DOUBLING DOWN AMID COVID-19
STUDENT RETURN FollowS RECORD CASES
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UVA Parents Fund
Investigation finds ‘poor judgment’ in November Corner incident, UPD officer will return to work after weeks-long training

A University Police Department internal investigation found “poor judgment” by an officer in a November incident on the Corner that, according to Defund Charlottesville Police, resulted in a local man seeking medical attention at U.Va. Health for three broken ribs. The officer involved was placed on administrative leave and is required to undergo several weeks of training then will return to the job.

UPD’s Office of Professional Standards conducted an internal review along with the University’s Office for Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights after the Charlottesville Commonwealth’s Attorney Joe Platainar determined that there was no criminal conduct related to the actions of the officers who responded to this incident.

I have directed that the involved officer, who remained on administrative leave while the investigations were underway, be assigned to an experienced Field Training Officer for the next several weeks,” Chief of Police Tim Longo wrote in a statement Monday. “A training plan has been prescribed that will focus on the principles of Fair and Impartial Policing, effective communication strategies and de-escalation.”

Since the November incident, several officers have undergone virtual training on constitutional policing through Montpelier’s Center for the Constitution.

UVa. Health’s COVID–19 vaccination team grows to 600 members

In order to accelerate the distribution of vaccines to the community, UVa. Health has relied on its 600-member vaccination volunteer team — made up of nurses, physicians, EMTs, nurse practitioners, faculty in the Schools of Nursing and Medicine and others who vaccinate within their scope of practice. All members of the vaccination team are paid volunteers and members of the UVa. Hospital network, and the team has grown in size substantially since vaccinations at U.Va. Health began Dec. 15.

When vaccinations first started, the team was operating out of an eight-seat clinic with eight vaccinators working — a size that allowed roughly 200 vaccinations a day. Today, the team operates two clinics that allow a total of 20 vaccinators to give upwards of 1,300 vaccinations a day.

April Howell, the heart and vascular ambulatory director for U.Va. Health and a member of the vaccination team, said that administering vaccines to members of the community is an honor.

“When we have some patients over 75, and they sit down to get a vaccine and they just start crying because now they have hope and they have this overwhelming sense of relief,” Howell said. “It is such a good feeling.”

Carole Ballew, fellow vaccination team member and nurse practitioner for cardiac transplant, said she feels like helping to vaccinate the community is part of her patriotic duty.

“I feel like I’m contributing in a positive manner as a citizen — I feel warm and fuzzy,” Ballew said. “I think that’s the general consensus that I’ve gotten from people, and so it’s a good feeling to be doing something that you know is going to be worthwhile in the end.”

UVa. reports 1,929 total positive cases, of which 1,412 are students

Since Aug. 17, the University’s COVID tracker has reported 1,929 positive cases of coronavirus in the University community, which includes faculty, staff, students and contracted employees. University students make up 1,412 of the total positive cases. Sept. 17 marked the highest number of daily reported cases since Aug. 17, recording 59 positive cases in the University community. These numbers are only reflective of students who have tested positive through the Student Health & Wellness or the UVa. Health Clinic. The University COVID tracker dashboard does not include the number of positive student cases that may have been detected with pre-arrival testing. The dashboard also reports 2 percent of the student quarantine rooms to be currently occupied while no student isolation rooms are occupied. These numbers include students who are in post-travel quarantine.

To our readers:

As we step into another sur- real semester, I’m honored to be sharing the 132nd term of The Cavalier Daily’s first print issue with you. In the following pages, you’ll find stories about attitudes returning to Grounds, hope for vaccines stifled by systemic inequities and students’ thoughts on living and learning through times defined by predictable sentiments of “unprecedented”-ness. In short — 80 percent of students told The Cavalier Daily that they felt comfortable returning to Grounds for the spring, but just over half said they obeyed proper quarantine protocol upon their return last semester. Growing COVID fatigue and vaccine optimism contrast the reality that, in the words of University leaders, “our margin for error is narrower than the fall.”

To fellow students, while we’ve been on a prolonged break and are eager to return to Char- lottesville, our decisions and behavior impact those around us — those outside of your “UVa. bubble,” as our Editorial Board writes. I hope this collection of hard work from our staff captures the continuous efforts navigating this pandemic and the progress to come. I’m grateful to everyone who has trusted us with their stories and to our dedicated team of volunteer writers, designers, photographers, ad reps and edi- tors who are committed to serv- ing the community through crea- tive storytelling.

As the year goes on, we’d ap- preciate your ideas, input and feedback. Please feel welcome to reach out via email, social media or on our website. And if you’d like to support the work of in- dependent student journalists, consider making a tax deductible donation to The Cavalier Daily.

With gratitude,

Jenn Brice
editor@cavalierdaily.com
In an effort to manage increasing COVID-19 hospitalizations, U.Va. Health introduced a new policy mandating that all registered nurses, certified nursing assistants and patient care technicians in inpatient units pick up an additional 12-hour red shift—one that has a high need for additional staffing—every three weeks. The policy went into effect Jan. 10.

U.Va. Health saw a surge in hospitalizations following Thanksgiving break, and the number is anticipated to continue rising over the course of the next six weeks. As of Tuesday, there were 53 hospitalized COVID-19 patients at U.Va. Health. There were 10 new COVID-19 patients admitted to U.Va. Health on Tuesday. On Jan. 20, 16 new COVID-19 patients were admitted to U.Va. Health, the highest number of new admissions in a single day since the University’s COVID-19 tracker began reporting statistics on Aug. 17. The current seven-day moving average is 8.43 hospitalizations, compared with a seven-day average of 5 hospitalizations in August.

According to the CDC’s ensemble hospitalizations forecast based on data from 13 modeling groups, COVID-19 hospitalizations in Virginia are expected to increase in the weeks leading up to Feb. 15. Nationally, the number of new COVID-19 hospital admissions predicted to be reported on Feb. 15 ranges from 9,300 to 21,000.

To protect the health of patients and hospital workers amidst increasing COVID-19 hospitalizations, U.Va. Health barred visitors beginning Jan. 15. Special exceptions can be made for specific patients such as pediatric patients, patients with disabilities and patients at the end of their lives. However, visitors can not have COVID-19 or symptoms of any other infectious diseases and are screened prior to entering the hospital. These visitation restrictions are similar to those implemented in March 2020 when the pandemic was in its early stages.

The hospital previously had to turn away some patients, referring them to other hospitals, due to many staff members being re-allocated to COVID-19 patients. According to Eric Swensen, U.Va. Health Public Information Officer, the hospital continues to care for all patients coming to the Emergency Department and accepts transfers from other hospitals as beds become available.

“We continue to make these adjustments on a daily basis as our COVID care needs change rapidly,” Swensen said.

Previously, many staff members had already voluntarily picked up extra shifts for incentive pay, but further projected increases in hospitalizations have led to an additional need for support. During these shifts, registered nurses will receive an additional $20 per hour, while certified nurses and patient care technicians will each receive an additional $10 per hour.

For staff members who are unable to pick up extra shifts, other staff members can fulfill this requirement in their place once they have completed their own requirement. Staff members who have previously picked up incentive shifts are not required to pick up more.

U.Va. Health CEO Wendy Horton and Chief Nursing Officer Mary Dixon are both hopeful that the expectation can be removed around six to eight weeks after the pandemic was in its early stages. Special exceptions, U.Va. Health barred visitors beginning Jan. 13. Special exceptions can be made for specific patients such as pediatric patients, patients with disabilities and patients at the end of their lives.

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With a majority of students returning to Grounds this week for the start of spring classes amid the ongoing pandemic, The Cavalier Daily surveyed undergraduate students on what they hope the upcoming semester will entail.

Despite half of all respondents saying having more in-person classes is important to them while around 47 percent of respondents are satisfied with the University’s current hybrid model of instruction with classes conducted through a mix of in-person and online learning. Nearly 86 percent of respondents indicated that their mental well-being was negatively impacted during the past fall semester, and about 12 percent of respondents said they do not feel safe returning to Charlottesville this spring.

The survey, which ran from Dec. 14 to Dec. 26, garnered 1,930 anonymous responses from undergraduate students in the Class of 2021 through the Class of 2024. Of all respondents, roughly 82 percent lived in the Charlottesville area last fall.

**Students’ safety concerns about spring**

With 136 active cases of COVID-19 already in the University community, students have mixed feelings about returning to Grounds this week. Across Virginia, the number of coronavirus cases continues to increase at record levels, with more than 6,000 cases per day on average during the third week of January, placing Virginia in the top 10 nationally for cases per capita.

While the majority of survey respondents feel safe about living in the Charlottesville area this spring, around 35 percent of respondents “strongly disagree” with this sentiment. An additional 8 percent disagree or somewhat disagree.

Many respondents cited the recent spike in cases in the University community as a reason for feeling unsafe while others believe students are becoming tired of following health and safety restrictions and may ignore the University’s implemented gathering policies as a result.

“I’m concerned that the pressure cooker that everyone has been in for the past 10-11 months is going to explode,” second-year Engineering student Lauren Askew said. “Everyone is tired of being stuck at home or in dorms and apartments. Everyone is tired of living through unprecedented times. It’s hard to be a perfectly responsible citizen for 7,000+ hours — and that’s what we’ve been told to do.”

The University has implemented a couple of new policies for the spring semester, including weekly mandatory prevalence testing for all students living in the Charlottesville area and stricter limitations on gatherings. No more than six students will be able to gather in groups between Jan. 19 and Feb. 14, and those who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

Students must also comply with Gov. Ralph Northam’s executive order requiring individuals to stay at home between midnight and 5 a.m. unless for necessary travel. The statewide policy — which expires Jan. 31 but could be extended if deemed necessary to curb the spread of the virus — also requires bars and restaurants to close at midnight and bans on-site alcohol sales after 10 p.m.

**Last fall, Dean of Students Allen Groves told The Cavalier Daily that there was a “slippage” in adherence to the University’s 10-person gathering limit towards the end of the semester, though he had a generally positive impression of student compliance with public health guidelines. There were over 1,900 positive COVID-19 cases in the University community last semester, none of which were linked to in-person instruction, according to University administrators.**

Caitlin Cimons, who graduated from the School of Education in December, believes that the upcoming semester could present more challenges than the last, especially in how the University enforces its gathering policies.

“I’m more concerned about the spring semester than the fall semester because once the weather starts to get warm, I think we’re going to see a lot of people going out more — wineries, outdoor bars on the Corner, Mad Bowl, etc.,” Cimons said. “Based on how students spent their time in Charlottesville last spring semester once classes were moved online, I really don’t see much changing, especially since students are tired of dealing with the pandemic and fourth years [are] itching to spend their last moments in Charlottesville with their friends.”

Several students interviewed by The Cavalier Daily said they saw pictures of their peers on social media gathering at bars and Halloween parties last semester without masks and in small spaces — adding to the concern that some students are not taking the pandemic seriously. Others expressed concern about mask compliance in dorms and student spaces.

“What concerns me most continues to be the reluctance toward mask-wearing. I saw in the first-year dorms at unsanctioned gatherings,” first-year College student Grant GianGrasso said. “Even if people unfortunately choose to break with distancing guidelines, I’d hope that they can do the bare minimum and cover their faces. And I’ll admit that UVa. hasn’t done a stellar job enforcing their policies, but rather depends on the goodwill of the majority to stop the spread.”

Per University policy, faculty, students and staff can report non-compliance with the University’s health and safety protocols on the Return to Grounds website, while community members can report apparent violations using the Community Concerns Reporting Portal. Nearly all reports of noncompliance are referred to the University Judicatory Committee, which imposes sanctions ranging from essays to interim suspensions.

**Mental health challenges**

Nearly 45 percent of survey respondents “strongly agreed” that their mental well-being was negatively impacted by the pandemic last fall. An additional 43 percent agreed or somewhat agreed to this sentiment while around 7 percent disagreed in some form and 3 percent are neutral.

First-year College student Katherine Larson cited the added stress of transitioning to college with limited opportunities for social interaction as a source of mental health challenges.

“I struggled with mental health in the fall, particularly toward the beginning of the semester as I was still in the beginning stages of transitioning to a new social circle, and dealing with the stress of the pandemic,” Larson said.

She found events like the Lighting of the Lawn scavenger hunt as helpful ways to navigate Grounds as a new student because it encouraged her to leave her dorm room and engage in a fun bonding activity with friends.

Several students who were interviewed agreed that social activities can help relieve the stress and burnout associated with schoolwork amid the pandemic.

Fourth-year College student Meaghan Malapaka suggested that professors could incorporate more small group activities into lessons plans or the University could sponsor more virtual activities for students to alleviate feelings of loneliness or isolation.
“Something about leaving your house and breaking up the monotony of Zoom call after Zoom call as well seeing people’s faces — even if it’s behind a mask — definitely seems to help mentally,” third-year Engineering student Kalman Butterbaugh said.

Brille Dorson, a fourth-year College student, suggested that the University could even provide students with free pizza or gift cards on random days throughout the semester.

“Programming has the ability to help people still feel connected to and cared by a community,” Dorson said. “I feel like my connection to the overall University has faded throughout this year.”

Others called on the University to lower the financial burden of tuition, encourage professors to not assign work over scheduled breaks and increase the accessibility and availability of Counseling and Psychological Services.

Instead of having a traditional weekend spring break, the University will give students four days off throughout the spring semester — called “break days” — intended to allow students to rest and minimize travel to and from Charlottesville. The break days are scheduled for Feb. 17, March 9, March 29 and April 15 — all weekdays.

Over 62 percent of survey respondents believe that these four break days off are an inadequate substitute for spring break.

“I know that spring semesters are shorter than fall semesters in any given year, but to have an even shorter semester this year scares me a bit,” first-year Architecture student Everett Vereen.

“I’ve barely adjusted to being in college — and in completely wild circumstances, too. I don’t see the random days off helping alleviate stress that much ‘cause I’m just going to procrastinate another day in most cases.”

Having a ‘college experience’

When the University reopened last fall, it did it in part to allow students to not miss out on the “college experience” despite the unique circumstances of the pandemic. According to the survey, over 68 percent of respondents did not feel they received this experience, with around 29 percent strongly disagreeing with this sentiment.

“My concerns are the learning environment,” third-year McIntire student Everett Ward said. “Last semester I lived in the Charlottesville community but did not feel as though I was included in the UVa. community. I felt my learning experience was significantly harmed because of the virtual learning environment when I was told classes were most likely to be in person. I felt deceived and as though I paid the same amount in tuition for a much worse experience.”

Approximately 27 percent of classes offered an in-person component last semester.

Cimons added that online classes do not get easier the longer students do it. Despite having sufficient resources to learn effectively, Cimons said she was a lot less likely to meet with professors during office hours — a key component of the college experience — because of the constant virtual environment.

“I couldn’t just walk into a professor’s office when I had free time on Grounds,” Cimons said. “I was sitting in my bedroom for hours straight, which affected my focus, and the learning experience is a lot more challenging online.”

Additionally, over 79 percent of survey respondents agreed, strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that contracting COVID-19 or fear of contracting the virus negatively impacted their ability to complete schoolwork during the fall semester. Around 53 percent of respondents said they had a friend or multiple friends test positive for COVID-19.

Yet, the majority of respondents who lived in Charlottesville last semester — around 90 percent — still felt happy about their decision to return, with roughly 42 percent strongly agreeing with this sentiment. Of the respondents who stayed home last semester, almost 83 percent agreed in some form that they were happy with their decision, though 34 percent expressed being unable to learn effectively from home.

Compliance with University policies

Around 72 percent of survey respondents agreed, strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that the University should keep the same COVID-19 policies and restrictions from the fall semester in place for the spring. Majority of respondents — 49.5 percent — also reported that the University’s policies were “just right.”

“I do feel safe returning to Grounds this month because of the great work UVa. has done in implementing helpful precautions, such as regular testing for students, wastewater testing in dorms and offering quarantine/isolation for students who may have been exposed to the virus or who have symptoms,” Larson said. “I was also on Grounds in the fall, and although I was still anxious about the virus, it was very reassuring to see all that UVa. was doing to stop the spread.”

However, the majority of respondents — roughly 76 percent — said they gathered in groups of five or more in the fall, with 7 percent doing so everyday, despite the University’s temporary ban on gatherings of more than five people. Over 45 percent of respondents said they gathered in groups of 10 or more and around 16 percent said they gathered in groups of 20 or more. Additionally, 56 percent of respondents said they always made an effort to avoid large crowds, 32 percent said they did so most of the time, 10 percent said sometimes and 2 percent said they never made an effort to avoid large crowds.

About 70 percent of respondents indicated that they always wore a mask outside their home while nearly 27 percent said they did so most of the time. 3 percent said sometimes and 0.5 percent said they never wore a mask.

Just over 50 percent of respondents said they self-quarantined when they arrived to Charlottesville, which was required in the fall and will be once again in the spring. Of those respondents who were possibly exposed to someone with COVID-19, around 66 percent said they always quarantined for the CDC-recommended time frame of 14 days, while 13 percent said they did so most of the time, 7 percent said sometimes and around 14 percent said they never quarantined for 14 days after a potential exposure.

The majority of respondents also said it was easy to receive a COVID-19 test — with around 30 percent strongly agreeing with this sentiment, 32 percent agreeing and 6 percent somewhat agreeing.

Students who lived on Grounds housing were supposed to be tested on a regular basis, or least once every nine days by either mid-nasal swabs or saliva screenings. Additional students living in the Charlottesville area were also contacted at random for prevalence testing via saliva screenings throughout the semester. Around 10 percent of survey respondents said they were never selected for prevalence testing while 42 percent were selected once and over 67 percent were selected more than once.

Survey respondents had mixed reviews on the University’s Hoos Health Check app, with around 52 percent indicating that the app was not useful. Students were asked to self-report their symptoms daily on the app — although reporting was never tracked or required. Additionally, around 60 percent of respondents felt the University’s COVID tracker was a useful resource.

Spring plans and lingering questions

Roughly 29 percent of the respondents who did not live in the Charlottesville area last fall are now planning to return to the spring, though the majority — 57 percent — who remained home are still planning to do so this semester. Of those who spent the fall semester in Charlottesville, roughly 89 percent are planning to stay in the area while over 8 percent are not and 2 percent are unsure.

With the COVID-19 vaccine rollout underway across the nation and in the University community, many students are feeling hopeful and reassured about their safety. The University has not yet announced plans for when or how students and faculty will receive the vaccine.

“I think as more of the community gets vaccinated, especially those who are immunocompromised, things will start to look up,” third-year College student Matt Carwell said. “One of my personal concerns is UVa’s ability to vaccinate its students... Obviously those who are more vulnerable to COVID should and will get it first, but I do wonder how UVa will tackle the logistics of vaccinating students down the road.”

DATA COMPILED BY NIK POPLI

GRAPHS BY MARTHA WILDING
Classes connect with South African community groups

J-term students worked in collaboration with the Movement for Change and Social Justice and The Black Power Station

Haley Stocks and Sally Stouffer | Features Writers

Although January term courses — which often have a study-abroad component — were online this year due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, students were still able to interact with the global community. Particularly, students were able to take two new classes which collaborated virtually with community-based organizations in South Africa. Students in the course Community Organizing and Public Health in South Africa joined forces with the Movement for Change and Social Justice in South Africa, and students worked with The Black Power Station while taking Arts Activism, Liberated Spaces and Creative Economies at The Black Power Station.

MCSJ is run by and for Black South Africans to tackle issues of race, class and gender injustices in the poverty-stricken, peri-urban town of Gugulethu, South Africa. MCSJ was founded in 2016 in South Africa and aims to connect local organizations to one another and encourage citizens to take an active role in their community. The course allowed students to interact with members of MCSJ and learn more about how to create sustainable relationships with both MCSJ and organizations similar to it.

Assoc. Public Health Prof. Chris Colvin has been fostering a relationship with MCSJ cofounder Mandla Majola for many years and is one of the people who organized the course Community Organizing and Public Health in South Africa.

"Much of the teaching is actually done by our partners in South Africa," Colvin said in an email to The Cavalier Daily. "They connect with the class every day, teach language, host discussion sessions, teach the students about South African history and politics and work with them to develop projects that will be both useful for MCSJ and the communities it works with, as well as for the students participating in the program."

Students in this course had the opportunity to contribute to MCSJ's work in the areas of health information, policy, and community organizing. Under the instruction of Global Development Studies Director David Edmunds, students were able to contribute through research, newsletter submissions and creating networking plans. The goal of the networking plans was to set up a "Friends of MCSJ" group of students, academics, activists and others who had visited or engaged with MCSJ in some way and wanted to maintain the connection.

In Edmunds' class, students had the opportunity to explore non-Western public health measures.

Fourth-year College student Andrea Henriques' group explored the concept of friendship benches, which originates from Zimbabwe. Acknowledging the histories of slavery and oppression in both countries allowed students to come together and discuss their insights collectively.

"The first week of the class we did a lot of conversation about South African history and ... a lot of students were able to have an opportunity to talk about how we still see legacies of slavery, genocide and ... it's been a space for a lot of shared learning," Lagbo said. "I really like the way one of the group members said 'There's no fix to this, there's no solution if you're not getting input as a community when attempting to find solutions to problems.'"

"I always find it really valuable to link that kind of conceptual and theoretical work we do here at the University with people's everyday practice outside the University and inside, too," Edmunds said.

Students like third-year Batten student Valencia Lagbo found that taking this class gave them a new perspective on similarities between the United States and South Africa and some of these other topics in the United States," Lagbo said. "So it's been a lot of listening, interacting and trying to find relationships and ... it's been a space for a lot of growth for a lot of people."

The course also highlighted how it is important for organizations like nonprofits to consult with the local community when attempting to find solutions to problems.

"I really like the way one of the group members said 'There's no fix to this, there's no solution if you're not getting input as a community when attempting to find solutions to problems.'"

The J-term course Arts Activism, Liberated Spaces and Creative Economies at The Black Power Station was taught by Asst. Music Prof. Noel Lobley and hip-hop artist and activist Xolile "X" Madinda, the visionary behind The Black Power Station.

"The Black Power Station is such a cool, world-class space," Lobley said. "It's a liberated space where people are invited to be themselves. They don't have to explain themselves. It's protected space — it's community-protected. Students that have come back from Makhanda loved it. I think it's fair to say it's changed their lives. It certainly changed my life 20 some years ago."

In the past, students have been able to travel to South Africa to be involved with the creation and expansion of The Black Power Station and help with the National Arts Festival — the biggest arts festival in Africa. Some students have worked on festival content, and some have even performed poetry or DJ-ed. This J-term, students focused on raising funds for a new building for The Black Power Station and made a series of creative works that will likely be featured on the soon-to-be-launched website.

"We looked for less Western approaches, and it showed us when you're community organizing you have to be looking everywhere — not just at Western ideas," Henriquez said. "We never gave them an idea without getting their input."

Students in these J-term classes had the opportunity to connect globally with organizations, learn from new perspectives and broaden their view of the world. These classes taught students about the importance of establishing and maintaining respectful, mutually affirming relationships, which are skills students can continue to use beyond the classroom.

"Students in our J-term class proved admirably responsive to interacting with the creative and conversational energies shared and delivered by The Black Power Station," Lobley said in an email to The Cavalier Daily. "The formatting of respectful and trusting relationships with the team at The Black Power Station in Makhanda enabled students to think through difficult and pressing issues on race, gender equity, African philosophies of ubuntu (humanity), lessons which will stay with us all and can be deployed in multiple ongoing real-world realities in each of our interconnected lives."
Healthy and hearty recipes to beat your winter funk
How to eat every color of the rainbow in one sitting

Sadie Goodman | Food Columnist

For me, winter break is all about the food. I love experimenting with new recipes and trying to find ways to incorporate all the healthy fruits and vegetables that my diet so sorely lacks during the school year. I came up with two new recipes over this long winter break that are both filling and delicious.

I don't usually prepare these two dishes together, but I've been making them both pretty regularly this winter season. A few of my roommates have pushed me to explore more plant-based and vegan options for dinner, which I greatly appreciate. I've noticed that integrating a variety of vegetables into my daily meals helps me look and feel my best. I hope you try your hand at these healthy and delicious vegetable dishes.

**SPRING ROLLS**

For an appetizer, we have some crunchy rainbow spring rolls. Spring rolls are one of my favorite appetizers. Whenever I choose Thai or Vietnamese food I always gravitate towards their lightness and freshness.

*Prep time: 10 minutes*

**Ingredients:**
1. purple cabbage
2. 3-4 Persian cucumbers
3. large carrot
4. mango
5. avocado
6. 2 limes
7. 1 red or yellow bell pepper
8. 1 bunch Thai basil
9. package of rice paper

**Instructions:**
1. Prepare all vegetables by washing thoroughly and drying.
2. Dice all vegetables into thin matchsticks and set aside on a plate or bowl.
3. Fill a shallow bowl or plate with lukewarm water.
4. Dip the rice paper into the water and wet briefly for about two seconds.
5. Remove rice paper from the water and place on a cutting board.
6. Assemble the vegetables near the top of the rice paper, be careful not to overstuff the roll.
7. Fold down the top of the rice paper over the vegetables and proceed to fold the sides over, rolling from the top.
8. Set aside the spring rolls and cover with a lid or saran wrap if you plan to leave them out before eating.

While these spring rolls are great on their own or dipped in a little soy sauce, I love pairing them with this creamy peanut sauce. The sauce makes the rolls a little more filling and packs a punch with its flavor. This sauce recipe is easy to customize for your needs — you can add sriracha to make it a little spicier, leave out the honey or swap almond butter if you don't like peanuts.

*Prep time: 5 minutes*

**Ingredients:**
1/4 cup peanut butter — I use smooth, but crunchy also works
2 teaspoons soy sauce
1/2 lime, juiced
1 teaspoon honey
1 teaspoon fish sauce

**Instructions:**
1. Combine all of the ingredients in a saucepan over medium-low heat.
2. Mix thoroughly to combine and let cook for around five minutes, uncovered.
3. The sauce should thicken up a little bit, but if it gets too thick, add a splash of water and mix well.
4. Give it a taste and remove from heat — it's ready to serve!

**BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP**

One of my favorite recipes to eat in the winter is butternut squash soup. This soup is as delicious as it is easy to make. Preparing soups can be intimidating, but fresh soups are always so much better than canned. This soup is a bright and gingery take on a childhood favorite. I love to serve it with a bit of cracked pepper right on top and a slice of crusty bread.

This soup also keeps well in the fridge, so I can have lunch for days for a great price. My trip to the grocery store for ingredients rang up right around $11, so not only is this soup full of essential nutrients, but it's super affordable as well.

*Prep time: 30 minutes*

**Ingredients:**
1. Prepare the squash by dicing it into one-inch pieces and remove the skin. This is the most time-consuming part of the recipe, but I promise it's worth it.
2. Wash and dice the apple into one-inch pieces, leaving the skin on.
3. Heat one tablespoon of olive oil in a large soup pot over medium heat. Add a handful of sage, a few shakes of red pepper flakes, the diced shallot and two inches of fresh ginger. I like to prepare my ginger by peeling the root with a spoon and cutting it into rough slices.
4. Cook the shallot, ginger, sage and red pepper flakes for two to three minutes or until the shallot is translucent and stops stinging your eyes.
5. Add another tablespoon of olive oil to the pot and add the butternut squash and apple. Cook uncovered for 10 minutes, mixing often.
6. Add one tablespoon of paprika, two tablespoons of salt and as much pepper as your heart desires.
7. Add half a cup of vegetable stock and cover for five minutes or until the squash is fork-tender.
8. Add the rest of the stock and remove the pot from the heat.
9. Add half the mixture to a blender and blend until smooth. Pour this into a new bowl and set aside.
10. Add the other half of the mixture to the blender and blend. Pour the blended soup back into the original pot and return to low heat.
11. Mix the can of coconut milk into the soup until smooth, and serve with another crack of pepper.
There is a rude awakening when casual conversations and doctor’s office forms probe me with this harmless, fleeting question — “How old are you?” It may seem almost premature to agonize over such a question at the moment — one that will certainly be grieved and avoided with ill-fated denial at a much later age. Coming to terms with the fact that I’ve reached this milestone, I crick out and fumble with this number each time. A residual thought accompanies this inconsequential idea: Oh God, I’m 20. This little horror of mine stays, dissipates and returns when asked again.

The Roaring’ 20s, the legal drinking age and Taylor Swift’s “22” — this unlikely trio personally captures the essence of the number 20, signifying liberating prosperity, dalliances and wild-spiritedness. Steering our truly found independence, as young twenty-somethings shelve our mini-adult accomplishments of driver’s license attainment and high school graduations to explore ever-broadening horizons. The twenties are supposedly the peak golden era of human life. Growing into this glorified number, however, must be approached with skepticism before blindly bounding in. What we consider to be golden may be revealed to have been gilded all along.

Despite clouding our minds with unserving cynicism, it is best that we give our twenties the benefit of the doubt. Answering the philosophical meaning in life — through a combination of shortcomings and accomplishments — is the sole purpose of these irradiated, sought-after years. We are the protagonists assembled through our social media accounts and relationships cannot discount the identities that cannot be changed as easily — particularly gender and ethnicity. Whatever barriers of innocence and authoritative figures. We may have to wearily return to our homes at night with our state of humanness battered and bruised.

For women, it’s not a matter of if they will be criticized, but the reasons why they will be criticized — will we be condemned for being a woman who has too much power or for falling short of becoming an “ideal” one? Will we continue to see horrific acts of crime toward minority groups, or will we finally be able to celebrate over the creation of a just and equitable society? Is the latter just a pipe dream?

These musings knot themselves into a universal feeling that I fear will come with aging — the indifference we have in the world we inhabit and the more pronounced roles we play in it, whether they be financial or identity-related. Mellowness is both a blessing and a curse, a sign of emotional growth, as we are less subject to our once-adolescent, hormonal outbursts. It could be a sign of our newfound wisdom or robustness associated with full-fledged adulthood.

Despite increasing risk and uncertainty, come with burgeoning choices. Investments and decisions must be made through savings, loans, retirement funds and stock portfolios amidst a fluctuating job market. A want for perpetual success and self-advancement will firmly take root and result in a burning desire for a stable economy — one untrouched by Wall Street experimentation and pandemics. However, recent crises such as the Great Recession and COVID-19 have leached us otherwise, revealing a fragile economy whose strings are being pulled by big banks and conglomerates. Finances could be the downfall of our truly found independence, us monolingual outbursts. It could be a sign of emotional growth, as we are less subject to our once-adolescent, hormonally charged reality that has the potential to trample our affinity for change and novelty. I fear that we may have to make moral compromises or even grow immune to the way our actions indirectly impact those around us. We the young people, the unwavering voice for a better humanity, will fall victim to mundanity — all muffled and drowned out.

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Unfortunately, it is an undeniable fact that our lives will be filled with mundanities. This long era where our days will seem predetermined and staged is a predictable fate that we will ironically deem beyond our control. Maturity brings a dimension of harsh, tradition-centered reality that has the potential to trample our affinity for change and novelty. I fear that we may have to make moral compromises or even grow immune to the way our actions indirectly impact those around us. We the young people, the unwavering voice for a better humanity, will fall victim to mundanity — all muffled and drowned out.

Despite clouding our minds with unserving cynicism, it is best that we give our twenties the benefit of the doubt. Answering the philosophical meaning in life — through a combination of shortcomings and accomplishments — is the sole purpose of these irradiated, sought-after years. We are the protagonists of our own coming-of-age novel — our choices and chance encounters will never result in us taking a step backwards, but always forwards. So long as we weather through our individualized set of aforementioned obstacles will we be able to emerge truly golden.

Our twenties can be represented as a tug-of-war between boozed, indulgent freedom and personal growth. We are simultaneously wandering, seeking what’s best for ourselves and others, writing last-minute papers, scouring the internet and being a bit fearful for our futures. Perhaps Taylor Swift was right — we are happy, free, confused and lonely at the same time and in the best way.
Top 10 ways to make the most of another online semester

We all think we’ve got this virtual learning thing down pat, but here are a few reminders to liven up another semester at Zoom University

Kaitlyn Hilliard | Top to Writer

1. Make it a priority to care for yourself

I think we all know why this is at the top of the list. It goes without saying that if you do not care for yourself first, then the rest of these things don’t truly matter. Recognize what you need to feel healthy, safe and fulfilled — and start climbing your mountain this semester. This is not intended to be a challenge or a series of levels that you have to complete to “win.” Instead, this tool of self-care — however purposeless it seems — is ready for you to use because you truly deserve it.

2. Figure out your goals before the semester begins

We all fall into the trap of saying, “I have a gazillion things I want to do this semester,” but we forget to write them down. After a few weeks, it’ll dawn on you that you forgot to start working towards any of those goals. Make a list of goals for the semester now — like, before the semester actually begins. This way, you can orient yourself and start the semester prepared and focused — and you won’t suddenly wake up in April and realize that you still don’t know how to knit a scarf and you haven’t spoken in any of your classes.

3. Recognize that meeting new people is still possible

If you chuckled when you read this one, I don’t blame you. We’re in the middle of a pandemic, and the opportunities for meeting new people are few and far between. However, I want you to remember what an incredible person you are and to consider all of the people that would be blessed to know you. If you want a romantic connection, dating apps are an option — and The Cavalier Daily’s Love Connection platform is also available to match you with other students! Also, don’t be shy in class — chat with people if you like their shirt that would be #blessed to know you. If you want a romantic connection, dating apps are an option — and The Cavalier Daily’s Love Connection platform is also available to match you with other students! Also, don’t be shy in class — chat with people if you like their shirt.

4. Don’t write off new opportunities

Online classes can’t hold you back from everything — there are still plenty of things waiting for you beyond your Zoom classroom. These “new opportunities” range from joining a new club, working a part-time job, getting an internship or even something simple like finding a new hobby. This pandemic has already taken much from us, so why let it take away your ability to branch out? Use this upcoming semester to safely find new activities that spice up your life and bring you purpose.

5. Get creative

If you are anything like me, I find this extremely difficult. I have never been particularly good at anything artistic, and I can’t knit to save my life. Once, I even tried to write a novel, but I retired after one sentence. But something I want to remember this semester — and I encourage you all to do with me — is that creativity does not require perfection or brilliance. Creativity includes making decorations for your room, trying new recipes, styling your hair in a different way or even creating a new personal style. Since we are all still rather isolated, now is the perfect time to express this creativity in your life and find new things that work for you.

6. Make use of the University’s online resources

If you’re looking to get more involved this semester, keep in mind that the University offers virtual activities for students every semester. Also, if you are looking for something a little more relaxing and passive to fill your time, the UVA Library offers an online streaming service for students with tons of feature films, documentaries and more. Not to mention the University still offers incredible online resources for job searches, graduate schools and next steps for students that are moving on.

7. Engage in your classes

If you’ve found that past online semesters haven’t been fulfilling, I encourage you to actively participate and consider your course material this semester. I know — you think I’m the worst person alive for suggesting this, and perhaps you’re right. But I think there is something to be said about taking on this challenge to be present — both physically and mentally — in your classes this semester. You may discover that your classes are actually fulfilling, your professors are real, interesting people and online classes don’t all have to be terrible.

8. Get familiar with your surroundings

If you find yourself in Charlottesville this semester, a fun way to bring newness into your life could be exploring Grounds or the Charlottesville area. It may be a little chilly at the beginning of the semester — however, I encourage you to simply put on a coat and take a walk to see the things that your University and the City of Charlottesville have to offer. Keep in mind that you need to be safe and wear a mask, but that is a small price to pay for getting out in the open and stretching your legs. Also, your explorations may bring you to new local shops and restaurants, and who doesn’t love supporting local businesses?

9. Document your semester

Similar to channeling your inner creativity, documenting your semester is a nice way to find a new hobby, while simultaneously keeping track of your adventures throughout the spring. Your documentation can take many forms. Perhaps, you could start journaling — whether it is with a gratitude journal or a one-line-a-day journal. Also, this could be in the form of a blog, vlog or photography collection — honestly, the options are limitless. In doing this, you may find yourself more dedicated to finding ways to fill your time. I mean, if you want your YouTube career to take off, you’re going to have to do more than staring out your window and waiting for the mailman to arrive.

10. Be flexible

If the human race has learned anything over the past year or so, it’s that we need to be flexible. Whether that means being willing to change your schedule by adding or dropping classes or recognizing when you need to take breaks for your own well-being, taking steps next semester to adjust in healthy and necessary ways will be extremely beneficial. Nobody truly knows what this semester will bring, but keeping an open mind and staying on your toes is the best way to stay successful and happy. Also, this new attitude of flexibility may bring you to things you had never planned for yourself — and everybody loves a good surprise, more or less.
After a shaky start to the men’s basketball season and a humbling experience with No. 1 Gonzaga, the Cavaliers have hit their stride.

By William Smythe | Columnist

On Dec. 26, it looked like Virginia men’s basketball was not what the pundits said it would be prior to the season. Starting their 2020-21 campaign ranked No. 4 in the AP pre-season poll, fans and media members alike were effusive in their praise of the Cavaliers, but as a late Christmas present, No. 1 Gonzaga left a chunk of coal in Virginia’s stocking — defeating the defending national champions 98-75.

Fast-forward a month, and the Cavaliers have turned the corner in pursuit of a second consecutive national championship in men’s basketball. While losses to the Bulldogs and unranked San Francisco undermined the promise of a team still finding its identity, the Cavaliers have gone on a tear in ACC play, looking more like the ACC-leading team fans expected.

In traditional Virginia fashion, the grittiness and durability of the pack line defense has allowed the Cavaliers to return once again to an elite level of play. A combination of improved shooting, balanced offensive production and a stingy defense has given Virginia the upper hand over its past seven opponents in ACC play.

Furthermore, no one can question Coach Tony Bennett’s uncanny ability to salvage dominant teams out of harrowing defeats. The most recent loss to Gonzaga, much like the Cavaliers’ December 2019 flop at Purdue, has done the necessary deed of revealing gaping flaws in both the offensive and defensive units.

The 2013-14 Virginia team faced challenges similar to the problems the current roster faces. Having been throntled by unranked Tennessee 87-52, a national embarrassment for a team with a respectable record of 9-3, the Cavaliers shook off the rust and finished the rest of the regular season with 16 wins and only two losses.

The Gonzaga loss only exposed the 2020 Virginia team to the cruelty of the national spotlight and the difficulty of learning the pack line defense. The system particularly impacted the likes of newcomers freshman guard Reece Beekman, senior forward Sam Hauser and junior guard Trey Murphy III.

A Bennett-coached lineup does not typically give up a lot of points on an average night, let alone as many as 98. To lose in such an emphatic fashion strays ever so far from the norm of Virginia basketball, yet one must remember that the “Zags” — already the No. 1 squad in the nation — shot a ridiculous 59 percent from the three-point arc, feasting upon the main weakness of the interior-focused pack line.

The national embarrassment has, ironically, catapulted Virginia to the top of the ACC. To find out how Bennett has righted the ship, let’s examine the key pieces and adjustments the Cavaliers have made that have drastically altered the course of this season.

**An Improved Defense**

Gonzaga — led by All-American candidates freshman guard Jalen Suggs, sophomore forward Drew Timme and senior forward Corey Kispert — caused issues for the Cavaliers defense by continuously finding ways to avoid the entanglements of the pack line. Employing excellent continuity ball screens to free up shooters — mainly Kispert, who made nine out of 11 three-point attempts — the Bulldogs preyed upon the relatively inexperienced Virginia team from the outside yet also stretched the defense thin with advantageous one-on-one matchups inside.

Hauser and senior forward Jay Huff — who were left on an island because of Gonzaga’s threats on the wings — were unequipped to handle the crafty Timme, who finished the game with 29 points in only 26 minutes.

Granted, Virginia will likely not face another team so rich in talent and versatility. The lack of double teams in the frontcourt, struggles with hedging and recovering by forwards Huff and Hauser and inexpertise ultimately doomed Virginia against arguably one of the best teams of this decade. However, due to a lighter schedule and a bevy of adjustments, this defense has been restored to its usual level of play.

Thanks to the implementation of the “Most Important Guy,” the frontcourt player who hedges near the three-point line is able to receive off-ball help from a teammate — the MIG — two passes away. Therefore, the Cavaliers ensured that their defense would duly account for quick passes off of the hedge, since Huff and Hauser often struggled to recover completely against Gonzaga.

Against Clemson, five Cavaliers scored in double figures, marking one of the only occasions that a Bennett-coached team has done so. The lack of one true “go-to” player has opened the door for players such as senior guard Tomas Woldetensae and sophomore guard Casey Morsell to cash in on offense.

Woldetensae showed flashes of brilliance with a 14-point performance against Clemson — making four of six three-point attempts — while Morsell put on perhaps his most impressive offensive outburst since last year’s showdown against Arizona State — hitting nearly all of his shots and posting 13 points against Notre Dame.

No longer does junior point guard Kihei Clark have to worry about shouldering the burden all by himself. The emergence of Huff and Hauser has particularly allowed Clark to concern himself more with his ball-handling and court vision rather than carrying Virginia with his scoring. It also is apparent that the Cavaliers have improved greatly in the area of three-point shooting, especially in regards to last year’s porous offensive team.

Bennett can deploy Woldetensae and Murphy for three-point specialization, yet he can also count on Hauser and Huff for success in the mid-range. While the Georgia Tech game bordered on ugly for a considerable period of time, the Cavaliers inched themselves back via the formidable duo of Huff and Hauser — especially on a night when Clark struggled tremendously on the offensive side of the ball.

Expect more of a balanced approach to continue in ACC play as surprise contributors such as Murphy and Morsell grow more confident in their roles.

The Cavaliers continue their quest for a fourth ACC championship and second national title Saturday against Virginia Tech in Blacksburg. Tip-off at Cassell Coliseum is set for 6 p.m. and the game will be broadcast live on the ACC Network.

**A Balanced Offense**

Save the Cavaliers’ recent wins against Georgia Tech and Syracuse — in which Huff and Hauser combined for 82 of the team’s 145 total points — scoring has been distributed relatively evenly across the often seven-man lineup. Unlike past Virginia teams, this current roster can rely on its depth and versatility for scoring rather than only one or two players.

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REKULAPELLEI: Women’s lacrosse is headed to the top

After struggling in the past decade, a seasoned squad and a strong recruiting class could vault the Cavaliers back into the pinnacle of the sport

Akhil Rekulapelli | Sports Editor

When hearing lacrosse and Virginia in the same sentence, many Cavalier fans immediately turn their minds to the seven-time and defending national champion Virginia men’s lacrosse team. However, what some fail to recognize is the equally impressive resume of Virginia women’s lacrosse, holder of nine national championship appearances and three national championship wins. The women’s lacrosse squad has made the NCAA tournament 25 straight times under Coach Julie Myers, and in the mid-2000s was a force in the national lacrosse scene, competing in four national championships from 2003 to 2007.

Yet as of late, Virginia has relinquished its throne to the likes of rivals Maryland and North Carolina, in-state foe James Madison and ACC opponent Boston College. In sharp contrast to their half-decade of success, the Cavaliers haven’t reached the NCAA semifinals since 2014 and haven’t won an ACC tournament since 2008.

Nonetheless, after nearly six years of first- and second-round NCAA exits — and a underwhelming 2020 campaign — Virginia’s women’s lacrosse looks set for a resurgence in the coming seasons, combining a mature core with a stellar 2020 recruiting class.

Junior attacker Lillie Kloak is one of the key pieces of this mature core, having received quality playing time since arriving in Charlottesville. The New Jersey native has played in all of Virginia’s 26 games since 2019, scoring 45 goals and netting eight hat tricks, and looks to be an even more refined scorer come the 2021 season.

Kloak will line up with junior midfielder Annie Dyson, who was a 2018 Under Armour and U.S. Lacrosse All-American coming out of high school, where she led her team to a Virginia state championship. Dyson has struggled with injuries throughout her time at Virginia, tearing her ACL against William & Mary in her freshman season and missing the last three games of an abbreviated 2020 season due to injury. However, during her limited action, Dyson was a Swiss Army knife for the Cavaliers, tallying eight goals and seven assists across 10 starts, while also winning 18 ground balls. Overall, if Dyson stays healthy and Kloak continues to develop her shot, the duo is slated to be a potent one-two punch this season.

The Cavaliers also boast an improved defense with the addition of graduate transfer defender Meredith Chapman, who started in all of her four seasons at High Point. Chapman rewrote the record books during her time with the Panthers, holding the record for single-season and single-game caused turnovers and helping High Point advance to the second round of the NCAA tournament for the first time in its history. Joining Chapman in steadying the defense is senior goalkeeper Charlie Campbell, who has started 27 games across the past two seasons. In 2019 and 2020 Campbell ranked first and third, respectively, in the ACC in saves per game, and she will be a force to be reckoned with in the 2021 season.

However, the icing on the cake is the arrival of one of Virginia’s best recruiting classes in recent years, which will set up the program for years to come. After securing just one top-50 recruit in 2019, the Cavaliers bring in five top-35 recruits in the 2020 class — equalling North Carolina and Boston College combined.

Highlighting the class is Inside Lacrosse’s No. 12 overall recruit, freshman attacker Morgan Schwab, who was a 2019 US Lacrosse All-American. Schwab was effective in her praise of Schwab, citing her ability to both coordinate the offense and use her athleticism to dodge towards the goal. While Schwab will certainly take time to get her feet under her, the support of veterans Dyson and Kloak will make her transition to high-level Division I lacrosse smoother.

Another key recruit is freshman midfielder Mackenzie Hoeg, sister of Cavalier sophomore attacker Riley Hoeg and North Carolina senior attacker Katie Hoeg — who was Inside Lacrosse’s 2020 co-National Player of the Year. Beyond Hoeg’s remarkable pedigree is her ability to facilitate while also serving as a scoring threat like Dyson and her older sister Katie. Look for Hoeg to get minutes early and often and potentially join Katie in the women’s lacrosse record books by her senior season.

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Further shoring up the midfield is freshman Maggie Bostain, a two-time U.S. Lacrosse All-American known for her blinding speed. Bostain’s speed will help the Cavaliers with escaping the ride and setting up goals in transition for Schwab and Kloak, especially against elite defensive teams like Duke, who last seasonranked first in the ACC in turnovers caused and gave Virginia a bevy of offensive trouble in 2020.

Overall, Virginia women’s lacrosse looks on course for a bounce-back 2021 season, combining a strong veteran presence with a plethora of new offensive firepower courtesy of the 2020 recruiting class. Furthermore, while recent powerhouse like North Carolina and Boston College look poised for NCAA semifinal appearances — at the least — this season, the Cavaliers are ready to present some tough competition.

Virginia women’s lacrosse hasn’t won an NCAA title since 2004 and an ACC tournament championship since 2008 — streaks they hope to break in the coming years.

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LEAD EDITORIAL
COVID-19 spreads beyond the ‘U.Va. bubble’

The University’s existing precautions must be strengthened — and students must abide by the rules — to protect the surrounding community

As we approach the beginning of yet another uncertain semester, it is important that we all keep one important fact in mind — the COVID-19 pandemic is not over. While the prospect of newly introduced vaccines has left many hopeful that the end is near, the country is still seeing daily new cases consistently exceeding 100,000. The Blue Ridge Health District — which covers nearly 1.2 million people across Charlottesville, Albemarle County and other surrounding counties — reported a peak in new cases daily as recent as Jan. 4 of this year. The Centers for Disease Control predicts that a new strain of the virus — one with higher transmission rates — will become the dominant strain this year. The Centers for Disease Control has confirmed all in-person classes, they have upped testing requirements and further restricted gathering limits, which gives us hope that the administration is better prepared to address COVID-19 in the upcoming semester. Nevertheless, it is important that students returning to Grounds still recognize the dangerous impact their reckless behavior can have on the surrounding Charlottesville area. Students may feel rightfully frustrated about the lack of actual enforcement and guidance from the University on these policies. However, administrative enforcement should be the last resort when it comes to meeting COVID-19 restrictions — we must hold each other accountable in our personal circles first and foremost. Furthermore, we must acknowledge the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic — both nationwide and in the University and Charlottesville community — has more dire consequences for members of marginalized communities. In particular, Black people are disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting a much broader issue related to the disparities in healthcare access. Despite making up 112 percent of COVID-19 cases in the health districts, Black residents account for 32 percent of the hospitalizations, and nearly 22 percent of the deaths. Further, older populations are at a much higher risk when it comes to contracting the virus — while those in the 20-29 age group make up the largest portion of COVID-19 cases in the community, it is the older population that has been affected by hospitalizations and deaths. When students behave irresponsibly, they must recognize that they are directly putting members of these communities at an even heightened risk — this includes classmates, peers, University faculty and staff and members of the greater Charlottesville community. The virus, however, does not fully rest on the students — the University’s administration has a responsibility to not only keep its students safe, but also to do all that they can to keep the Charlottesville community safe. As such, the University must continue to expand its existing testing options for community members so that there is a greater focus on those that are being tested once a week, with the University offering this support — keep to act responsibly to ensure a greater Charlottesville community.

OPINION

THE CAVALIER DAILY

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We recently wrapped up a difficult semester. Before I delve into next semester and the policy changes that the University should enact, I want to recognize an important achievement for University students — long story short, we survived. Let us take a moment to breathe and temporarily discard an academic environment that has us believe we must be on the grind every night and day. I’m proud of us. We pulled through — maybe not unscathed — but alive. We must now ensure the University meets our needs as we enter another difficult semester.

Provost Liz Magill recently announced a continuation of the fall grading policy — one which gave us the option to take our courses with the standard letter grade or credit/no credit/universal credit. While I’m thankful that the University extended some kind of helping hand, this grading policy does not fully consider students who have been disadvantaged during the coronavirus pandemic. Rather, it creates the illusion of fairness through a policy that provides more grading options to students — only to reveal why those very options are stressful to students taking them. In her email to students, Magill attached a page of advising principles. Two words stand out in this list of principles — “holistic” and “trend.” This webpage notes a “national trend” across law, medical and business postgraduate programs toward viewing applications with a “holistic approach” — while still recommending students take letter grades in certain required classes. However, that supposedly holistic approach is not set in stone. After all, “trend” is not all-encompassing — and letter grades are still being encouraged as more impressive. Encouraging students seeking certain postgraduate opportunities to take letter grades in their classes is evidence enough that we need some sort of equalizer.

While we can’t characterize the student body under any universal description, we can assume there are many students on Grounds living with a great deal of privilege during this pandemic. Privilege includes having a healthy and safe environment to return home to or quarantine in. It includes not having financial anxieties because of the pandemic. It includes having stable mental health and solid support systems. It also includes not being a victim of the racism, transphobia, ableism and other forms of discrimination that this pandemic has intensified.

Disparities of privilege necessitate a universal credit/no credit grading policy for the sole fact that some students still inhibit students taking them. By the end of this semester, I’ve seen in my circles of close friends the stress of having to decide between grading options, particularly when the deadline to do so occurs before students can even guess their grade. Students have protested this policy before, starting back when the University implemented a similar policy earlier this spring. At this point, it feels as though our administration is side-stepping student demands and letting students work seven days a week in order to process the paperwork and labs speeded up the paperwork process. But enforcing mandatory vaccinations will not. Massive funding from a lack of funding, the coronavirus vaccine did not. Widespread public acceptance of the vaccine will be necessary for any return to normalcy. We pulled through — maybe not unscathed — but alive. We must now ensure the University meets our needs as we enter another difficult semester.

BRYCE WYLES is the Senior Associate Opinion Editor for The Cavalier Daily. He can be reached at b.wyles@cavalierdaily.com.

OPINION

T he coronavirus vaccine rollout has begun nationwide, with one percent of the total United States population fully vaccinated. Unequal access regarding the vaccine’s safety is unfounded. However, in order to encourage increased acceptance of the vaccine, we must respond to the many nuanced concerns by respectfully sharing facts.

Foremost, I aim to counter a popular myth. This vaccine was able to be produced so quickly for several reasons — none of which jeopardize its safety. While most vaccines suffer from a lack of funding, the coronavirus vaccine did not. Massive funding provided by the US government prevented financial shortfalls. In addition, academics and scientists prioritized their work on the vaccine. Hospitals and labs sped up the paperwork process — filing daily rather than waiting weeks to process the paperwork in batches. Scientists at the United States Food and Drug Administration worked seven days a week in order to hasten decision-making. The speed of the vaccine’s production does not risk the health of Americans.

There are many other protections in place. For one, the vaccine’s production process was extensively scrutinized. Data and Safety Monitoring Boards monitored the clinical trials, and the FDA summarized data to independent advisory committees who agreed that the vaccine was safe and effective. To address some additional worries — there is no evidence the vaccine will make recipients ill, an ingrained fear for those with allergic reaction concerns and some coronavirus vaccines are even expected to be vegetarian or vegan-friendly. As additional people begin to receive the vaccine, the US vaccine safety system will ensure continued American health. The coronavirus vaccine is safe.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shared a plan for distributing the vaccine that most states will likely follow. Frontline medical workers and nursing home residents have been some of the first to receive the vaccine. Those in the general public — not a part of any priority group — probably shouldn’t expect a vaccine until May or June. Consequently, there is still a considerable wait before many of us will have to make a decision to accept the vaccine. But if one is available to you, remember the extensive developmental process. That being said, historic medical mistreatment of certain populations may contribute to outstanding fears. Mistrust of the medical system by people who have been traditionally mistreated in medical situations is reasonable and must be respected.

For example, although Black Americans were disproportionately affected by the coronavirus, only 42 percent of Black Americans reported being vaccinated. That’s a concerning statistic that should be compared to the over 60 percent of white and Hispanic adults who say they would. There is a dearth of history-based racial racism in the United States. Doctors experimented on enslaved Black people, sometimes even without anesthesia. Despite available treatment options, the Tuskegee Institute took advantage of poor Black men over the course of decades to study the effects of untreated syphilis. Further, studies show that medical training and residents perceive Black patients to be less susceptible to pain than white patients. According to the American Medical Association, Black patients have higher mortality rates than their white counterparts. Black Americans are abused by the medical system.

As a second example, America has encouraged force or coerced sterilization to limit supposed undesirable populations, including immigrants, people of color, poor people, unmarried mothers, the disabled and the mentally ill. In North Carolina, sterilization surgeries were forced on those labeled sexually promiscuous or perceived to be unintelligent in the mid to late 1900s. As recent as 2020, California prisons authorized coerced sterilization of female inmates. Even last year, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was accused of sterilizing immigrant detainees who did not understand what procedure they were undergoing.

Time after time, American medical institutions have mistreated minority communities — do not dismiss anxieties from these communities about the safety of the vaccine. We cannot disregard their trauma. In response to those who express worries, we must provide factual information, like the FDAs data on vaccine trials. Refer them to answers to frequent asked questions, highlighting that the vaccine is safe and necessary if we want to return to normal. However, for those from minority communities that express their justified concerns, our foremost responsibility is to acknowledge their lived experiences. We should listen and provide facts, but we must also stop and respect the decisions of those around us who have fears of our country’s historically racist and unequal medical institutions.

JESSICA MOORE is an Opinion Columnist for The Cavalier Daily. She can be reached at opinion@cavalierdaily.com.

U.Va. must adopt a universal credit/no credit policy

Disparities of privilege are bound to leave some students advantaged over others

Widen the scope of your coronavirus vaccine arguments

While most coronavirus vaccine fears are unfounded, respectfully responding with facts will encourage acceptance of the vaccine

Thursday, January 28, 2021 | 13

Forcibly vaccinated in a Virginia prison, a photographer was able to capture this moment — an incident which may not be in the near future as the country steadily approaches 400,000 deaths from coronavirus.

Regardless, I — alongside so many University students — am sick and tired of learning beneath an umbrella of administrators who rarely prioritize our needs. When they do, it’s a version of this same maddening favor that gives us little relief. I call on Provost Magill to listen to students and implement a universal credit/no credit grading policy for the spring semester.

At this point, it feels as though our administration is side-stepping student demands and letting students intensify.

We must now ensure the University meets our needs as we enter another difficult semester.
Abolish the University

Frankly, I’m disappointed in you guys. I thought college was supposed to be a place with radical ideas where we question authority in a dorm with our AC, drinking off-the-brand beer. However, as evidenced by the last few hot takes here, we are simply not thinking radically enough.

“Abolish legacy admissions”
“Abolish founders day”
“Get two-ply toilet paper in Clem”
“Abolish the traditional curriculum”

“Answer my texts, Emily, please she was just a friend, I swear”

“There are simply too many issues that are beyond reform: The University remains a PWI — Predominantly White Institution, these incremental reforms don’t cut it.

1. Names
No, I’m not talking about buildings being named after slave owners and eugenicists. Or a building literally being named after slave owners and eugenicists. Or a building literally being named after slave owners and eugenicists. Or a building literally being named after slave owners and eugenicists.

2. Diversity
The University remains a PWI — Predominantly White Institution for the people who quickly click past every pastel infographic on Instagram. There’s nothing wrong with white people — except the ones that ask to re-do high fives because the first one wasn’t good enough — but when I get “spicy food” from Newcomb I want it to actually be spicy and not just have pepper on it or something.

Plus, meeting people from different backgrounds is hard when a certain group chooses to self-segregate. You guys know who I’m talking about — the Greeks. No no, not people of Greek descent — people in Greek LIFE. They keep to their little groups, refusing to integrate. To tell you the truth, they make the REST of us feel excluded with their lingo, and I really don’t like how the University panders to them, letting them have entire houses and streets to themselves so they can have a “safe space.” Grow up, snowflakes.

3. Everything is competitive
Are you not particularly talented in any area but tell yourself you’re a “people person” despite being afraid to tell the waiter that he got your order wrong? In most schools, you could quickly become a Business Major and spend your time day-drinking and banking on the nerd in your group project doing the work for you. Meanwhile, here at the University, you have to work hard for two years, be involved with orgs you claim to “have a passion for” — who on earth enjoys making excel spreadsheets — and then spend your last two years explaining to people that you aren’t a communications major. And that’s not even the worst one. Do you want to “make the world a better place” and be involved in government? Well, not only will you spend two years staying in and studying, you’ll get the privilege of paying MORE money to go into a career that makes LESS money.

4. Getting the classes you actually want
I came to college to LEARN, or at least that’s what I tell my parents when I’m at the “library” on a Friday night. I could put up with the weird names, obsession with slave owners, toxic greek life culture, horrible dining food, even the fact that being nak’d in front of all of your friends in the cold is considered a “tradition.”

You just won’t get to take them! Well, unless you get blessed with early SIS times every semester because Jim Ryan is your dad or something. For classes that require instructor consent, you will find yourself writing paragraphs on paragraphs, pretending to be passionate about something you know zilch about. It’s not like the whole point of taking a class is to learn new things! Plus, be prepared for SIS to crash because we really wanted to emphasize the public in public Ivy. It’s easier to break into the Capitol than it is to get a seat in Dracula.

As you can see, there’s just way too many things for admin to fix, even if you are getting paid eight figures and given a mansion to live in while doing so. What’s that? U.Va. isn’t special, and higher education in America is a predatory industry that doesn’t really care about students or athletes or education and remains inaccessible and unaffordable for working class Americans, POC, and just about every marginalized group you can name? Whew, that sounds like a much harder problem. Maybe get one of the chumps who are paying 40k a semester for a degree in public policy to fix it?

ESHAAN SARUP is the Humor editor for The Cavalier Daily. He can be reached at e.sarup@cavalierdaily.com

HUMOR

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The Cavalier Daily
WEEKLY CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Aaron Rose | Puzzle Master

* THE SOLUTION TO THIS PUZZLE CAN BE FOUND IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Across
8. Dish consisting of chopped meat and potatoes.
9. Soviet space dog.
10. Small talk.
11. Famous Peanuts canine; A baron, Joe Cool, and, incidentally, the Great Pumpkin.
12. Call and --------.
13. Covering used over presents (two words).
15. Temporary termination of employment.
17. An innocent, naive young woman; typically a character of the stage.
19. In a friendly, pleasant, approachable way.
22. Land that can be used to grow crops; farmable land.
24. Activity done in order to get a tan.
26. Microorganism that was one of the earliest lifeforms on earth; can cause illness.
28. President Joe Biden’s dogs, Champ and Major, are this type of shepherd.
30. Name of Dean J’s canine companion; commonly known as CavPup.
31. To make an effort; spending energy.
32. Dorothy’s dog who travels with her from Kansas to Oz.

Down
1. Building that houses animals or crops.
2. In a car, this manages the flow of fuel to the engine.
3. Member of a sports team; a person who regularly partakes in a sport.
4. The ‘ph’ sound, for example.
5. Clef representing musical notes below middle C.
6. Dog detective who will do anything for his eponymous snacks; Shaggy’s companion.
7. Type of common fish found in freshwater and the sea; prized for food and sport.
16. To steal; also, last name of the Hogwarts caretaker.
18. Not merited, undeserving.
20. Enthusiasm, promptness.
21. Someone that manages to get away.
23. To go someplace (an outdated term).
25. To make invalid.
27. Tony award-winning musical “Come From ----.”
29. Prefix meaning “self.”
I think anyone who writes about music describes their childhood the same way — early memories of huddling around the family record player, the crackling sound waves radiating enough fiery breeze to emanate past the mouth of the foyer and a laundry list of godmothers and godfathers on 12-inch. But as a child, music truly did not consume my life. Some of my earliest musical memories involve being convinced that the Black Eyed Peas were saying “boo-she” on the uncensored “Elephunk” CD my parents used to play in the car. Or listening to “Confessions” while playing Madden 07 in my garage — pretending my lifeline was the microphone, the blocky rendition of Giants Stadium on the pop-static screen my stage and realizing that what Usher was vibrating into my cochlea was not for the common man. The seeds had been planted, but in the soil they sat. Music didn’t start controlling my life until a road trip I took in high school.

To that point in my life, the best body of musical work I thought I’d ever heard was the Minecraft soundtrack — which, let’s be honest, is not the worst album to put on a pedestal. But I was going on a long road trip, and I was becoming, perhaps subconsciously, unsatisfied with listening solely to YouTube EDM — a special 14-year-old shoutout to Monstercat. I asked around for recommendations, and a friend told me about someone named Lauryn Hill. The seeds finally got the nutrients they’d been waiting for.

And, since then, those seeds have been fortunate enough to grow, expand and flourish, along with myself. I’m deeply indebted to the branches that have since blossomed from the trunk — the Sades, Al Greens, Radioheads and Missy Ellists of the world. Eventually, these calloused stalks reached “Baduizm,” Erykah Badu’s 1992 debut album. I first listened to that album in 2017 and was instantly hooked. Three years later, I finally decided to listen to “Mama’s Gun,” her sophomore, well, anti-dumpy. I remember telling a friend that the reason I held out so long was because I was “afraid I’d like it too much.” Those suspicions were entirely correct. Nonetheless, I could have never fully prepared myself for the intro track — you guessed it, the greatest song of all time. And honestly, I’m glad I waited.

“Penitentiary Philosophy” begins with Badu muttering some swirling stressors of everyday living — taking her vitamins, heating up the apartment and other trivial tasks of maintaining the monotonous. They build, thicker and thicker, until Badu reaches a breaking point. With a wall of embittered liberation, Badu takes an aural hammer to the walls of her mind — decorated with portraits of the whispering voices inside her head. With cerebral rubber bands stretched too thin, Badu finds a transcendent release, as the “warrior princess / [that has] come from another sun.” And I don’t think any of us would disagree with that self-assessment. The Badu cascade has begun.

She’s angry — and about a lot more than just vitamins. “Why would do you want me to be so mad” carries the hook of Badu’s witchy warble as it reaches the heavens — sung with such a pointed conviction that you’d think she’s channeling her grievances while staring directly into the sun. Except, in this case, it’s the sun who turns herself away from the track. And Questlove on the drums, the two combine to steamroll through one of the most jarring, frustrated, breakneck odes to social and mental decay ever produced. And I’m not using “breakneck” lightly — try listening to the “whys,” “yeahs” and “make mes” that round out the backend of the track without something in your bone structure screwing loose.

Daphne Brooks puts it best. In a 2016 review for Pitchfork, she states that “Mama’s Gun” offers a more pointed, sustained, and grounded statement about what it means to get tired of waiting out and wading through the wretchedness of urban blight — and the sometimes oppressive voices inside one’s own head. The album’s opener exemplifies this burst of invigorated agitation — both at the world and at the self — which is why “Penitentiary Philosophy,” on more than one occasion, has entirely replaced my morning cup of coffee.

From the intro track alone, it was pretty obvious that Badu had also taken some time to let her seeds grow in the buildup to “Mama’s Gun.” “Penitentiary Philosophy” felt like her own personal nod to the Black musical tradition as a lineage, as a community and as a commitment to shared excellence. A nod to the spacey, extraterrestrial funkateers of the ’70s, a nod to the soul-belters and pulp-rattlers and even more explicit nods towards one of the greatest to ever breathe — Stevie Wonder. The second verse of “Penitentiary Philosophy” flips the second half of Wonder’s “Ordinary Pain,” a half that starts with longtime Stevie collaborator Shirley Brewer yelling “you’re just a masochistic fool!” For Erykah Badu, this exclamation feels appropriate — in content and in creation.

So, even though there were at least three years of my life where I existed without “Mama’s Gun” and without “Penitentiary Philosophy” — when I know I truly didn’t have to — I’m still glad I waited. I’m glad I waited because in that three-year gap, the seeds of my musical existence continued to grow new branches. I reached Funkadelic, which led me to the Ohio Players, which led me to Betty Davis, which led me to Bad Brains, which spun me in an ever-continuous circle until I arrived here — far removed from video game soundtracks and space heaters. These artists that brought me to “Penitentiary Philosophy” are the same artists that brought Badu herself to “Penitentiary Philosophy” — I was just lucky enough to follow the root. These artists, and others, have helped me ferment my musical inventory with new shades of appreciation and made the savory flavor of “Penitentiary Philosophy” so much richer.

So, if I may: I’ll wrap this entry up with a soapbox spiel. Good taste isn’t necessarily about already having an inventory spilling over with shades of influence. To me, good taste is simply the desire to find the influences that water your own personal plant — I guess. Amass your own internal lineage and amass your own catalogue of excellence — and to me, that’s good taste. Ask your friends for recommendations, keep an open mind and only put off listening to an album if you truly, genuinely have a handful of seeds you’d like to sow first.
Horror therapy: Processing trauma with horror films

Media Studies Lecturer Matthew Marshall discusses how fear-inducing flicks may help with processing anxiety and fear

Kalista Diamantopoulos | Arts & Entertainment Editor

The words “horror movie” and “therapy” are not usually found in the same sentence. In fact, horror movies are probably not the first tool people think of when it comes to coping with real-world trauma and anxiety. Especially after enduring a particularly heavy year burdened by violence, death and uncertainty, watching a film that replicates those same distressing themes seems off-putting at best. However, a peculiar phenomenon suggests that confronting fears head-on through horror movies — even if you are watching through splattered fingers — may actually be therapeutic and improve fear-response.

To understand this concept, one must first break down fear. How does it operate? The way the mind processes fear is the same as the fight-or-flight response — you can either confront the fear like final girl Laurie does as she fights the masked killer Michael Myers in the 1978 “Halloween,” or you can flee to escape danger like the chainsaw-wielding cannibal, Leatherface, in the 1974 “Texas Chainsaw Massacre.”

In both cases, this response is driven by the sympathetic nervous system, which is made up of a collection of neurons that trail from the spine to the rest of the body. According to National Geographic, when the body perceives danger, it will trigger involuntary reactions such as an increased heart rate and an influx of blood into our muscles in order to physically prepare the body to address the present threat.

When people watch horror movies, this same response mechanism is triggered. The difference? According to Media Studies Lecturer Matthew Marshall, horror movies allow people to experience fear in a controlled environment.

“Film in general, be it horror or other genres, are simulations [and] role-playing of different situations,” Marshall said. “We can safely sit and go through another set of reactions, such as a global pandemic, so they are better prepared to deal with it if it were to arise again.”

For example, when viewers become aware that the threat is not real or that it is no longer dangerous, their bodies go through another set of reactions propelled by the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps them feel a sense of relief or calm. When watching horror movies, the body reacts as if the perceived danger is real, triggering all of the typical involuntary responses like a fast heartbeat or extra blood pumping through one’s veins.

This process of heightening fear and anxiety to then have it wash away with a neurochemically pleasurable feeling of relief is what makes horror movies so therapeutic. A 2018 study found that people who watch horror films may enjoy being scared because it enables them to gain control over their fears from the safety of their homes or movie theaters.

Researchers have seen this same trend play out during the current global pandemic. According to a 2020 study, horror fans have exhibited less psychological distress during the pandemic and “morbidly curious” people have exhibited greater positive resilience. University of Chicago doctorate student Coltan Scrivner suggests that this “morbid curiosity” may motivate people to learn about threatening situations, such as a global pandemic, so they are better prepared to deal with it if it were to arise again.

Marshall also noted that horror author Stephen King’s motivation for writing horror stories is to imagine the worst possible situations, so he can be more prepared if they actually happen. However, when discussing horror movies as a tool to help individuals cope with trauma, it is critical that one recognizes that the act of creating and even watching horror movies is rooted in privilege.

“You can argue that it is a privilege to have the time and the safety to sit around and imagine horror stories,” Marshall said. “If you are struggling in life, there is not much incentive to imagine things being worse.”

While horror movies have not been scientifically or officially proven to be successful treatments for certain traumas and phobias, researchers agree that it is possible. That being said, the next time you are settling in to watch your favorite horror movie, or a chilling new release, pay attention to how you feel — chances are, it might be more soothing than you think.

A&E Book Club: Three books to read this month

Fictional love stories to live vicariously through this February

Olivia Garrone | Staff Writer

Love is in the air as February approaches. What better way to celebrate your happy relationship — or lack thereof — than with some festive reading? Whether you’re looking for a sweet romantic comedy or a darker reminder of love’s challenges, there’s a book for you. Below are three novel recommendations featuring love stories for you to savor like the box of chocolates you are bound to receive — if not this year, one day.

“One to Watch” by Kate Stayman-London

Nothing screams saccharine love and commercialism like “The Bachelor,” so what better way to celebrate Valentine season than with a literary riff on the franchise? Kate Stayman-London’s 2020 release “One to Watch” offers a “Bachelor-ette”-esque romp with substance and heart.

The story follows a popular plus-sized fashion blogger named Bea as she is offered the lead on hit reality show “Main Squeeze.” Bea agrees to embark on the journey of televised romance to promote both body positivity and her career, but has one caveat — she will not fall in love. However, Bea realizes life may be more difficult than she predicted to keep feelings out of the equation. With the whole country watching, she is forced to face viewers’ criticisms and her own insecurities — is anyone there for the right reasons? Should she open her heart to the man after all?

A newer release, “One to Watch” has lived up to its title having already garnered more prestige than the show it was inspired by. Among other accolades, it was recommended by Oprah magazine and recognized by TIME as one of the too much reads of the year. If that’s not enough to convince you to give it a try, take it from — Hillary Clinton, for whom Stayman-London served as a digital writer for during the 2016 presidential campaign. Clinton described the debut novel as “thoroughly charming.” This sweet rom-com with depth is the perfect book to boost your mood when the winter weather has you feeling down.

“You Deserve Each Other” by Sarah Hogle

For a romantic comedy with an unconventional plot, check out Sarah Hogle’s 2020 release. Even if you’ve watched every 2000s chick flick under the sun, this book brings a fresh take on the genre. Hogle’s debut features an engaged couple — Naomi and Nicholas — who act more like enemies than fiancés. But neither one of them wants to be the one to dump the other and pay for the upcoming nuptial festivities. So the war begins, each battle more riveting than the last until someone breaks it off — unless they fall in love all over again, of course. An Amazon Editors’ Pick for Best Romance, it’s the fun and carefree distraction you need as COVID-19 cases rise across the country. The episode of a light-hearted romantic comedy, let “You Deserve Each Other” be your Valentine this year.

“The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo” by Taylor Jenkins Reid

It’s no mystery why author Jenkins Reid’s career has been skyrocketing as of late. She has a new book on the way and her 2019 hit “Daisy Jones and the Six” is slated to become a limited Amazon series with Reese Witherspoon’s production company at the helm. “The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo” is the perfect way to introduce yourself to her work as it is an incredible book you won’t forget.
Experts discuss structural racism and vaccine distribution

Only 13.6 percent of vaccinations that provide recipient’s race, ethnicity have been administered to Black Virginians

Ellen Wu | Staff Writer

It is no question that the issue of racial inequality has been at the forefront of the United States for the past 150 years, and since the start of the pandemic, these problems have not gone away, presenting a particularly deadly concern for Black and immigrant communities. Systemic health inequalities have contributed to people of color having higher risk of contracting COVID-19 and experiencing worse outcomes, including higher death rates.

Now, as COVID-19 vaccine rollouts have begun, these communities are not receiving the same access to COVID-19 vaccines.

Virginia, of the 40.5 percent of COVID-19 vaccinations that reported the race or ethnicity of the recipient, only 13.6 percent have been administered to African Americans as of Monday.

"Because of structural racism, people of color have disproportionate access to resources and, related to that, higher rates of some chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension that increase risk of severe complications from COVID-19," Crawford said.

Virginia’s current vaccination plan prioritizes health workers and individuals who are considered more at risk for contracting COVID-19.

"Because of structural racism, people of color have disproportionate access to resources and, related to that, higher rates of some chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension that increase risk of severe complications from COVID-19," Crawford said.

Benjamin states that these symptoms are an indication that the vaccine is working properly and believes getting vaccinated is a necessary step to take, as catching the virus would make a worker indisposed for even longer than the shot.

"Should they get infected, [workers] would be out of work for weeks," Benjamin said. "This vaccine is, quite frankly, worth 48 hours of having a sore shoulder."

Hilton, with much of the same mindset, strongly advocates for the protection and care of such “necessary workers,” believing that companies should allow for sick days to recover should an individual experience negative side effects from the vaccine.

Furthermore, Crawford is worried that state governments are not prioritizing the right individuals. She states that the only way for equality to be reached is to “require focused outreach to frontline and other essential workers to reduce access-related barriers to vaccination.”

Similarly, Benjamin believes it is crucial for people of power within the government and hospitals to make responsible decisions.

“We have to hold ourselves, resource allocators and [vaccination programs] accountable for reaching out into communities to make sure that we’re vaccinating the highest risk populations and that we don’t ignore them,” Benjamin said.

Following this, Benjamin also thinks it extremely important to invest in strategies that can efficiently collect “the data to document who is getting vaccinated and what the demographics are” and to actually step foot into these lower income communities and to engage in “community health centers” and “free clinics.”

There is a great deal of hesitancy about the vaccine in communities of color due to a range of historical mistrust that people have with ... health systems," Benjamin said. "If you don’t go into these communities, communicating the right message from trusted messengers, and then make it easy for people to come in and get vaccinated, then you’ll have disparities.”

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Furthermore, Crawford is worried that state governments are not prioritizing the right individuals. She states that the only way for equality to be reached is to “require focused outreach to frontline and other essential workers to reduce access-related barriers to vaccination.”

Similarly, Benjamin believes it is crucial for people of power within the government and hospitals to make responsible decisions.

“We have to hold ourselves, resource allocators and [vaccination programs] accountable for reaching out into communities to make sure that we’re vaccinating the highest risk populations and that we don’t ignore them,” Benjamin said.

Following this, Benjamin also thinks it extremely important to invest in strategies that can efficiently collect “the data to document who is getting vaccinated and what the demographics are” and to actually step foot into these lower income communities and to engage in “community health centers” and “free clinics.”

There is a great deal of hesitancy about the vaccine in communities of color due to a range of historical mistrust that people have with ... health systems," Benjamin said. "If you don’t go into these communities, communicating the right message from trusted messengers, and then make it easy for people to come in and get vaccinated, then you’ll have disparities.”
Researchers develop program to support diabetes patients
Clinical trials have shown that hemoglobin A1c levels lower significantly when patients learn an individualized approach toward lifestyle management

Isabel Weir | Health & Science Editor

According to the 2020 National Diabetes Statistics Report, 34.2 million people suffer from diabetes in the United States, and around 90 to 95 percent of these cases are classified as Type 2 diabetes. In an effort to regain health, most T2D patients will either try to lose weight or become encumbered by increasing doses of medication. However, effective T2D management may not be limited to costly prescriptions or weight loss. In fact, University researchers have developed a more progressive management program — one that promotes patient empowerment in lifestyle choices.

While patients who are diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes are unable to produce insulin in their pancreas, patients with T2D are often resistant to insulin as lifestyle habits alter the body’s reaction to glucose, leaving their bodies unable to properly metabolize it. As a result, blood glucose levels in people diagnosed with T2D can climb until they reach levels of toxicity that harm the nervous and cardiovascular systems.

Overweight patients may also experience pancreas damage due to an abnormal amount of adipose, or fat tissue, in their abdomen. This damage further impairs insulin production, indicating a correlation between obesity and T2D — this is why many patients diagnosed with T2D are advised to lose weight as part of treatment. However, some patients cannot lose weight, and others do not want to, so if a weight-loss lifestyle cannot be easily implemented, then a patient can opt for medication such as Metformin, a drug that treats high blood glucose.

Yet, a medication lifestyle also invites complications. The United Kingdom Prospective Diabetes Study found that T2D patients produce incrementally less insulin on an annual basis, and as a result, often need higher and higher doses of medication the longer they have the disease. This scenario not only leads to additional financial obligations and resulting non-compliance regarding the prescribed medication, but can also culminate in a patient being dependent on insulin for life.

Evidently, T2D treatment and prevention can be difficult to manage. Despite this, Daniel Cox, professor of psychiatric medicine and internal medicine, sensed some potential in the prescription after he developed T2D himself.

Initially, Cox’s blood glucose levels were high, which was confirmed by detecting high levels of glycosylated hemoglobin, HbA1c. While blood glucose levels vary during the course of a day, particularly in association with meals, HbA1c levels more accurately reflect blood glucose levels by measuring the amount of glucose bound to hemoglobin over a three-month period. The more hemoglobin A1c detected, the higher the glucose levels over the past three months.

“A person who doesn’t have diabetes has an A1c of 5.6 or below — and a person who has diabetes has an A1c of 6.5 or higher,” Cox said. “My A1c was 10.6.”

Anthony McCall, Cox’s endocrinologist and medical research professor, advised him to start Metformin right away, but Cox had another idea in mind.

As a researcher, Cox had been working on diabetes for over 30 years, and he knew that in order to lower his A1c level, he had to learn how to quickly reduce his blood glucose and prevent it from spiking again. He also knew that he would not be able to lose weight easily, so he decided to focus on reducing his carbohydrate consumption and sedentary behavior while implementing an achievable and regular exercise routine.

High carbohydrate intake can cause blood glucose levels to rise rapidly after a meal. To understand which carbs specifically spiked his levels, Cox used the Continuous Glucose Monitor. Unlike a blood glucose meter, which requires a patient to prick their finger to determine glucose levels, the Continuous Glucose Monitor consists of a device that scans a sensor attached to Cox’s arm and produces a graph of his recent blood glucose levels.

With this, Cox has immediate access to his blood sugar history and a better understanding of how to move forward. He can also experiment. For instance, he knows that an IPA beer will not affect his blood glucose, while a porter will, merely by checking his monitor after consumption.

Cox created a personal goal of going to bed with a blood glucose level lower than 140. If his monitor reads 140 after dinner, he grabs his earphones and heads out for a neighborhood walk, as the Continuous Glucose Monitor reads his blood glucose levels. He also experiment. For instance, he knows that an IPA beer will not affect his blood glucose, while a porter will, merely by checking his monitor after consumption.

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Eleven years later, Cox has neither made the transition to medications nor has he worried about losing weight. But what he has done is organized the Glycemic Excursion Minimization, a program that allows other T2D patients to experience his same success.

“This radical new treatment program is actually quite simple,” Cox said.

GEM aims to educate, activate and motivate patients by enhancing their understanding of personal blood glucose levels and equipping them to make lifestyle decisions in response.

To test the efficacy of GEM, Cox and McCall directed a clinical study in which a population of T2D patients were divided into four groups — one of which was given weight management training and three of which received 4-6 week lessons. According to the study, the lessons, or “didactic sessions,” educated patients with feedback from the Continuous Glucose Monitor, eliminated the consumption of high-carb foods, increased physical activity and promoted lifetime food, activity and relapse management.

The researchers found that the participants who attended the lessons actually experienced more weight loss than the group that received weight loss training. Additionally, the study reports that these patients left with improved diabetes knowledge and an enhanced quality of life.

At a one-year-long follow up, the A1c levels of the didactic groups were still lower than that of the weight loss group.

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T2D patients is one of empowerment and choice. Although there may be no single specific treatment advised for diabetes, according to McCall and Cox, patients withhold the power to manage their health in ways that even doctors cannot control.

“Diabetes is a self-treating disorder,” McCall said. “The last thing you want is a physician treating diabetes — ‘It’s whatever you say, doc.’ No, it’s not whatever I say — it’s what you do, what you want to do.”
We can do this.
Keep going, UVA.