges. Water continuously cycles through the ceramic lobes, cascading into the basin with a resonant sound as the basin's sculpted ridges and vortices collect and redirect the water back toward the six sculptures, beginning the cycle anew.

Working closely with water's dynamism in this piece, according to Fishman, has enabled her to slow down and consider the difficulties of containing and directing water within a ceramic sculpture. Fishman said that beyond challenging her understanding of the natural environment, the continuous circulation of water in "My Lungs" reflects her broader interest in how water's movement in natural environments like streams and rivers can be recreated within human-made structures.

"I live in New York, and I don't have much control over the water and where it comes from here," Fishman said. "But it makes me really interested in the waterways and where it comes



KATIE HALL | THE CAVALIER DAILY

Fishman's sculptures incorporate marine biomatter, toxicology and engineering, drawing on structures and systems in the natural world.

from and how the city was built and how water is routed ... because also water is so difficult to control, I've been really curious about how it's been controlled historically."

Fishman also drew inspiration from the Austrian naturalist Viktor Schauberger's theories about the revitalizing effects of vortexing water — specifically how funneling water in a vortex regenerates the energy found in water naturally — which he believed could be diminished as water moves through human-made structures. While Fishman acknowledges that Schauberger's research leans into pseudoscience and claims about vortices' cleansing properties are heavily disputed, she embraces the ambiguity offered by the vortices, readily using them as an alternate mechanism to move water.

"I love the tension of how strange it is that these forms [can be seen] working and doing something that I can't explain, but it feels really bodily and innate," Fishman said. "I love that ... there's something there, there's something quantum that we can't quite understand, and we don't maybe have the language in the sciences yet."

Similarly, Fishman draws deep structural inspiration from British sculptor John Wilkes' kidney-shaped

creations called "Flowforms." The vessel-like structures were designed to harness water in a way that reflects the momentum found naturally in tides and rivers. Six of these structures line the ridges of Fishman's "My Lungs" guiding water through cascading movements similar to Wilkes' original intention.

Eight additional Flowform structures adorn the gallery walls, each with its own hues and textures. Despite following the same general curved, sloping framework, the structures vary in their small details. One, for example, has four lobes, with intricate grooves forming a spiral pattern within each. Another has three brown lobes with slanting prongs pointing toward emerald-green glass at its center.

The variety in color and texture comes from the hand-created glazes that Fishman developed. Fishman explained that she would consult with glaze researchers, develop her own glaze recipes and collaborate with other artists to get a diverse range of hundreds of glaze options. While laborious, Fishman said she reveled in the experience because of the surprise and unpredictability it brought — the colors of the glaze were a mystery until a piece came out of the kiln.

"In the same way that these Flow-

forms have this kind of quality that goes beyond science, the kilns also have this kind of crazy way of just doing things ... [where] something will always just come out in a different [way], something you didn't think would happen," Fishman said.

Fishman worked on these glazes during a residency at the European Ceramic Work Centre in Oisterwijk, Netherlands. There, the massive size of the kilns compelled her to create a larger sculpture than initially planned. Making the 650-pound "My Lungs" piece by hand, Fishman pounded balls of clay, created her own tools in the center's metal shop and made special stilts before drying the piece for six weeks. During this process, Fishman said she drew inspiration from previous travel and biological research, anchoring the basin of "My Lungs" around the olfactory rosettes of sturgeons she studied during conservation research in Oregon. The basin's colors, according to Fishman, were inspired by the blue dye used in Italian-style gardens and fountains.

After three months crafting "My Lungs," Fishman coordinated its transport from the Netherlands to Ruffin Gallery with Stephanie Germosen Salazar, Ruffin Gallery and visiting artist program manager. Germosen

Salazar handled the process of internationally shipping the piece, orchestrating the movement of the weighty sculpture into Fishman's "Lemniscata." For Fishman, the process highlighted the often-invisible labor behind public art and its transport.

"A big part of the art world that people don't talk about is also how do you prepare the crate? How do you just really wrap something well so that it survives, especially ceramics? It's so much other materials and planning and time that goes into a piece that no one will ever see," Fishman said.

Despite the intricate mechanisms of "My Lungs" — from its creation and movement to its transport — Fishman's solo exhibition ultimately points back to something much more fundamental at the core of her work. It reflects an appreciation and understanding of the fluidity of water. Anchored by this theme, Fishman described what she hopes audiences take away from "Lemniscata."

"Gratitude for water, or just to be more mindful of how precious water is," Fishman said. "I want this to really be something that is different from what people expect and what they know of fountains, and for them to just consider just how precious water is, and how beautiful it is."

An essential guide to the Charlottesville music scene

How students can discover the sounds that make the city feel like home

CC West | Staff Writer

A student's time in Charlottesville can impact their life in a myriad of ways — becoming a bagel connoisseur, an expert on a UNESCO World Heritage site, an owner of a closet full of orange and blue or a deep lover of the local music scene. While not everyone arrives to Grounds a music buff, some may end up walking the Lawn at Final Exercises with their newfound concertgoing companions.

Charlottesville is nationally recognized for a spirited live music scene that is cherished by many University students. With advertisements for concerts plastered across Grounds, a multitude of local venues across the city and echoes of student band shows omnipresent on weekends, it can be overwhelming to know where to start.

Whether someone is a composer, a dedicated listener or looking to grow their music knowledge, here are some ways to find new harmonies throughout a student's years on Grounds.

Join a club

No matter how niche a student's favorite music genre may be, the University's vast club scene will surely offer opportunities to meet those with similar interests. Although a cappella

groups have a prominent reputation in the University's music scene, they are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to music lovers.

For musicians, ensemble clubs can be a great match. Cavalier Symphony Orchestra is student-run and open to all majors who love all things classical. For those looking to immerse themselves in the heart of Appalachian melodies, Hoograss offers an enticing group of bluegrass stringers. Ensemble and composition clubs vary across the spectrum of classical to techno with an invite to all types of musicians.

If someone finds themselves intrigued more by music culture or production, they might pique their interest by tuning in to WXTJ 100.1 FM radio, an ear-catching lineup of songs chosen by student DJs. University Records is a web for those in the music scene, connecting artists around the behind-the-scenes production of a show.

Attend live shows at local venues

Charlottesville offers an array of different venues — both small and large — each of which is structured with unique acoustics that complement the artists on stage. For bigger

names, the Jefferson Theater, John Paul Jones Arena and Ting Pavillion are major destinations in the city. Some notable headliners coming this fall to these locations include the Southern rock band Whiskey Myers and indie jam band Goose.

The Jefferson Theater is known for its incredible sonic design on the Downtown Mall. For an amphitheater's concert energy, John Paul Jones Arena is the place, hosting not only iconic winter sporting events, but also world renowned musicians. And, for those who love to lie in the grass while they listen to an artist, Ting Pavilion offers an outdoor concert experience from mid-April to mid-October.

Bars and restaurants in Charlottesville can be great places to catch a set for a smaller and more intimate vibe. The Whiskey Jar, Miller's Downtown and The Southern Café and Music Hall on the Downtown Mall are great places to check out Charlottesville's food scene and enjoy dinner with a show.

For audiences packed with undergraduate University students, the Corner offers an array of venues. Elliewood Avenue's bars include Ellie's Country Club, Coupe DeVille's and

Crozet Pizza at Buddhist Biker Bar, all of which frequently host weekend gigs for student and local bands. And for the lovers of both music and books, the student-run Ginkgo Bookshop offers frequent jazz and bluegrass sets. University Records and Indieheads are consistently open to those seeking engagement with more obscure or eclectic musical styles through their house shows.

Get involved in the Charlottesville music community

There are many opportunities throughout the city and within local institutions for students to march to the beat of their own drum. Charlottesville has an incredible collection of record stores centered around the Downtown Mall. Hello Goodbye Records, Melody Supreme and Plan 9 Music are all walking distance from the Corner. With vinyl offerings for old collectors waiting to be dusted off and recent releases still wrapped in their plastic, these records are eager for a spin.

Local non-profits create similar roles to more deeply ingrain oneself in the art and artistry of Charlottesville. The Front Porch is a local music school

open to all ages, which serves as a great starting point to pick up a long-desired instrument with the organization's private lessons, group classes and workshops. The school also hosts live concerts throughout the city with volunteers encouraged to join in show setups, box offices and concessions.

The University's connection to and celebration of the musical world is extensive and storied. From the start of its music technology innovation over 100 years ago with the formation of the University music department in 1920, to the historic Easters music festival of the 1970s that flocked national audiences to Mad Bowl, to Luke Combs headlining Scott Stadium April 4, the University's music scene has created lasting memories and impressive legacies for generations of graduates.

Although students' time at the University is strictly temporary, Charlottesville's music scene offers a way to make their fleeting time on Grounds count. Starting a band, discovering a new favorite local spot and finding a new friend in the audience at a concert are a few of the many opportunities offered to make these years memorable.

Girls in pearls, guys in ... jerseys

University students share how tradition and individual style shape contemporary football game day fashion

Zoe McFarland | Staff Writer

At first glance around Scott Stadium on a football game day, the unmistakable hues of orange and navy tend to overwhelm one's sight. But upon second or third glance, one might begin to notice the broad spectrum of styles and colors this familiar palette gives way to.

Once associated with the "guys in ties, girls in pearls," aesthetic, University game day fashion has become less uniform in recent years. Traditional Southern influences such as sport coats and long dresses have not entirely disappeared from the student section, but they now exist alongside micro shorts, jerseys, patterned scarves, pins and other looks shaped by contemporary fashion and personal taste, rather than solely by University custom.

Fourth-year College student Dearing Fife embodied this dichotomy during the Sept. 11 Virginia football game against Norfolk State. Fife paired a grey and white striped shorts and button-down blouse matching set with black sneakers, a pearl necklace and pearl earrings.

Fife described her typical game day style as a middle ground between traditional and modern, reflecting a

broader willingness among students to draw from multiple influences when dressing for game day. Fife said that she personally attributes part of this style to her roots in both New York and Virginia, and said that she sees influences of game day dressing around the University associated with Southern schools.

"I feel like UVa. does have this mixture," Fife said. "A lot of people dress like it's an SEC game, and so they'll wear the game pins and the cute little floral dresses, and I definitely do a little bit of that ... I kind of like to do a little mix of both to incorporate where I'm from and my past."

However, not every student approaches game day with a deliberately planned outfit. For second-year Engineering student Avery Esterson, the football game Sept. 11 called for a simple combination — khaki shorts and a polo. He said he has noticed increasingly casual styles across the student body, including the unmistakable orange and navy striped overalls, a trend he emphatically ruled out wearing.

"I try to stay looking as professional as I can, even if it's not up to UVa. tradition, I try to make sure I'm not looking out of place," Esterson said.

"You never know who you're going to run into."

Fourth-year Batten student Rohan Agarwal, on the other hand, took a less traditional approach to his attire for the Sept. 11 football game. Agarwal appeared in a Reece Beekman jersey, expressing his gameday fashion by donning the attire of a former Virginia men's basketball player as a form of good luck charm, a tradition of his that he carried over from last season. He acknowledged that his take on game day style was a bit different from his peers, even admitting that his mother wished he would dress more formally. But for Agarwal, his outfit choices revolve more around honoring his own personal traditions than fitting into typical customs.

The mixture is apparent not only in the stadium, but also in the clothes students seek out before game day. At Finch, a clothing store on the Corner frequented by University students, third-year College student Valentina Fratarcangeli said she has witnessed firsthand how changing game day tastes and trends play out. Fratarcangeli, who has worked at the store since the spring of her first year, said that students continue to arrive in

pursuit of the perfect game day outfit.

The ways students style those colors, however, are less predictable. Fratarcangeli described mini dresses and cowboy boots as game day staples, alongside pins, colorful earrings and patterned scarves. Fratarcangeli noted scarves as an especially popular accessory this season, with students not only wearing them around their necks but tying them around their boots and bags. For Fratarcangeli, those smaller styling decisions point to a broader change she has noticed during her years working at Finch.

Fratarcangeli said that over time, the attitude surrounding game day outfits has become more individualized, rather than reflecting an overall culture or attitude. Fife agreed, and pondered if this evolved style was a result of getting older, but said that she has noticed similar looks among younger students too. To her, game day fashion "ebbs and flows" with styles trending outside the stadium.

Social media has also expanded the range of inspiration available to students, too. Fratarcangeli specifically referenced Pinterest, where she said that she notices students glean inspiration from more fun, "non-traditional"

game day outfits. She also echoed Fife's observation that University students tend to borrow from the more elaborate game day culture often associated with schools farther south.

"I feel like we're trying to bring in more of an SEC look, but we still have our very much small little college town-esque style," Fratarcangeli said.

Yet, the growing emphasis on personal style means not every student approaches game day with an intentionally planned outfit. Taken together, these approaches make any single definition of contemporary University game day style challenging to demarcate.

As University tradition continues to coexist with changing trends and tastes, game day fashion will likely continue to resist simple characterization. Even so, a new "tradition" of sorts emerges from this melting pot of styles — the common proclivity to make game day attire one's own. With Virginia football's upcoming home game against Delaware, students have another chance to express themselves through the fashion that they don for kickoff.

OPINION

LEAD EDITORIAL

EDITORIAL: College sports need fixing

College athletics, including at the University, have descended into disorder and disarray in the NIL era

Today, collegiate athletics are a chaotic, lawsuit-ridden mess. Despite the kickoff of a new college football season, what has dominated headlines thus far has been legal controversy after legal controversy — from class of 2022 players' eligibility status changing daily to Lane Kiffin's attempt to bring back NFL players to Louisiana State University's roster. Moreover, it is not just lawsuits that are embroiling the NCAA, as astronomically large Name, Image and Likeness deals and disjointed regulation have sent the organization spiraling into disarray. College sports, in their current state, are fundamentally broken, and they desperately need legislative stabilization and reform.

Arguably, the biggest problem in college sports is the never-ending eligibility disputes. The NCAA disclosed that there are 79 current lawsuits against the organization over the current eligibility rules. Athletes who face special circumstances often sue the NCAA for extra years of eligibility, leading to dramatic legal

battles and arbitrary decisions across jurisdictions. For example, both Virginia quarterback Chandler Morris and University of Mississippi quarterback Trinidad Chambliss sued the NCAA for another year of eligibility this past offseason. The cases are remarkably similar. Morris claimed that mental health struggles had kept him from playing during the 2022 season. Chambliss argued that chronic tonsillitis held him out of competition during the same season. The biggest difference in the two situations? Chambliss, granted another year by a Mississippi court, takes the field this year. Morris, denied his eligibility by a Virginia court, had to end his college career.

The NCAA should be able to make enforceable rules that quash the drama of lawsuits altogether, but player compensation has thrust college athletics into awkward legal territory. It can no longer be argued that it is a purely amateur endeavor, as it directly impacts athletes' pocketbooks. When eligibility limits are

taken as a suggestion, the traditional order of college sports falls apart, as high school recruits are deprioritized when schools attempt to hoard as many older players as they possibly can. Notably, Virginia football has started taking significantly fewer high school recruits and far more veteran players in the portal, making it the oldest team in college football. Though this might be a successful roster-building strategy, it derails one of the most sacred elements of college sports — the traditional four-year player. There must be a path set for clear, actionable limits on player eligibility in order to protect the integrity and equity of college sports across the country.

Fortunately, Congress has heard the public outcry over the state of college athletics and taken up trying to solve these problems. The Protect College Sports Act is a bipartisan bill currently making its way through the Senate, which would officially establish a simpler, enforceable eligibility framework, standardize NIL funding

and limit the transfer portal. These reforms would help fix what is broken in college sports. However, it is not yet clear whether the broader implications of the legislation are worth the real improvements it would make to college athletics. To achieve its ambitious goals, the act gives the NCAA antitrust exemptions that would only further empower an organization that has been credibly labeled as having monopsony power by economists. Furthermore, the bill could depress athlete wages by setting hard limits on NIL funds and limiting players' legal leverage over the NCAA.

These downsides make it difficult to fully endorse the bill in its current state, and we strongly urge Congress to make amendments to the bill to protect player compensation. Nevertheless, it is encouraging to see the government attempt to bring much-needed stability and reform to college sports. If the necessary player protections are made, this board would wholeheartedly endorse the act.

When legendary Virginia basketball Coach Tony Bennett shocked the University community by suddenly retiring in 2024, he explained his decision by pointing to the state of college athletics — “College athletics is not in a healthy spot. It's not. And there needs to be change.” Though even at the time his words rang true, they have only gotten more prescient in the ensuing years. College sports are in a profoundly unhealthy state which threatens to both undermine fan enjoyment and decay its true mission of shaping scholar-athletes. However, the potential for ground-breaking, stabilizing and fair legislation provides a real glimmer of hope for the future of the sports we all love.

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

CLIPPINGER: Grade inflation is killing curiosity

Inflated grades throughout higher education are pushing students towards courses that have a reputation for ease, rather than what really interests them

If you are interested in law school, it is probable that you have been told to take the courses that maximize your GPA. In August, the School of Law welcomed a class with a median GPA of 3.99. But many students, regardless of intended careers, have an understanding that it is in their best interest to minimize challenging coursework to achieve a higher GPA. After all, future employers and graduate school admissions teams may look to that one number to predict future outcomes.

Grade inflation has been the discussion of universities and politicians alike, with schools like Harvard University embracing caps on the number of students who can receive A grades. The University is not an outlier in this regard — its average GPA has risen from 3.24 to 3.61 in the last 15 years, mirroring national trends. This shift is still significant — when average GPAs shift closer to an A or A-minus, it becomes harder to know what a given GPA reveals about a student's performance or the rigor of the work behind it. Unsurprisingly, this raises questions about rigor and higher education. Have classes really become easier? Has the degree be-

come a transactional stop on the path towards professional attainment?

The central problem is not just that grades mean less. Indeed, some professors report that, although students receive higher grades on average, there is still sufficient range for determining top performers. Rather,

these decisions feel particularly dramatic in the moment, but they reveal an alarming pattern of protecting professional advantage over valuing genuine educational challenges.

In these circumstances, curiosity can become a liability, wherein taking a class in a new discipline, improving

er than establish clear standards of rigor, and create fewer competitive advantages post-graduation — factors that contributed to the system's failure at Princeton University. There are certainly better alternative methods.

It would be far too great a task

across departments so students are not penalized for taking courses in disciplines where high grades are less common. Perhaps we also need to reconsider the system of student evaluations, which significantly affects faculty tenure and career prospects. When professors know that difficult grading can lead to poor evaluations, there is a structural incentive to make courses — and grades — more accommodating.

None of this is to say that the students or professors are at fault — they are working within a system defined by rigid standards and career risks. But we should all work to find the best, most honest way to amend it. The primary goal should not be to protect the reputation of the A grade. Nor should the goal be to create another system for ranking students. It should be to give students something more valuable — the freedom to be curious, to struggle and to take intellectual risks without calculating what they will cost us.

GRACE CLIPPINGER is a senior opinion columnist for The Cavalier Daily. She can be reached at opinion@cavalierdaily.com.

“Have classes really become easier? Has the degree become a transactional stop on the path towards professional attainment?”

behaviors will rationally adapt to meet the demands of application processes. When a high GPA is deemed important for future opportunities, students have more reason to avoid difficult courses and protect their transcripts, rather than pursue what interests them.

Students have learned to treat course selection as a form of risk management. Some fill credits with “GPA boosters” and seek out courses with lenient grading policies. I have been tempted to switch out of classes I find interesting if I know they may cause a drop in my GPA. None of

upon a subject you struggle with or simply trying to challenge yourself becomes a question of transcript preservation. Rigor and exploration become secondary to maintaining a perfect record. Further, though inflation may, in theory, lower student stress, the sense of failure when even B grades are received is apt to perpetuate perfectionist anxiety.

There is a saying that “As goes Harvard, so goes the nation.” However, while Harvard's impulse to reduce the impacts of grade inflation was correct, grade caps miss the point. They drive us to rank ourselves, rather

to entirely uproot the significance of grades in career and educational prospects, but we can try to improve standardization. For instance, we can begin placing percentiles alongside grades on transcripts, reducing the impact of the “A-minus cliff,” which creates vast GPA differences along arbitrary cut-offs. A student who earns an A-minus may be separated from a classmate by a few points, but that distinction can compound over dozens of courses and ultimately have consequences for graduate school admissions or employment.

We could also normalize grades

GARVIE: Do not let data centers go unnoticed

While there is no world where data center development will be halted, University students should know about the impacts of these facilities

There is a new power-sucking facility being built less than two miles from you, and you may not even be aware of it.

This new research data center is located at Fontaine Research Park, right off of Jefferson Park Avenue. The project was initially approved by the Board of Visitors in June 2025 and is currently in the pre-construction phase. Despite this decision occurring over a year ago, this project seems to have eluded the University community's attention. While it is understandable that many citizens may not be aware of this development due to minimal publication and pushback on it, there could be severe impacts from this lack of knowledge.

While the Fontaine data center may not be exclusively utilized for AI, it is designed to support high-performance computing and artificial intelligence workloads. The University claims it is a necessity to support the University's computing needs, but it is unclear precisely what this means in the context of the University's current or prospective investments into technology and AI.

The development of data centers is not unique to Charlottesville. North-

ern Virginia is currently the world's largest hotspot for data centers with over 250 facilities spread across the region. This rapid development has been met recently with increased local opposition to the development of data centers. Within this opposition are a few key aspects of data center development that do not sit right with many citizens — aspects which should be critically engaged with over the course

center, and the University must make clear publicly that they are considering these consequences for the broader Charlottesville community.

The other common gripe against data centers are the environmental consequences for surrounding communities. In 2025, data centers worldwide consumed 222 billion liters of water for cooling. The University said that water will operate in a closed-

crack down on data center development. In Virginia Beach, a moratorium has been placed on new projects. While the stated reason for striking down data centers may vary between counties, one thing is clear — public disapproval has influenced these choices. Virginians are tired of these facilities taking over their lives and are making their opposition known, with 25 data center projects canceled in Vir-

the workforce for this to be realistic. Conversely, this does not mean citizens should sit down in the discussion of data centers. If citizens become aware of these developments earlier, they have legal and political leverage through nuisance claims, environmental reviews, expenditure of resident funds and water rights violations.

The repetitiveness of the spiel on data center concerns does not make it any less important. University students should remain vigilant about the proceedings of developing data centers in their community, and prioritize informing themselves about the potential consequences to wield the proper ammunition for fighting against their development. The University must prove their commitment to their community and show the fight against data centers is not in vain.

ADELINE GARVIE is an opinion columnist who writes about health, technology and environment for *The Cavalier Daily*. She can be reached at opinion@cavalierdaily.com.

“The harm data centers are causing to the environment is real and extensive, and it is happening now — even in our very own community.”

of the Fontaine data center's development and operation.

The most prominent effect of data centers on nearby residents is the rising energy costs associated with increased local electricity demand. Electricity costs are far outpacing inflation rates. This surge in electricity demand is highly correlated with the expansion in new data centers. These sweeping energy-related impacts are likely to also impact Charlottesville with the development of the Fontaine data

loop system, which could help to reduce waste — though this method is only guaranteed when the Fontaine Central Energy Plant is operating at full capacity. On top of water consumption, there is also an increase in noise, light and air pollution from data centers. The harm data centers are causing to the environment is real and extensive, and it is happening now — even in our very own community.

Perhaps because of these growing issues, Virginia is finally beginning to

ginia in 2025 due to public resistance. Charlottesville's perspective should be reflected as well in this development, with citizens expressing any concerns and consternation they might have about the Fontaine data center.

There is a lot more nuance to the data center discussion than simply “stop building.” While many environmentalists and philosophers would prefer the end of generative AI altogether to slow down development, AI is too ingrained in our society and

HUMOR

U.Va. president announces demolition of Academical Village

The decision is endorsed by University leadership, and Amy Coney Barrett, for some reason

On Sept. 17, University President Scott Beardsley sent a letter to the community announcing that Thomas Jefferson's Academical Village — including the Rotunda and all surrounding Lawn rooms and Pavilions — is set to be demolished at the end of the academic year. Despite its status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and backlash from the community, Beardsley urges that this decision is the culmination of a need to expand the University's image in light of an everchanging landscape of student life and pre-professional growth.

In the opening paragraph of the letter, Beardsley described the decision as one made at “his own discretion” and “for the better of the University.” With no apparent evidence that the Board of Visitors — or anyone, really — formally approved the demolition plan, students and faculty questioned its validity. When asked for confirmation of any such approval, Beardsley did not care to go into any detail.

“Well, I'm the president,” Beardsley said.

Many students less concerned with the political and economic state of the University cited sentimental and tradition-based reasons for their upset.

“The Academical Village is the cornerstone of the University,” third-year Engineering student Brick Bybrich said. “There are at least 15 things on the fourth-year bucket list every year that require the Rotunda. What am I supposed to do next year, streak Lambeth Field?”

“I was bid-promised 28 East during my first year,” second-year College student Lonnie Rume said. “It's been in my Hullabahoo family for generations. This is a disastrous announcement.”

Despite overwhelming disagreement with Beardsley's decision, several members of University leadership came to his aid to defend the change.

“Although I'm unsure when Scotty came up with this plan, the

University has really been overdoing it with the red brick anyways,” Archie Texture, dean of the School of Architecture, said. “I think scaffolding and no clear infrastructural plan is the new look for the University.”

When asked about what will replace the Academical Village, most deans were unsure and started spitballing their own opinions and ideas.

“I vote for a 1515 satellite house with even bigger windows,” Mack Anical, dean of the School of Engineering, said. “Or another burger place. Maybe a 7 Day. Potentially some more luxury student housing, or another parking lot. I think we're lacking all those things.”

Beardsley shared some of the ideas he has come up with.

“I've kept the nature of my plans close to my chest and have heard feedback from my colleagues who wish they were consulted about these plans,” Beardsley said. “However, a new data center is the front-running option in my mind,

so it'll likely be the plan that goes. Shannon and Clem are just near the Lawn, and with every student having a Claude or ChatGPT tab open at all times, a data center would be pretty cost-effective.”

The letter was sent just in time for Justice Amy Coney Barrett's visit to the University to discuss her book “Listening to the Law.” Despite a lack of correlation between the purpose of her visit and the announcement, she was still asked about the controversial decision by an audience member at her talk.

“I mean, I think people should just trust the judgement of those who are appointed,” Barrett said. “Especially when those appointing them can make the decision so fast.”

The audience member inquired further, asking about what she believes is the best replacement for the Academical Village.

“You know, when I first got here I was really confused why my monogram was everywhere in Char-

lottesville,” Barrett said. “At first, I asked myself, ‘Why are these people slapping my initials on liquor stores?’ But now, I actually think it's a great way to connect with the students here and shed some positive light on my legacy. For that reason, I think the Rotunda should be replaced by an ABC store. We the People, ammiright?”

The final notable point of criticism against this significant alteration to Grounds is how it will affect travel times for students, especially by vehicle. With existing concerns about Charlottesville's driveability given the variety of construction projects in the city, students, faculty and townies alike expressed outrage regarding how this project will contribute.

When asked for potential solutions to this inevitable obstacle, Beardsley was concise.

“Drive a VEO!” Beardsley said.

CLARE PELLI is the Humor Editor for *The Cavalier Daily*. She can be reached at humor@cavalierdaily.com.



GOOGLE GEMINI



FREE FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS