Let’s make history again in 2021.

In 2020, we broke records and over 4.4 million Virginians voted.

Go to IWillVote.com/VA to make a plan to vote early or on November 2.
This week in-brief

U.Va. extends general mask mandate through semester, announces outdoor, in-person LOTL

The University extended its mask mandate to the end of the fall semester, with the exception of activities that are "particularly difficult" while wearing a mask, per a University-wide email sent Oct. 22 by Provost Liz Magill and Chief Operating Officer J.J. Davis. Activities under the exception include cardio exercise inside IM-Rac facilities and some drama and music performances.

The decision comes just one day after the University announced that all employees are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 by Dec. 8. The mask mandate applies to all students, faculty, employees and visitors inside spaces that are owned or leased by the University. It does not include residence halls or personal residences.

Effective Oct. 27, vaccinated students, members and guests at IM-Rac facilities are permitted to use cardio equipment or participate in group exercise classes without masks. All attendees are still required to wear a mask when not in class or using equipment and are expected to socially distance whenever possible.

Some students participating in for-credit drama, dance and music classes will be permitted to rehearse and perform indoors without masks, provided that they follow specific public health requirements. The University may require individual courses and activities to adhere to various requirements, such as wearing clear masks at final rehearsals for drama performances or fitting brass and wind instruments with bell covers. Final drama performances will not require masks for individuals, so long as the audience is masked.

The Cavalier Marching Band will also now be permitted to play in the stands of Scott Stadium, after a petition circulated by band members garnered more than 8,000 signatures within just a few days.

Additionally, Magill and Davis announced that this year’s Lighting of the Lawn will be held in-person and attendance will be limited to University students, faculty, staff and families.

10.19

10.22

U.Va. endowment reaches record-high $14.5 billion in 2020-21 fiscal year

The University’s endowment grew markedly over the 2020-21 fiscal year despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, according to the University of Virginia Investment Management Company’s 2021 annual report. The endowment’s size currently stands at $14.5 billion, a 46 percent increase from its $9.9 billion valuation last year.

The University’s endowment is among the largest reported by public universities. The University of Michigan’s has reached $7.5 billion, and Texas A&M University’s is over $6 billion.

The endowment serves to provide a steady income that can be utilized to support the University’s goals. Its funding is derived from a group of investment funds known as the Long Term Pool, in which the University’s long-term funds are invested. The endowment makes up the largest portion at 52 percent, while the remainder of the Long Term Pool is made up of investments in University-associated organizations at 22 percent, the University Central Bank at 7 percent and other long-term assets at 2 percent.

The percentage of the Long Term Pool invested in the University Strategic Investment Fund — a source of funding for 16 distinct projects including COVID-19 disaster relief and funding for increased hiring for the Division for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion — decreased slightly from 16 percent in 2020 to 17 percent in 2021.

The University’s investment process is regulated by UVIMCO, which secured a 49 percent return in the Long Term Pool, along with $155.2 million in its Short Term Pool for “near-term liquidity needs” in 2021.

The University’s $14.5 billion endowment fits into a pattern of universities nationwide reporting sharp gains during the 2020 fiscal year. The University of Illinois’ endowment rose from $2.03 billion in 2020 to $3.82 billion in 2021, and Pennsylvania State University’s grew from $3.4 billion in 2020 to $3.7 billion.

According to UVIMCO’s 2021 report, the 49 percent return of this past fiscal year caused a sharp increase in three and five year returns, which measure how much the investment has increased over time — these returns now surpass the University’s spending significantly.

Student Council creates University Networks of Care Ad-hoc Committee

Student Council passed its fall budget, a resolution supporting Divest U.Va. and a bill to create the University Networks of Care Ad-hoc Committee during its general body meeting Oct. 19.

UNOC is a proposed community-based crisis response program that will remove the University Police Department from nonviolent mental health crises involving students. The pilot program is slated to launch in the fall 2022 semester, pending University approval, and will operate 24 hours a day Thursday through Sunday. Under the program, paid EMTs and skilled post-graduate student counselors would respond to all mental health crises, interventions with intoxicated persons and agitated situations within U.PD jurisdiction. Student Council is allocating $9,000 in student activities fee funding to the UNOC pilot program.

By limiting police presence in mental health crises, UNOC hopes to improve relationships between students and U.PD — especially students of historically marginalized identities.

"The state of mental health crisis response and interventions into agitated situations at the University is abysmal," Liu said. "Students leave mental health crises in handcuffs, are taken into police custody and are often further traumatized, either by the University Police Department’s response to the mental health crisis or by their experience managing their mental health crises alone.’’

The bill also cites current HRL protocol, which trains resident advisors to contact the Dean on Call, Counseling and Psychological Services or U.PD in the event of a mental health crisis. Some students, however, have reported that RAs discouraged them from contacting U.PD because of previous negative experiences.

Jayla Hart, co-chair of Housing and Residence Life and fourth-year College student, urged representatives to pass the bill during Tuesday night’s meeting.

"Having U.PD come into residential buildings to help students has been very, very stressful, not only for residents but for RAs and [senior residents] alike," Hart said. "I implore all of you guys to consider what we’re trying to do in terms of changing culture at U.Va., but also better supporting students — especially students of color — and other marginalized identities.’’

Donovan Lea, vice-president of BSA and fourth-year Rotten student, added that while he is excited to see UNOC finally come to fruition, Black students have been pushing for these kinds of changes for a long time.

BSA has pushed for these sorts of demands for over 30 years, and it shouldn’t have taken 30 years for something like this to happen,” Lea said.

Organizations in the Latinx community on Grounds have struggled with access to proper mental health services for “quite some time” as they noted in a joint statement to The Cavalier Daily.

Specifically, the groups cited the high cost of medical fees and the inadequacy of the University’s CAPS program, adding that because the Latinx community is so diverse and intersectional, students often find it difficult to find counselors within CAPS who make them feel represented and understood.

"UNOC would allow Latinx students and students of color at the University to receive support during a crisis,” the statement reads. “Having this issue of mental health crisis response addressed would allow PLUMAS, and the many Latinx organizations we represent, to advocate for improved mental health resources for Latinx students at the University.”

UNOC has been in development since fall 2020 by several partnering organizations — Student Council, HRL, BSA, PLUMAS and unoc@U.Va. — as well as University partners, such as U.PD and the Equity Center. These five student groups will form the 2022-23 UNOC Coalition, which will guide the program’s structure, funding and implementation this year.
House of Delegates, City Council seats up for election

Charlottesville residents will vote for two City Council, School Board, Commonwealth Attorney and Board of Supervisor positions

Zach Rosenthal, Maryann Xue & Ava MacBlane | News Staff

While the race for Virginia’s next governor heats up, voters in Charlottesville and parts of Albemarle County also have the chance to vote for who will represent the 57th District in the Virginia House of Delegates in the Nov. 2 election. Charlottesville residents will also vote for new City Council, School Board, Commonwealth Attorney and Board of Supervisor seats.

Incumbent Democratic Del. Sally Hudson will face Republican challenger Philip Hamilton in the delegates race. The 57th district encompasses about half of both Charlottesville City and Albemarle County, with 89,709 constituents.

Hudson is a professor in the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy and was first elected as a delegate in 2009, winning her election unopposed with 96.1 percent of the vote. After her victory, Hudson became the first female delegate to represent the 57th District, a seat that has been held by Democrats since it was created in 1983.

Hamilton is the first Republican to run for the seat since 2005 and says he is running to “fight against the status quo,” according to an interview with NBC 29. This is Hamilton’s first time running for public office.

Hamilton’s legislative priorities include limiting government interference into operations of schools and businesses, enhancing law enforcement regulations of activities involving animal abuse — such as dogfighting and breeder abuse — and enacting term limits for elected positions like the House of Delegates, school board and mayor.

Hudson’s priorities for the coming term are education — including universal pre-k and increasing teacher salaries — the legalization of marijuana, meeting the challenges of climate change, improving access to quality healthcare and solving Charlottesville’s housing shortage, according to the incumbent delegate’s campaign website.

As a delegate, Hudson has sponsored several bills, including HB1877, which allows localities to remove, relocate, contextualize or cover war monuments. The passing of the bill permitted the removal of Confederate monuments in Charlottesville. Following years of advocacy, the city removed the statues of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson last summer.

Hudson has also sponsored HB2197, which would have allowed for the possession of small amounts of marijuana for personal use, and HB2106, which would have prohibited campaign contributions from corporations in state elections, though both bills failed to pass.

Another platform point Hudson is committed to implementing is ranked-choice voting, a method of voting in which voters rank candidates in order of preference regardless of party affiliation. After votes are cast, they are tallied and the candidate with the least votes is eliminated. The eliminated candidate’s votes are then reallocated to the voter’s second choice until one candidate has a majority of the vote.

Hudson introduced a bill in January 2020 that allowed localities to use ranked-choice voting in elections held in Town Council and Board of Supervisors elections.

In the 2020 presidential election, both the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County voted for President Joe Biden, who won the localities by 85.5 percent and 65.68 percent, respectively. The racial makeup of the district is 69.2 percent white, 18.1 percent Black and 8.1 percent Asian, with all other groups below one percent.

Eyes are also on the Charlottesville City Council race, which holds elections during odd-numbered years. There are five seats on the council — the council elects one member as mayor while another is elected vice mayor. Current Mayor Nikuyah Walker and council member Heather Hill’s terms are ending, while vice mayor Sera Magill, Michael Payne and Lloyd Snook will remain in office.

City Council has been embroiled in controversy for the past few months. Without informing the rest of the Council, City Manager Chip Boyles fired Charlottesville Police Chief RaShall Brackney Sept. 1 following a survey of police officers that revealed a lack of internal leadership in the department. Angered by his decision, Walker accused Boyles of being pressured by a police association into firing Brackney.

Boyles resigned from his position Oct. 12 only eight months after being hired, adding his name to a long list of city managers who have left before their terms were over. Boyles is the fifth Charlottesville city manager since 2018. Tarren Richardson, the city’s last permanent city manager, resigned after 16 months in office.

Boyles’ resignation is effective Oct. 29, but the search for a new city manager will not begin until the two new council members are sworn in this January.

Walker, the City’s first Black mayor, withdrew from the race Sept. 8, citing racism within the City government among the reasons for her not seeking a second term. Similarly, Hale said the “toxic culture” within City Council was the biggest reason she did not choose to run for reelection.

The two vacant Council seats are contested by Democrats Juan Diego Wade and Brian Pinkston and Independent Yas Washington. Wade received his Masters degree in Urban and Environmental Planning from the University, aims to address grievances surrounding the City’s criminal justice system, which would involve enhancing de-escalation training for police officers, addressing the impacts of climate change, continuing efforts to fund affordable housing options and making access to public education a priority, according to his campaign website.

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Wade noted in an email to The Cavalier Daily why it is so important for college students to become involved in tackling these issues.

“The effects of climate change will impact them in future, and currently, we need college students to help advocate for policies to address it,” Wade said. “Addressing issues of affordable housing will open up opportunities for them to purchase a first home, and so getting involved now is very important.”

For Pinkston, climate change is “the most visibly relevant issue” that college students face. He also noted the importance of improving equity and racial justice and how college students should care about affordable housing because they need opportunities to get “on the ladder” to rent an affordable living space and eventually own a home.

“Climate, justice and housing all start off as local issues,” Pinkston said in an email to The Cavalier Daily. “It’s where change can be made in the most concrete and practical ways.”

Pinkston also seeks to improve civic management, advocate for local businesses to increase economic vitality and prioritize community partnerships.

Washington’s campaign takes stances on urban development, eco-management, public safety and equitable education. Washington plans to enhance standards of living through commercial and housing development, monitor human impacts on the environment to prevent climate change, construct
inclusive classrooms and implement policies that reduce the cost of keeping low-level offenders in prison as they await trial.

Also on the ballot are nominations for the Charlottesville and Albemarle County School Boards, Commonwealth Attorney and Board of Supervisor positions.

Charlottesville School Board members set school policies, approve the academic calendar, approve budgets, hire the Charlottesville City Schools superintendent and determine school boundaries. The Albemarle County School Board carries out similar duties but is in charge of Albemarle County Public Schools.

The Charlottesville Commonwealth Attorney is responsible for prosecuting criminal cases and assisting victims of crime.

The Board of Supervisors consists of six members, one from each magisterial district in the county, and is responsible for overseeing county policies and government.

Wade, Leah Puryear and Lisa Larson-Torres are the incumbent Charlottesville City School Board members, with both Puryear and Larson-Torres returning for election. Puryear is the director of the University’s Upward Bound program, which supports high school students interested in attending university and is running for her fifth term. Larson-Torres, who is currently the chair of the School Board, is seeking a second term.

Realtor and former teacher Emily Dooley, local parent Christa Bennett and Albemarle County educator Dom Morse are also competing to fill up the seats.

In the Albemarle County School Board, incumbents Kate Acuff, Katrina Callens and Graham Paige will be running as representatives from the Jack Jouett District, Rio District and Samuel Miller District, respectively. Paige will be challenged in the Samuel Miller District by Randy Zackrisson, who entered as a write-in candidate.

The Albemarle County Board of Supervisors race is also uncontested, and all candidates are Democrats. Ned Gallaway and Diantha McKeel are the incumbent members for the Rio District and the Jack Jouett District, respectively, while Jim Andrews is running in the Samuel Miller District.

Incumbent Charlottesville Commonwealth Attorney Joe Plata is also running for the position uncontested.

Residents of the 57th District will be able to vote for these candidates and in other Virginia elections Nov. 2. To find your polling location, visit the Virginia Department of Elections website.

Gubernatorial Election Statistics

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<th>2017 Voter Turnout</th>
<th>2017 Margins</th>
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<tr>
<td>Charlottesville City</td>
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<td>Virginia</td>
<td>2021 Predicted Margins</td>
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<td>47.6%</td>
<td>CNU poll</td>
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<td>Suffolk Univ. poll</td>
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2021 Early Voting

| Charlottesville | 2017 — 1,453 early votes | 2021 — 4,322 early votes |
|                | +197%                     |
| Albemarle      | 2017 — 2,928 e. v.       | 2021 — 13,282 e. v.     |
|                | +350%                     |
| Virginia       | 2017 — 195,364 e. v.     | 2021 — 788,644 e. v.    |
|                | +300%                     |
Democrat Terry McAuliffe will face off against Republican Glenn Youngkin in Virginia’s gubernatorial election Nov. 2. Polling indicates McAuliffe, who served as governor from 2010 to 2018, is neck and neck with Youngkin, former CEO of global investment company The Carlyle Group.

Incumbent Governor Ralph Northam is ineligible to run, as Article V of Virginia’s constitution prevents governors from serving consecutive terms. Virginia is the only state to prohibit incumbent governors from running for immediate re-election and one of a handful of states that selects its governor in an off-year.

The Republican primary was held May 8 through ranked-choice voting — Youngkin was declared the Republican nominee later that week after the party voted to hand count the ballots, a process that takes longer than machine or software counting. Born and raised in Virginia, Youngkin worked at The Carlyle Group for 25 years. At the beginning of his time as governor, McAuliffe worked to restore voting rights to previously incarcerated individuals who were prohibited from voting even though their sentences were complete. He also largely helped decrease unemployment and pushed to include Virginia in the U.S. Climate Alliance.

This year, key issues on McAuliffe’s platform include rebuilding Virginia’s economy in the wake of COVID-19 and ensuring quality education and healthcare for all Virginians. With experts predicting that the race between McAuliffe and Youngkin will be a preview for the 2022 midterm election, Virginia’s gubernatorial race has garnered national attention.

Though recent Gallup polls show President Biden’s approval rating has declined through September to a low of 42 percent, the state of Virginia has not elected a Republican governor in over a decade, when Republican candidate Bob McDonnell won in 2009. The Commonwealth of Virginia has not elected a Republican governor in over a decade, when Republican candidate Bob McDonnell won in 2009.

“All we need to do is keep the House of Delegates, keep the Senate and make sure we keep the governorship as well, because it’s really, really important to keep if we want to keep making progress on these issues we care about,” Hess said.

Democrats have controlled the General Assembly for the past two years. In that time, Democratic legislators passed reforms making it easier to vote, passed the Clean Economy Act, introduced a plan to increase minimum wage to $15 by 2025 and banned the death penalty.

Democrats have been working to ensure that the student fills it out and sends it back home in order to be counted,” Klinger said. “In the fall, we are really focused on campaigning because you can’t have real change without having Republicans in office.”

“Were actually an affiliate of Planned Parenthood, so all the efforts that they’ve been doing to get the vote out have been incorporated by our clubs,” McGovern said.

Both candidates visited the University this fall to speak about their campaigns — McAuliffe addressed students Aug. 25 regarding the importance of COVID-19 vaccinations and participating in the gubernatorial election, while Youngkin attended a tailgate for the Virginia football game against Wake Forest Sept. 24.

Democratic nominee and delegate Hula Ayala and Winsome Sears, Republican nominee and former delegate, are running for lieutenant governor. Incumbent Democrat Mark Herring and Republican Jason Miyares are running for attorney general.

Democratic nominee and delegate Libby Klinger, third-year College student and president of CRs, said the organization has been participating in phone banking and attending events such as the Women’s March.

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CAPS and CSC partner for mindfulness meetups this fall

The Contemplative Sciences Center collaborates with CAPS for weekly meetings centered around student wellness and health

Acacia McCabe | Features Writer

What exactly does the term “self-care” entail? Although most of our minds might jump straight to a picturesque night in with junk food, a bubble bath and face masks after a long week of school or work, the term is far more expansive. Oftentimes, our idea of self-care neglects the connection that the seemingly simple term has with the largely impactful concept of mindfulness — allowing yourself to fully focus on your feelings and surroundings.

At the start of the 2020 Fall semester, the University’s Counseling and Psychological Services and the Contemplative Sciences Center partnered to hold weekly Mindfulness Meetups that run throughout the end of December. These meetups show undergraduate, graduate and community members the benefits of practicing mindfulness, as well as how to do so in a way that can easily be fit into a daily routine.

Meetups are led by Robin Albertson-Wren, professor of education and human development and contemplative practice instructor, on Mondays from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. and CAPS Director Nicole Ruezek-Fridays from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. They’ve occurred twice per week since they began in September. Both sessions have assumed an online format for the entirety of the program. CAPS and CSC used both organizations’ websites, fliers, activity fairs and other CSC or University events — such as the University’s reading day at Morven Farm — to promote the meetups.

Each session begins with a focus on a new mindfulness technique and a quick check-in on the past week. This check in entails both a general overview of how attendees are feeling, as well as a survey of whether or not attendees chose to implement the previous week’s mindfulness technique throughout their day-to-day schedules.

“If we had been doing something called ‘anchor breathing’ the week before, we check in and say, ‘Were you able to use anchor breathing at all this past week?’” Albertson-Wren explained. “Then I do something new, like mindful movement, mindful eating, loving-kindness meditation, self-compassion work or talking about habits or priorities.”

Following these opening activities, Albertson-Wren then leads the group into what she calls a “mental body scan.” These scans are meant to ground oneself and find peace of mind in doing so, relieving stress and removing any intrusive thoughts from outside of that exact moment.

“It’s something that will help people fall asleep at night or if you’re feeling anxious,” Albertson-Wren said. “It’s like a way to settle your heart rate and send a message to your brain that you’re actually safe and calm. And so we do that, usually for the last eight to 12 minutes of class.”

Although the CSC has hosted similar mindfulness programs in the past, including meditation on the Lawn and Ashtanga Yoga, this is their first time partnering with CAPS in an increased attempt to promote wellness in the University community.

Their newly formed partnership comes in the midst of widespread student dissatisfaction with University-sponsored mental health programs — including CAPS itself. Student Council allocated $50,000 in order to combat mental health crises, and the Young Democratic Socialists of America at U.Va. pushed a committed campaign for increased funding. Both actions emphasize a growing concern surrounding the University’s mental health resources.

Coupled with an online format, CAPS and the CSC’s current collaboration allows for broader outreach among community members and more expansive participation as there is no longer a limit towards who can register.

“I’m excited that the contemplative sciences center and CAPS are working together,” Albertson-Wren said. “I think the more options that people have, or the more places that they hear about stuff, the better it is.”

The meetups have been successful so far, hosting varying amounts of students from week to week. Albertson-Wren estimates a number of six to eight attendees each week at her sessions — some who are regulars and many alternating first timers. Throughout the course of the program thus far, over 20 students have expressed interest through registering.

“I am getting the firsthand experience of these practices … it’s really helpful for my work, as well,” Zahoor said. “I read about these practices when I started working on my dissertation, but it’s good to have a firsthand experience and be personally involved in these practices.”

Although Zahoor is interested in this field of cognitive study itself, she stresses that all students no matter their study can benefit from learning these mindfulness practices, as well.

“I think it’s really important that students from all the fields not just from the social sciences or from the education department, but all of these students need to attend … these kinds of meetups,” Zahoor said. “They can get a sense of peacefulness and calmness and can develop the ability of dealing with all these anxiety and stress issues.

Educational endeavors — at all levels — can be stressful to simply even think about, especially when assignments start to accumulate. Add on top of that jobs, internships and relationships, and stressors only grow.

No matter what stress might look like for any individual in the Charlottesville community, it is important to remember what resources are available throughout the year. Although practicing mindfulness can be new or intimidating, it is ultimately a lifelong practice with numerous health benefits that we can use to ground ourselves and achieve peace of mind when we are overwhelmed.

“As human beings we are all going to experience suffering on some level or another — whether it’s like anxiety or trauma,” Albertson-Wren said. “We are all going to experience stress … and it doesn’t have to be a bad thing. The thing that’s bad is how you manage it.”
TikTok is known to create viral sensations of certain people, songs, dances or helpful tips. The app is also the source of many popular recipes that are usually different and intriguing — or in this case, easy and simple.

In a short period of time, Emily Mariko, a 29-year-old influencer also known as @emilymariko, skyrocketed from around 50,000 followers to more than 5.4 million followers on the platform. Her rise to fame came as a result of her minimalist and organized lifestyle, as well as the variety of simple recipes she creates. Her most signature recipe is a variation of leftover grilled salmon over a bed of rice — the popular video currently has over 25 million views.

Even before Mariko went viral, I actually followed her when she was at 50,000 followers in admiration of her dedication to organization and structure. When I saw people finding Mariko through her salmon and rice recipe, I initially thought it seemed basic and not worthy of going viral.

After seeing other comments, however, I saw why the recipe’s simplicity made it so popular. The meal consists of only a few ingredients that are both accessible and easily replaceable to fit individual preferences, meaning almost anyone can recreate it.

Mariko also has an unconventional way of steaming leftover rice — instead of microwaving the rice on its own, she places an ice cube on it and covers the rice and ice cube with parchment paper before placing it in the microwave. When she pulls the plate out from the microwave, the ice is not melted at all. This trick has caused debate regarding why the ice cube did not melt, helping to boost the video’s popularity.

While Mariko uses leftover salmon and rice in her video, I think it is fine to use freshly baked salmon and cooked rice. Besides the salmon and rice, the recipe calls for sriracha, Japanese Kewpie mayonnaise, soy sauce and optional sides, such as avocado, roasted seaweed or kimchi.

Mariko’s instructions are fairly simple as well. First, smash up the salmon with a fork. Then, place your leftover rice on top. Next, place the ice cube on the rice and cover the whole plate with parchment paper to microwave it. Mariko never specifies how long she microwaves this for in the TikTok, but I microwaved mine for about a minute and a half. After microwaving, squeeze the mayonnaise, sriracha and soy sauce over the rice and mix everything thoroughly. Finally, enjoy the dish by itself, or with the optional sides mentioned above.

If you can’t find the Japanese Kewpie mayonnaise in the grocery store, you can either buy it online or replace it with regular mayo, which is what I did. The dish can also be made vegan by replacing the mayonnaise with vegan mayonnaise and the salmon with tofu, which @healthygirlkitchen provides the recipe for. I found that although Mariko’s method is nicely structured, it can also be a little time consuming, and some of her steps can be cut out to save time. For example, it is not necessary to smash up the salmon with a fork. Then, place your leftover rice on top. Next, place the ice cube on the rice and cover the whole plate with parchment paper to microwave it. Mariko never specifies how long she microwaves this for in the TikTok, but I microwaved mine for about a minute and a half. After microwaving, squeeze the mayonnaise, sriracha and soy sauce over the rice and mix everything thoroughly. Finally, enjoy the dish by itself, or with the optional sides mentioned above.

In terms of flavor, I found the dish very tasty. If you are a fan of seafood, this is a perfect way to whip up something quick — particularly if you have leftovers from the day before. The mayonnaise, sriracha and soy sauce are all adjustable to your own preferences, so you can make it as spicy or as mild as you want.

In conclusion, I would rate Mariko’s viral recipe a nine out of 10 for its deliciousness given the limited ingredients it has. The reason why I wouldn’t give it a full 10 out of 10 is because of the extra steps Mariko adds that simply take up too much time for a lazy person like me. Despite this one con, I would ultimately say, yes — Emily Mariko’s salmon and rice recipe does indeed live up to the hype.
Top 10 ways to recreate Trick-or-Treating on the Lawn

The University’s hallmark Halloween tradition may be canceled, but that should not diminish our Halloween spirit

Zach Anderson | Top 10 Writer

1. Surprise your hallmates or friends with a “boo basket”
   “You’ve been booed!” Boo baskets are a great way to share the sweet side of Halloween in a way that can be fun and COVID-19-safe. There are so many ways to share kindness, even during the spooky season, and booing someone can be as big of an effort as you want. Your boo basket can consist solely of a candy bar or it can be a bushel of candy arranged in a frightening arrangement that screams “eat me!” Just drop off the boo basket at the door for a sweet scare, and let the Halloween spirit commence.

4. Make spooky foods
   Halloween-themed food is an awesome way to show culinary creativity in a variety of frightening forms. There are so many recipes to choose from or you can just make their own original frightening feast! Here’s an impromptu recipe idea — instant garlic mashed potatoes, red food coloring and black beans — mix it all together and I call it ... the monster mash! These terrifying treats can be sweet, savory and everything in between making it a perfect activity for everyone.

5. Cozy up and watch some horror or Halloween movies
   With the lights off, a warm cup of cider and blankets galore, a Halloween movie is sure to bring thrills and smiles this season. From classic horror films like “Halloween” to family-friendly flicks like “Hotel Transylvania,” there is a film for everyone this time of year. Hosting a small watch party with a group of friends can be a surefire start for a midnight marathon of the classics, and don’t forget the candy corn or popcorn — candy corn is a bit too sweet for me.

6. Get spooked at a haunted house
   From personal experience, haunted houses are scary. I advise against facing your fears alone, for the monsters are sure to make your worst fears come true. In all honesty, haunted houses can be really fun. With a small group of friends or your entire roster of hallmates, make the terrifying trek into the unknown and witness the horrors with a bit of humor. Show out to our very own Hauntings on the Hill hosted by the Brown physics lab teaching assistant would be proud of. Carvings as each carving stroke is done with precision that your physics lab teaching assistant would be proud of. Carvings and can take all shapes and forms, but others opt to paint their pumpkins. Pumpkins can be a new medium for the next Picasso, and all it takes is a single brushstroke or carving to make a masterpiece.

9. Carve pumpkins and make pumpkin crafts
   Pumpkin carving screams Halloween, and it also makes for some great fall decor. Unleash your inner Michelangelo as each carving stroke is done with precision that your physics lab teaching assistant would be proud of. Carvings can take all shapes and forms, but others opt to paint their pumpkins. Pumpkins can be a new medium for the next Picasso, and all it takes is a single brushstroke or carving to make a masterpiece.

10. Go for a creepy Halloween hike
    The O’Hill trails can be quite spooky at night, so I recommend bringing a flashlight and a friend. Hearing the autumn leaves crunch under each footstep is sure to send shivers up the spine and stir the senses. It’s an adventure that is sure to bring the spooky season spirit to the next level. Was the sound of crunching leaves someone else? Shine your flashlight over there! Did you hear that? Oh, it was just your imagination. Or was it?

Top 10 ways to recreate Trick-or-Treating on the Lawn

2. Trick-or-treat in your dorm building
   Bringing the Halloween spirit to a smaller scale can be much safer than roaming the hallowed roads of Charlottesville beneath the orange-tinted incandescent street lights, and it can foster better community in your dorm. Keeping the trick or treating within a group of hallmates can also be a great way to show off a costume that has been waiting for the spookiest of times.

3. Hold a best costume contest
   Halloween costumes are one of the most popular ways to get into the spooky spirit, and whether the costumes are scary or scandalous, a costume contest is sure to be a frightening time. Expect personal experience, haunted houses are scary. I advise against facing your fears alone, for the monsters are sure to make your worst fears come true. In all honesty, haunted houses can be really fun. With a small group of friends or your entire roster of hallmates, make the terrifying trek into the unknown and witness the horrors with a bit of humor. Show out to our very own Hauntings on the Hill hosted by the Brown College Friday and Saturday. Witnessing the horrors of a haunted house can bring us together — through the laughs of the clown to the horrors of a haunted house — it is sure to be a thrilling time.

7. Prepare a ghost story night
   Ghost stories are the epitome of horror, and they can bring people together in the spirit of Halloween. Whether on the dorm room floor or in the dimly lit zoom call, ghost stories are sure to stir the emotions and be fun too! Did you hear about the ghost of Thomas Jefferson? Apparently there are ghosts all around the University, and all it takes is one brave soul to confront them and later tell the tale.

8. Put on a playlist of some haunting Halloween songs
   There are many great songs to bring in the Halloween spirit, and these can come in many different forms from the terrifying tones of the classic “Halloween” theme to the catchy tunes of the “Monster Mash.” These songs will create the perfect spooky ambiance and background noise for a social event.
The student-athlete COVID-19 experience

Why a newfound resilience poises Virginia for athletic excellence in coming months

Alexandra Morgan | Sports Writer

Four weekly COVID-19 tests, complete isolation outside of the team, restriction from grocery stores, restaurants, salons and coffee shops — this was just the start of the heavy isolation student athletes felt throughout the 2020-2021 athletic seasons. The heat of the pandemic proved to be a pressing time for all as quarantine forced society into a state of loneliness when the world seemingly came to halt in March 2020.

When students returned to Grounds that fall, they were repeatedly asked to maintain the safety and health of peers, faculty and the Charlottesville community by following public health guidelines. For many, this seemed a little daunting — it took away the very essence of being at college. There were no packed sidewalks on the way to class, coffee shops filled with students or opportunities to socialize with a whole new world of people.

Beyond just the stress of going to class, wearing masks and maintaining a safe distance from others, imagine the stresses that arose with the expectation of playing a collegiate sport at the highest level in the midst of a pandemic.

“You're so lucky to have a season,” many expressed to Virginia athletes as the ACC marched forward and held many sports seasons — athletes responded with a tired smile and bleak reply. For all athletes, last year presented challenges unlike anything anyone had experienced in the history of sports. The year required student athletes to dedicate themselves to their sports more than ever and avoid social engagement in a way that strained many athletes’ mental health.

The NCAA conducted a survey from Oct. 6 to Nov. 2, 2020 addressing heightened mental health concerns in student athletes. The survey reported rates of mental health concerns among student athletes were 1.3 to 2 times higher during the fall 2020 season than ever before in NCAA studies. This increase is immense and was just one initial insight into the insurmountable challenges still ahead.

The men's basketball team experienced isolation in a more extreme manner than perhaps any other sport. The team was unable to live in dorms, see family members or socialize with peers for the duration of their season. The team’s vitality and ability to compete last year as a freshman on the men's basketball team.

“It was a hard time and hard thing to go through — people can get homesick, and being away from my family for so long and not being able to see them, I really struggled,” Beekman said.

John Paul Jones Arena is known for its surging energy and packed stands, but the 2020-2021 men’s basketball season saw an eerie silence of faceless seats in the arena due to COVID-19 restrictions prohibiting fans from attending games. The empty seats made it particularly difficult to stay motivated and focused during games and practices, Beekman said.

“We had to create energy through our teammates on the court that hometown fans usually give,” Beekman said.

Not only was energy lacking, but student athletes also felt detached from their peers and classmates on Grounds. Along with the struggles faced on the field, student athletes were forced to confront the same challenges affecting the student body as a whole.

“The atmosphere was missing and the energy around campus...we didn’t get to stay in dorms and meet the people you spend the next four years of your life with,” Beekman said. “It was tough.”

Alexa Spaanstra, senior forward and midfielder on the women's soccer team, is known around Grounds for her athletic triumphs. She was named Female Rookie of the Year at the 2019 Hoos Choice Awards and most recently made First-Team All-ACC in the 2020-2021 season.

But for Spaanstra, COVID-19 changed much of what playing collegiate soccer looked like.

“During my first year, college looked completely different than it did during COVID-19,” Spaanstra said. “It was carefree and you had nothing to worry about...During [COVID-19], there was so much uncertainty [about] when we were going to practice, if we had enough people available to practice or just how many players or coaches were going to be at practice.”

Despite the difficulties COVID-19 caused, Spaanstra recognized that it strengthened connections and trust both on and off the field.

“Although there were a lot of negative aspects that came with COVID-19, something that I really appreciated is that it brought our team closer together,” Spaanstra said. “Being in a bubble in the NCAA Tournament for over a month, we were with each other every minute of the day. I think that this really strengthened our relationships off the field that allowed us to perform even better on the field.”

Additionally, Spaanstra was thankful for the ways she felt the athletic department helped her and the women's soccer team navigate COVID-19.

“I think that the athletic department did a really good job making me feel safe by regulating [COVID-19] tests every other day,” Spaanstra said. “The ACC was very fortunate to allow us to have a season during the fall, and UVa did a good job on keeping us healthy to perform to our best ability during this difficult time.”

The onset of the Virginia Athletic departments COVID-19 testing began in July of 2020 prior to the fall 2020 sports season. As recorded at the beginning of May 2021, the department had administered 34,597 tests — following the ACC guidelines requiring three molecular (PCR) tests each week before competition. Testing through May 2021 found a positivity rate of 0.6 percent among Virginia athletes and athletic staff.

While mental health was one of the sports psychology department's primary focuses during this time, and the resources it invested in to provide student athletes with the ability to compete in the safest environment possible was impressive. Socially distanced trivia nights, Zoom sessions with members of the sports psychology department and Student Athletic Advisory Committee game nights were some of the ways the department kept the Cavaliers connected and supported.

This investment in not only the athlete, but the person, proved successful. Though it could not alleviate all of the pressures of the pandemic, the commitment to community led many of Virginia’s teams to see great triumphs during a difficult time. Ultimately, despite obvious challenges and hardships that COVID-19 gave rise to, the Cavaliers persevered — winning the NCAA Championship in men's lacrosse, women's swimming and diving, Michaela Meyer's win in the 800-meter track and field event and Emma Navarro’s win in women's singles tennis represented only a handful of the incredible successes seen by Virginia athletes last year.

Off the field, the strength demonstrated by student athletes while navigating a year of isolation created an impressive attitude of determination that will undoubtedly remain rooted in the foundation of Virginia Athletics for years to come.

With vaccination rates among students topping 96 percent, the return to in-person learning and grounds buzzing with energy, there is no doubt that the Cavaliers are poised for success this year. After the hardships faced during the pandemic seasons, Virginia student athletes are returning stronger than ever with a new perspective on what it means to compete and represent the University. Student athletes now have a new layer of resilience that will prove crucial as Virginia marches forward in its pursuit of athletic excellence.
Numerous student-athletes made their voices heard at protests across Charlottesville, including the Defund the Police Block Party and Noise Demonstration. The rise of social media and other factors allow for newfound activism from athletes. Connor Lothrop | Sports Columnist

Almost as long as there have been athletes, athletes have used their elevated status to promote positive social change. One of the first recorded instances of sports intersecting with social unrest occurred in 532 AD in Justinian’s Byzantine Empire when supporters of separate chariot racing teams, the Greens and the Blues, were arrested in connection with deaths caused by the Nika Revolt the previous year. The Blues and the Greens were traditionally strong rivals — much like Virginia and Virginia Tech — and together, asked Justinian to pardon them. This led to six weeks of rioting, 30,000 deaths and the burning of the landmark church Hagia Sophia.

As athletes have changed, athletes and their political activities have changed too. An unhappy Irish long jumper competing for Great Britain in the 1906 Olympics resorted to broadcasting their discontentment in the 1906 Olympics, Black sprinters John Carlos and Tommie Smith raised their fists to protest racial inequality — live and in color on television. Social media and modern news outlets bring even more opportunities for athletes to express their political views. Millions watched former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick kneel during the national anthem before NFL games, which happened for the first time on Aug. 16, 2016. Millions more offered up opinions on social media, and reactions spread into other forms of media commentary in seemingly every way imaginable.

Students at the University have a similarly strong history of vocal political advocacy, despite the administration’s conservative history. Since day one, the student body has taken pride in student self-governance — a pride that still remains to this day. In 1970, nearly 1,500 University students gathered to protest the murder of four Kent State students at an anti-Vietnam War protest. In 1983, roughly 100 individuals marched on administrative offices with a list of demands — ones that date back to as early as 1970 — including increasing acceptance rates and financial aid for Black students. Even last spring, there were a scattering of small, socially distanced protests related to the police shooting of Black teenager Xavier Hill.

The rise of social media has made activism much easier and more accessible. Almost every injustice is broadcast everywhere instantly, and things like Instagram infographics make it easy to share information about relevant issues and steps people can take to address them. Previously, if student athletes wanted to partake in activism, they could mostly only do so through a scheduled media interview, during which administration may hold firm say over the content, or through conversations with teammates, friends and family. Now, social media also permits athletes to reach larger groups of people and spread messages far and wide.

Athletes gained an even greater degree of freedom over the summer when the NCAA enabled athletes to profit off their name, image and likeness decision, however, Virginia’s most recent NCAA enforcement focused on initiating change through education. While Rodriguez and Jana will probably not end up like the supporters of the COP to take real climate action, they may use their platform to go big. Since I am privileged to have an athlete’s platform, and chances are they will only be used from schools and coaches, which could in turn allow them to speak more freely if they aren’t as worried about a critical scholarship being revoked. Coupled with the traditionally conservative administration loosing its top buttons, this increased reach and freedom has enabled Virginia’s student athletes to speak out more than ever before. Virginia’s most well-known student athletes — like senior point guard Kihei Clark, for example — have gained large followings on social media, eclipsing more than 60,000 total followers on Instagram. With such a wide audience, these players are more empowered than ever to use their voices for good.

Even before the name, image and likeness decision, however, Virginia athletes were making national headlines for their activism. Recently departed wide receiver Terrell Jana, who now plays for the Saskatchewan Roughriders of the Canadian Football League, made national headlines on Aug. 12, 2017. This is one moving example of athletes using their platform to enact change. Even though Jana is no longer playing for the Cavaliers, other current athletes have followed in his footsteps to use their own voices to speak out about a myriad of issues.

Senior discus thrower Sadey Rodriguez is a member of the nonprofit organization EcoAthletes, a group focused on educating athletes about climate change so they can inspire others and lead climate action. Rodriguez is also one of more than 200 international athletes who signed the COP26 Sports Community Manifesto to — a document that will be presented at this week’s COP26 climate conference in Glasgow, Scotland. Rodriguez also co-founded Green Athletics, a partnership with the Office of Sustainability to support student athlete activism in sustainability.

“It’s not enough for us to merely support things like ‘reusable straws’ anymore,” Rodriguez said. “It’s time to go big. Since I am privileged enough to have an athlete’s platform, I am happy to use it to urge the leaders of the COP to take real climate action to help people who don’t have a voice.”

Athletes have never been more empowered than they are at this moment to speak up for positive change, and chances are they will only become more outspoken in the future. While Rodriguez and Jana will probably not end up like the supporters of the Blues and Greens, they may use their platform to help make the University, Charlottesville and the world a better place.
Fans remain key to the success of Virginia Athletics

Win or lose, the Charlottesville community is finally back supporting the Cavaliers

Harry Farley | Staff Writer

The women’s soccer team — which made an NCAA tournament run without a full Klöckner Stadium last season — has enjoyed fervorish support this season en route to a No. 1 national ranking.

Around 19 months ago, the sports world shut down. Teams at all levels around the country saw their seasons come to an abrupt end as the COVID-19 virus wreaked havoc on communities worldwide. For Virginia student-athletes, many were left wondering whether they’d ever get the chance to play again — and if so, when that would be.

As sports seasons ramped back up last fall and Charlottesville slowly reopened, there was something inherently different and immediately noticeable about Virginia sports. Scott Stadium was practically empty, along with Klöckner Stadium, Memorial Gym and every other facility. At the earliest point in the fall 2020 semester, no fans were permitted in the stands, and the reality of playing in front of an empty crowd was a tough trade-off for many athletes.

Despite these difficulties, the fall 2020 season unfolded, and student-athletes had no choice but to accept their fate of playing in front of bare stands — trying to make it through the season as if life was normal and nothing had happened.

A glimmer of hope appeared within the sports community when it was announced June 18 that families were currently in effect until the end of the fall semester.

On Aug. 6, however, the University announced that vaccinated or unvaccinated — who entered a University facility or property must wear a mask. This policy has been extended twice this semester and is currently in effect until the end of the fall semester.

A handful of athletes spoke about what full attendance has meant to them after such a long break without the Charlottesville community cheering them on.

“When fans at home games added a totally different element to the game and provides as with a huge advantage — feeding off the crowd helps all phases of our team,” senior wide receiver Hayden Mitchell said.

In the opening matchup against William & Mary, attendance in Scott Stadium was 42,982 — around 70 percent of Scott Stadium’s 62,900-person capacity. Since then, attendance has been over 36,000 in every other home football game this year — including an early 11 a.m. kickoff against Illinois, which saw 60,096 fans show up. The Cavaliers have stormed to a 6-2 record, and the most recent game against Georgia Tech saw the highest attendance of the year with 45,875 fans.

Sophomore goalkeeper Holden Brown from the men’s soccer team also expressed similar feelings of admiration for fans at home games. Until this year, he hadn’t experienced a season with fans in Charlottesville. This season, he’s played in multiple games with upwards of 7,900 fans in attendance at Klöckner.

“[The fans] are always so loud and energetic,” Brown said. “I love being out there and seeing people of all ages watching our games.”

While outdoor stadiums did allow families to watch games starting in the fall of 2020, these crowds were not the same as the ones seen in packed, pre-pandemic stands.

“Playing in an empty stadium is a weird feeling,” Brown said. “Once you get used to having fans, it’s weird just having your parents there. I appreciate the energy and atmosphere [all of the fans] create.”

Mitchell also emphasized how fan engagement tactics like the 4th Side have added to the level of hype the community is bringing this year. The 4th Side is a “rallying point around which Cavaliers can join together and support Virginia Football,” according to the University. Virginia football consists of the offense, defense and special teams, which serve as three sides of the team. The fans make up the 4th Side, and the movement was brought to life to encourage fan support and involvement for the Cavaliers.

“We’re all really hopeful and looking forward to what the new 4th Side movement will bring in terms of fan support,” Mitchell said. “It’s been a term we’ve used within our team the past couple of years, so now that the fans are on board I think it will take it to the next level.”

Fans this season in Scott Stadium have already been treated to three night games, an early game and an afternoon game. Mitchell said the first game of the season — a night game against William & Mary — was one of the highlights of having fans back this year.

“The football team has a few more exciting games left in Charlottesville this season. The Cavaliers are set to take on both Notre Dame and Virginia Tech at home — a couple of match-ups that Mitchell is particularly looking forward to.”

“With a program like [Notre Dame], there will be a different feel to the weekend, and a lot of people that would normally be on the fence about coming will show up,” Mitchell said.

In big games like the Notre Dame matchup, fans can make all the difference. This is not only left at Scott Stadium, but other athletic facilities too. Amber Ezechiel, a senior back for the field hockey team, described the unique energy that fans bring to the game and how without them, sports simply aren’t the same.

“It was sometimes so quiet last year, even with the other sporting events, [and] having fans back in the stands now makes you realize that they are a part of the game too,” Ezechiel said. “The most crowded game so far has been Duke. The stands were packed. Tied 2-2 in regular time, we made the difference and scored. [Fans] make such a difference.”

As a senior, Ezechiel is looking forward to having fans at field hockey’s senior day, which is scheduled for Friday’s matchup against North Carolina.

“It’s my last home game ever for UVA, so that is definitely a game with a lot of emotions, and I expect a lot of people to show up,” Ezechiel said.

Even student-athletes who are new to Virginia recognize the importance of fans being in the stands at games. Graduate middle blocker Alana Walker, a transfer from Northwestern, is in her first year as a Cavalier with the volleyball team. She noted that fans at Memorial Gym have already welcomed her with open arms.

“The fans are always so loud and supportive, it truly feels like home,” Walker said. “I think they elevate our play. You don’t realize that impact they have on the game until they’re gone. My family comes to every game, so not having them there also impacted me and was something I had to adjust to.”

Now that full-capacity sports events are back after a long year, the crowds have been electric. From tailgating before football games to watching soccer and field hockey win thrillers in overtime, the community has rallied around the Cavaliers and made the turnout for athletic events special this fall.

Clearly, the support and dedication that Virginia fans provide doesn’t go unnoticed. These athletes offer just a glimpse into Virginia Athletics and the appreciation Virginia athletes feel towards the Charlottesville community in general — a community that is integral to the University’s success.

The more we get out there, watch games and support our student-athletes, the better off this community will be.
Terry McAuliffe is the right choice for Virginia
The Editorial Board encourages all in our community to vote for Terry McAuliffe for governor

Since Virginia’s last gubernatorial election four years ago, the Commonwealth and the country itself have witnessed unprecedented change. From responding to COVID-19 to finally grappling with Virginia’s deep and ongoing painful history, lawmakers in Richmond certainly had plenty on their plates. In 2021, Democrats gained control of both chambers of the General Assembly for the first time since 1993, marking a fundamental shift in the political direction of the Commonwealth. However, as Virginia is the only state in the country which bars its governors from serving more than one consecutive term, the time has come for incumbent Ralph Northam to pass the torch.

Two candidates on the ballot have a chance to shape Virginia’s future — Democrat Terry McAuliffe and Republican Glenn Youngkin. The stakes could not be higher. Virginia’s ability to fully reopen has become a feasible reality with higher rates of vaccinations. Likewise, the pursuit of racial justice for Virginia’s role in perpetuating white supremacy remains far from complete. Moreover, with the future of Roe v. Wade hanging in the balance, the need for a pro-choice governor could not be more important. Given the enormity of these stakes and the clear contrast between the candidates and their respective platforms, our decision is clear. The Editorial Board enthusiastically endorses Terry McAuliffe to be the next Governor of Virginia.

McAuliffe, having previously served as Governor, is certainly no stranger to public service. During his term, McAuliffe was forced to work with a Republican-controlled General Assembly that was antagonistic. Not only was he successful in restoring voting rights to nearly 200,000 convicted felons, but he also brought tens of thousands of new jobs to Virginia, reaching a historic 57 percent unemployment rate. This wealth of experience is a sharp contrast to Youngkin, who has worked exclusively in the private sector. During his time as head of one of the world’s largest private equity firms, Youngkin amassed a considerable fortune — a resource he has deployed upon throughout the campaign, loaning $17.5 million to his own campaign. Youngkin’s lack of experience coupled with the use of his significant personal fortune to bankroll his campaign are deeply troubling. This is compounded by the fact that Youngkin’s campaign has failed to outline a policy agenda beyond a handful of bullet points.

One of the most pressing issues facing voters this November is how the state will emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite an overwhelming consensus that vaccines are safe and effective, the political right has continued to fan the flames of confusion and fear. Youngkin has repeatedly tiptoed into this playbook, opposing mandates for vaccines and masks. This irresponsible stance is a threat to public safety and disqualifying. Conversely, McAuliffe has embraced vaccine mandates as the best possible strategy for safely reopening Virginia’s economy and keeping its most vulnerable residents safe.

In addition, we acknowledge the progress that has been made under Gov. Northam in atoning for Virginia’s painful history of white supremacy. This progress, however, is far from complete, and the Youngkin platform only seeks to hinder future strides. For example, the Youngkin campaign has sought to ban the teaching of so-called “Critical Race Theory” in class rooms throughout Virginia. However, Republican fears about CRT are just one — fears. Not only is there no mention of CRT in Virginia’s Standards of Learning, but calls for its removal are a distraction from necessary change.

Attention has also shifted in recent months to the future of Roe v. Wade as the Supreme Court is due to hear several cases this term seeking not only to restrict its protections but even overturn it very next. Youngkin has made his anti-abortion stance clear, seeking to enact a pain threshold law—a measure that would effectively restrict all abortions past 20 weeks. Conversely, McAuliffe has said he would codify Roe’s protections into Virginia’s constitution. Women’s access to reproductive healthcare would be imperiled by a Youngkin governorship.

Perhaps most concerning of all has been Youngkin’s refusal to distance himself from former president Donald Trump. Not only has Youngkin been endorsed by Trump, but he has called for enhanced voting security measures and refused on numerous occasions to condemn the former president, even following the insurrection at the Capitol Jan. 6. Although Youngkin has sought to portray himself as a common-sense conservative, his association with — and at times even embrace of — Trump is dangerous.

Ultimately, Virginia finds itself at a crucial crossroads. Voters — especially college students — must make their voices heard, as polling has tightened considerably in recent weeks. Every vote matters. The choice this November is clear — Terry McAuliffe promises to lead Virginia into the future. The question is whether we will move in that direction.
The increasing effects of climate change demand that environmental policy be front and center in November’s gubernatorial election

NICOLE CHEBILI

On Youngkin’s website, he says we “have a lot we need to get done here in Virginia, and we need to start strong.” And he is right — there is a lot to get done here in Virginia. But in order to “start strong,” that must first tackle an issue that, if not dealt with, will result in utter catastrophe. It is only a matter of time. By 2050, 100-year storm surges will become 10-year or more frequent events. The effects of climate change are speeding up, and failing to recognize this will only further hurt Virginia’s infrastructure and economy. This isn’t just a call for Youngkin, but all individuals with some semblance of influence, to do better. Climate change is real. It’s real and its effects are real. The longer it takes to realize that, the further behind this nation and our Commonwealth will be in the efforts to mitigate it. Any politician that currently lacks an environmental plan is unreliable, ignorant and apathetic towards their constituents. If they truly cared, they would jump at the chance to rescue their state from the chocking block of climate change. In the words of Youngkin, there is a lot to get done here. However, this is because we have done so little in the past. This gubernatorial election must change that.

No matter where you lean politically or which candidate you support, it is in your best interest to support a candidate with an environmental policy.

NICOLE CHEBILI

Columnist for The Cavalier Daily. She can be reached at opinion@cavalierdaily.com.

Thursday, October 28, 2021 | 13

Students should prioritize state elections

Students should be as involved and engaged in state and local elections as they are in national elections

Lack of engagement in state politics is a widespread and debilitating issue throughout the Commonwealth. National politics — like Supreme Court cases, congressional and presidential elections — are more widely advertised, discussed and participated in, even though state and local politics are more impactful to citizens’ lives. In order to maximize the effects of our advocacy and exercise our right to vote to the fullest extent, students should be as involved and engaged in state and local elections as they are in national elections.

The University has a particularly engaged student body when it comes to political action, but unfortunately, most of the engagement comes from the presidential elections. Low voter turnout in non-presidential elections is also reflected in Student Council and referendum elections, in which only 24.9 and 25.4 percent of students participated in, respectively. While still not reaching a majority of students, these elections saw an incredible increase in turnout compared to last year. We need to continue to exercise our right to vote and extend our engagement to the state level.

As a public university, state policy and law control many operations at the University. According to a study commissioned by the General Assembly, “state operating funding per in-state student is one-third less than it was in the late 1990s.” These declines in state funding have led to increased tuition at Virginia’s schools. As a public institution, the University is one of the most important and most-fought-for rights we have as citizens. If they truly cared, they would jump at the chance to rescue their state from the chocking block of climate change. In the words of Youngkin, there is a lot to get done here. However, this is because we have done so little in the past. This gubernatorial election must change that.

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National politics garners more attention among the student body, but our advocacy can be more powerful within our state.
We’ve all been there — you’re taking notes in class when you find your attention slipping. Your eyes innocently fall on a classmate near you, also diligently taking notes, and that’s when you see it.

They’re writing with their left hand.

When you first notice this phenomenon — perhaps in kindergarten — it’s shocking. A little scary even, like seeing someone walking towards you upside down on their hands. Writing with the left hand? But the right hand is for writing! You know that. I know that.

And yet when you ask the teacher, in a panic, why that other student is writing that way, they just smile and shake their head.

“It’s normal,” they tell you. “Some people are just left-handed.”

And young as you are, you take this as fact. You begin to navigate a world filled with left-handed scissors, left-handed guitars and even left-handed notebooks. And you feel the wrongness of it all, but you just keep going, accepting the status quo.

Well, I’m here to set the world right — left-handed people are just pretending.

A recent study conducted by The Association of Right-Handed Skeptics has shown that in fact there is no evidence these self-proclaimed “lefties” have any actual reason to be writing with their left hand. They are just doing it to annoy you.

Haven’t you ever heard a “lefty” complain about how the world is designed for right-handed people? And under your disgust, didn’t you feel kind of bad for them? That’s their play.

“Left-handedness,” or LHDD — left-handed delusion disorder — bears no connection to genes or neural pathways, and any research suggesting so has been ruled fraudulent by our team of scientists.

This type of left-affirming research is actually funded by so-called “geneticists” and “cognitive neurosurgeons,” claiming to have studied in obviously made-up places like “Johns Hopkins” and “William and Mary.” Try to be a discerning reader — do those sound like real schools to you? No. Those are just people’s names.

Alleged “left-handed people” chose this burden. They chose to write in such a way that ink is immediately smudged. They chose to add unnecessary athletic challenges by catching with the wrong hand. In the past, young “left-handed” children have been punished by teachers and parents for not using their right hand and forced to do it the correct way.

In fact, the fist-bump was invented by “left-handers” as a technique to avoid acknowledging right-handed superiority through the handshake.

The hard truth is that it’s all an act — a worldwide conspiracy theory to make you and your fellow right-handed people uncomfortable. Wake up, America!

So, the next time you see your classmate scribbling away with their left hand, let them know that you know the truth. Show them that there’s a better way.

The right way.

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By Robert Exhaust(ed)

Teresa Michael | Cartoonist

“Two roads diverged in a wood... and I took the one less traveled... and regretted it.”
WEEKLY CROSSWORD PUZZLE
Abby Sacks | Puzzle Master

Across
1. Usual, common.
4. The middle of a ship.
9. In a feudal system, a landowner under the protection and servitude of a lord.
10. To assert one's control over another; tyrannize.
11. The following day, archaic.
12. A drink, usually other than water.
13. R&B artist whose real name is Gabriella Wilson.
14. Currency used in Portugal before the euro.
15. Every first-year student at the University is assigned a faculty _____.
16. In symbolic logic, to _____ a premise results in the creation of the logical complement.
17. In volleyball, an overhead contact with the ball.
18. In the idiom, to be caught this way is to be surprised.
19. The University has two of these types of societies: Jefferson and Washington.
20. Riverdale character who is a member of the Southside Serpents and shares a name with a type of flower. (Two words)
22. Type of place that is empty or uninhabited.
23. Specialty size for women's clothing with smaller proportions.

Down
1. The first Tuesday of this month is voting day.
2. Instagram privacy feature that allows the user to hide another person's comments from the rest of their followers.
3. Nicki Minaj song that became the first solo female rap song to reach one billion views on YouTube.
4. In chemistry, a different molecule that has an identical formula.
5. Shape of a thin crescent moon.
6. Cold remedy used to treat minor injuries by minimizing swelling or muscle spasm. (Two words)
7. A set of sequential books that follow the same characters or story.
12. Early; in good time, archaic.
15. Virginia state elections happen on these years, dissimilar to most other states.
16. In the third season of the show You, Henry is this to Joe and Love.
17. To move a sports team to a lower division.
19. Hindi for "queen."
20. Members of the lower house of the Virginia General Assembly are referred to as this.
22. The Facebook _____ are a collection of documents from whistleblower employees that allege the company made decisions that valued profit over public safety.
23. To hesitate or lose strength, especially in faith.
24. First word in the acronym SARS.
The University announced Sept. 24 that Tessa Ader, an honorary member of the advisory board for the Fralin Art Museum, has gifted the University $50 million to fund the construction of a new performing arts center. The center, which will be built along the Emmer-ijay Corridor, hopes to provide a single space to showcase all of the arts on Grounds.

“The concept is an 1,100-seat performing arts hall, 150 seat recital hall and then an experimental art space,” said Jody Kielbasa, vice-provost for the arts. “And then some additional studio space that could house programs from dance and music and rehearsals for theater, as well as [a] arts kind of performance that could accommodate.”

In time, Kielbasa said his hope is that all of the University’s museums could be relocated to the center, which could provide additional support for the arts.

The prospect of such a center provides incredible new potential for the University’s arts departments and student groups, which have been scattered around Grounds and paid varying amounts of attention since their inception.

The idea is a long time coming — according to Kielbasa, there have been conversations surrounding a new performing arts center for over 30 years.

Assoc. Arts Administration Prof. George Sampson was first hired by the University in 1999 to be the director of development for the arts, putting him in charge of raising arts funding. In a recent interview with The Cavalier Daily, Sampson explained that before he arrived, “the senior leadership of the University made a conscious decision about how they were going to market this University.”

“They said, athletics, sports, that’s what we want,” Sampson said. “From that day in the mid-’70s … on to today, it’s been a fairly steady drumbeat of building up elements within our athletics franchise.”

From the 1970s to the end of the 1990s, annual donations to the Virginia Athletics Foundation grew from around $75,000 to around $4.5 million, while the foundation’s endowment had grown to a value of almost $754 million. The University’s Arts Endowment was not even established until 2014, when it set a goal to reach a total value of $80 million.

In searching for money for the arts in the 1990s, Sampson said he ran into hesitation from people both inside and outside of the University. Richmond donors preferred to give arts funding to the promising arts spaces in Richmond, such as the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and were only willing to give money to athletics programs at the University, as Richmond-area arts facilities were much less promising.

Donors outside of Richmond were also unwilling to donate to the University for other reasons, one being that the University needed to receive more focused on other departments, such as the athletics department and the history department. In his lackluster experiences collecting arts donations at the time, Sampson came to a similar conclusion. Sampson shared one anecdote of a donor from South Carolina who refused to donate to U.Va. Arts because he “wanted[ed] to give to winners.”

According to Sampson, “[t]he donor chose not to give to the arts at the University of Virginia because ‘giving to the arts at U.Va. is like pounding sand down a rat hole.’”

While donors, and in some ways the University, were less than excited about the University’s arts programming in the 1990s and 2000s, the arts department has been more successful in growing fundraising and attention in recent years. Sampson believes that the tone towards the University’s arts has finally changed, and Kielbasa is pleased with his overall success in fundraising for the arts, but still acknowledges room for improvement.

“I always would hope that there would be more [fundraising] because I’m passionate about the arts,” Kielbasa said. “I think the arts provide a remarkable opportunity to bring the student body together… But there’s never been enough [funding]. And I would say that, you know, the University certainly needs additional funding, both for programming and we need more facilities as well, and the performing arts center provides an opportunity for that.”

The newfound possibility of a performing arts center signals a remarkable shift in the potential of University arts programming. Arts students and faculty alike are optimistic that it will forever remedy the lack of attention and funding that U.Va. Arts has faced for many years.

“I really believe that this extraordinary gift of $50 million … [is] a heck of a start,” Sampson said. “It’s very likely to be the one that changes the landscape significantly.”

Lydia Newman, third-year College student and member of First Year Players, is hopeful that the performing arts center will focus more of the University’s priorities on the arts. In particular, she hopes that it will remedy a long-standing struggle with space that student art groups have faced.

“First Year Players performs usually in the Student Activities Building,” Newman said. “Along with, Spectrum Theater, Shakespeare on the Lawn, Paul Robeson Players, all those groups perform in the Student Activities Building, which is [just] a warehouse without a stage. So I’m very excited for what [this] means for all the student-run groups.”

Faculty and students agree that the performing arts center will provide long-awaited possibilities for the arts at the University, but Ader’s $50 million gift alone is not sufficient to build it.

“This is a major gift,” Kielbasa said. “To the best of my knowledge, it is the largest gift in supporting the arts at the University of Virginia, so that’s extraordinary. And in my experience, usually support like this, you know, helps motivate additional support, and that’s certainly our hope … Sadly, $50 million doesn’t pay for a performing arts center these days. So there’s a lot of additional money that we will need to raise in support of that.”

Kielbasa is unsure of how long it will take to open the performing arts center, acknowledging that there is still a lot of fundraising necessary to cover construction costs before any building can begin. However, he is hopeful that this gift will generate enough further excitement and support to allow construction in the near future.

“I think that this is sending a very strong message now that the University is committed to supporting and expanding the arts, and opportunities are there for philanthropic support,” Kielbasa said. “These things do take time, but I’m optimistic that we’re going to start moving at a pace to make all this happen, and I really hope that this inspires other donors to step forward and support the arts at the University because we really have some extraordinary programs and remarkable students.”
These horror films will add some spookiness to Halloween

Each of these excellent movies perfectly evokes an autumnal ambience

Charles Burns | Staff Writer

With the availability of numerous streaming services, it is easier than ever to access horror films. As soon as someone opens Netflix, they’re greeted with an endless array of movie posters, most of them advertising seemingly generic movies that have sometimes skipped theaters altogether. These films can be fun when watched with a raucous crowd, and there are certainly some diamonds in the rough. Still, few of them likely evoke the kind of autumnal, chilling and strangely comforting atmosphere that can be associated with the best horror films—and by extension, Halloween itself.

There’s certainly no shortage of creepy atmosphere in “Alien,” the seminal science fiction horror film that helped to establish the careers of director Ridley Scott and actress Sigourney Weaver. In many ways, it can outperform the other. Despite the endurance battle of which one of them manages to kill the extraterrestrial’s unique ability to assume the likeness of its victims is key to the film’s power and tension. The paranoia and unease inflecting every interaction between the various characters becomes almost as much of an obstacle as the central monster, and Carpenter expertly increases the audience’s anxiety as the situation escalates.

This sense of claustrophobic dread is also present in “Prince of Darkness,” which similarly constructs its characters in a centrally located setting and meticulously ratchets up the horror and suspense. In general, the films share several strengths—gorgeous cinematography, methodical approaches to storytelling, excellent scores, hauntingly ambiguous endings and, perhaps most crucially, that aforementioned atmosphere. Just like “Alien,” these films flawlessly evoke a very particular mood. They become synonymous with the holiday. They are both masterpieces regardless of the time of year, but it almost wouldn’t feel right to watch them without leaves strewn across the ground outside and a brisk chill in the air.

Conventional wisdom would probably be to follow these recommendations with an extended write-up on “Halloween,” another film directed by Carpenter that’s proven to have a long-lasting legacy in the horror genre. Still, it is more rewarding to stumble off the beaten path and recommend another excellent—if wilder—entry in the franchise.

The same could easily be said of “The Night Circus” by Erin Morgenstern. The novel itself is a remarkable — if wilder—entry in the franchise. Though greeted with negative reviews, the film is ripe for re-evaluation. It’s a bold, visceral and terrifying movie that echoes the patient simplicity of Carpenter’s classic for an abrasive look at violence and twisted family dynamics. It follows Laurie Strode, the protagonist of the previous film, as she deals with the fallout of her experience with hallucinating serial killer Michael Myers and, initially unbeknownst to her, her brother. While she attempts to cope with her emotional trauma, Myers, still alive and living a nomadic existence in the countryside, embarks on a quest to find his sister, leaving a heftier body count in his wake.

The film mixes gruesome scenes of violence with surreal imagery and a disturbing examination of Strode’s declining mental health. On top of this, every scene is shot in a disorienting, grainy and often striking visual style. “Halloween II” isn’t for the faint of heart, but it’s a formidable artistic achievement. It’s no less atmospheric than the aforementioned films, but if those strike the viewer as akin to a chill down the spine, this is closer to an uncontrollable panic attack. One would be wise to brace themselves and, if up to the challenge, dive in.

Good books to boost the autumnal spirit

Magical realism, a haunting memoir, found family in university and thought-provoking short stories books to cuddle up with this fall

Carly Aul | Staff Writer

Here to solve all your dark academi-ia dreams is a compiled list of autumnal books. Amongst all the stress at the height of the fall semester, reading for pleasure is a perfect way to decompress and get lost in another world. These four books are well-written, entertaining and an ambient addition to fall itself.

“The Night Circus” by Erin Morgenstern

“The Night Circus” paints the magical and somewhat chilling atmosphere perfect for cozying up on a fall night. The magical Le Cirque des Rêves arrives without warning and presents unbelievable thrills for those who are lucky enough to experience it. Behind the scenes of the circus, a competition is brewing between two magicians unknowingly forced into a longstanding endurance battle of which one of them can outperform the other. Despite the stakes, they’re enamored with each other, and their fates are tested.

The novel is a quintessential part of the magic realism genre and contributes sparkling elements of mystical fantasy without being overwhelming. Its tone is warm, rich and atmospheric from the first sentence. If you’re a sucker for flowery, ultra-descriptive writing tinged with unbelievable imagery—and are willing to put the importance of the plot aside — this one’s for you.

Relationships and magical abilities weave the story through various European settings and dual timelines, creating captivatingly ghastly ambiance. It can be done in description of setting at times, but if you can suspend disbelief and go along for the ride, the story is beautiful.

“The Glass Castle” by Jeannette Walls

“The Glass Castle” is an exceedingly powerful memoir following the nomadic childhood life of Jeannette Walls herself. Four siblings at the mercy of their alcoholic father and mentally-ab- sent mother end up raising themselves, making new homes in various small towns. When family savings dry up, the Walls family settles in a dismal West Virginia mining town to be sup- ported by their estranged grandpar- ents. As Walls’ parents fall deeper into their battles with mental health and substance abuse, the siblings find their own ways to make successful lives for themselves.

Filled with heartwarming banter, profound wisdom and twisted family dynamics, this memoir is unforget-table. Walls describes her childhood in incredible detail, sparring no expla- nation. Audiences become attached to Walls and her siblings, their tragic, delving situation only heightening as they get older. The constant incre- dibility comes from Walls consistent ad- miration and affection for her parents who so obviously have not provided for her. The audiobook is narrated by Walls herself, allowing readers to experience raw emotions in her West Vir- ginia accent. Not to mention, the 2017 movie adaptation starring Brie Larson and Woody Harrelson compliments the literary experience.

“Loveless” by Alice Oseman

“Loveless” comes in as British au- thor Alice Oseman’s fourth young adult contemporary novel and does not disappoint. Georgia is about to enter university and is overly self-conscious about her lack of romantic interest and inability to make new friends. She moves into university alongside her two best friends Pip and Jaun and is contrasted by her outgoing roommate Rooney. As she begins to navigate uni- versity alongside romantic and platon- ical friendships, her own coming-of- age story unfolds as she explores her sexuality.

“Her Body and Other Parties” by Carmen Maria Machado

“Her Body and Other Parties” is a collection of eight short stories where Carmen Maria Machado destroys borders between fantasy and reality, tackling trials and tribulations which are both fantastical and emotionally. Machado combines the art of retelling and original psycho-

logical stories to explore the complex- ities of women’s bodies, how they are treated and how women manage their bodies. The stories are unsettling, eye opening, comedic, sexy, queer, candid and are capable of sparking nuanced and layered conversations about their provocative content and how the sto- ries manifest themselves into everyday life.

This collection is not only a stun- ning debut, but also a National Book Award Finalist. “Her Body and Other Parties” can be enjoyed like a normal novel, from start to finish, or can be cherry picked as each story stands alone with its own set of themes and goals. Elements of folklore, fairy tales and science fiction are also woven throughout the stories. “The Husband Stitch” is a retelling of the childbirth myth of the same name — in which delivery doctors stitch up women after childbirth to please their husbands — and “Innervory” compares the com- plexities of emotion and attempting to remain in safe, safe spaces amidst an epidemic. The stories themselves are very obscure and can be difficult to inter- pret individually. Readers must sus- pense themselves and lean into the feminist symbolism which makes this collection worthwhile.
Experts share guidance and resources on how to engage in conversation and break the stigma surrounding mental health

Tahi Wiggins | Staff Writer

As a considerable amount of people struggle with mental illness in Virginia and nationwide, depression has become increasingly prevalent on college campuses. As such, it’s important for students to know how to recognize the signs of depression and best practices for helping their peers cope.

Approximately 1 in 20 adults in Virginia live with a serious mental illness, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, while approximately 8 percent of people across the United States experience depression every year.

Comparatively, one in four college-age individuals have a diagnosable mental illness.

Joey Tan, a clinical psychologist and assistant professor from the Department of Family Medicine at the University, Margaret Edwards, program director of Counseling and Wellness Services at the Maxine Platzer Lynn Women's Center and Abby Palko, director of the Women's Center, spoke to the prevalence of depression and mental health concerns in college communities, as well as the importance of caring for others.

Despite the prevalence of mental illness, much of the discussion around depression and other mental health concerns tends to be shrouded by stigma. Tan said, “Unfortunately, there’s a lot of stigma that still lingers in our communities, in our society more generally, about depression and real mental health concerns in general,” Tan said. “It’s important to continue to normalize that and to really kind of emphasize that this is just part of health, as part of any other kind of health condition that people freely talk about.”

Tan compared depression to withdrawal — a continued detachment from a life one used to be engaged with. Like withdrawal, Tan said, depression is characterized by a persistent, chronic low mood and decreased energy along with the feeling of one’s world getting a lot smaller.

While depression and other mental health concerns can affect anyone, historically marginalized populations have exacerbated risk of suffering from depression. LGBTQ+, people, for example, have more than double the rates of mental illness as the general population. Experiencing discrimination makes developing a sense of belonging much more difficult, and Edwards said having a sense of belonging is a protective factor against depression and other mental health concerns — particularly during one’s college years.

“Identity formation and relationships are the two great developmental tasks of early adulthood,” Edwards said in an email statement to The Cavalier Daily. “It makes sense that when someone has intersecting identities that have been rejected in society historically, these developmental tasks are harder to navigate.”

In addition to struggling with mental health concerns, many individuals have difficulty accessing care. More than half of the people in the country who have a mental health condition did not receive any treatment last year, Tan noted.

The lack of racial and cultural diversity among professional therapists hinders students’ sense of connection when they seek counseling services. In 2019, 83 percent of the U.S. psychology workforce was white, 70 percent was female and 95 percent was without disabilities.

Palko explained this traces back to the accessibility and selection during professional training.

“The unfortunate fact is that the mental health professions are still overwhelmingly staffed by white, middle-class women,” Palko said. “Schools that train therapists should be paying attention to that and doing their best to recruit a diverse pool of applicants to turn into a diverse pool of counselors.”

Palko further pointed out that counselors are trained to facilitate a therapeutic relationship inclusive of any identity. In some cases, however, having a similar identity helps those receiving care build trust with providers more easily.

“The identity pieces fall to the side as you dig into what the issues are that brought you there,” Palko said. “Having someone who has a lived experience that mirrors yours is really helpful — you don’t have to explain the importance of things you can just dig in.”

Tan said one of the important things that students can do to support peers with depression is to offer suggestions in seeking professional help.

Palko pointed out that counseling services are free of charge for students at the University. Services such as individual or group therapy, psychiatric services, drop-in consultations, referral to other professionals, and emergency services can be accessed by contacting the University’s Counseling and Psychological Services online or by phone.

Some students, such as the Young Democratic Socialists of America at U.Va., are advocating for CAPS to create a larger staff of more diverse professionals to increase access to quality mental health services on Grounds.

Palko explained that the University works to make sure that students are able address barriers to care such as the ability to pay for services, transportation, navigating insurance and accessing the various resources that the University offers. The University rolled out TimelyCare at the beginning of October, which gives students free and ready access to 24/7 mental healthcare counseling without requiring insurance.

Besides directing peers to professional care, there are other ways students can be supportive and helpful for people who are depressed. Peers can provide a listening ear and emphasize that people with depression are not facing these challenges alone.

The lack of racial and cultural diversity among professional therapists hinders students’ sense of connection when they seek counseling services. In 2019, 83 percent of the U.S. psychology workforce was white, 70 percent was female and 95 percent was without disabilities.

“The concept is you always support in and you always dump out,” Palko said. “You get support from people who are less impacted by the issue, and you support people who are more impacted by it. And that’s how we have a web of community care.”

The issue of depression in college environments is multi-layered, still shrouded by social stigma and sometimes exacerbated by historical marginalization. As suggested by experts, peers can be supportive by encouraging those with depression to maintain networks of community care.
U.Va. and MBU seek better care for those with disabilities

The joint initiative trains future health professionals on treating children with developmental disabilities in the Blue Ridge region

Alison Lim | Staff Writer

Both the University and the greater Charlottesville area saw an addition to its health care system in August — Education Prof. Micah Mazurek and Dr. Beth Ellen Davis began to co-direct one of the newest Leadership Education in Neurodevelopment and Related Disabilities programs in the country in collaboration with Mary Baldwin University.

Mazurek has high hopes for the collaboration with Mary Baldwin University’s Murphy Deming College of Health and Sciences. Both Mazurek and Davis trained as LEND fellows prior to their time at the University.

“We don’t have physical therapy and occupational therapy programs here, and those are two really important disciplines when you think about children with disabilities and the therapies that they need access to,” Mazurek said. “So we were really fortunate that Mary Baldwin University has both of those training programs.”

Davis, a developmental and behavioral pediatrician and professor in the School of Medicine, previously served as the director of the LEND program in Seattle and hopes the new LEND program will address the underrepresented healthcare needs of children and families in the Blue Ridge region.

“Along with many of the training programs that we have … we have other partners up and down the Blue Ridge Mountains, from James Madison University, Virginia Tech, U.Va., Wise [and] Appalachian State University,” Davis said. “We are focusing on how to better serve individuals and families in rural areas, and so we thought it fitting that the title be Blue Ridge LEND.”

The LEND programs began in 1993, with locations expanding across the country to support the growth of leaders in health care. The Blue Ridge LEND Program is one of 60 federally-funded interdisciplinary programs of its kind under the Autism Collaborative Accountability, Accountability, Research, Education and Support Act. Mazurek and Davis received a $2.2 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and will use the money to advance the systems of care for individuals with disabilities.

“With the training we are providing, graduate students and those pursuing masters, doctoral and post-doctoral degrees from any school who are interested in training on an application basis, fellows from a diverse number of fields — such as medicine, specialized education, speech-language pathology and self-advocates — work in health care clinics that provide comprehensive assessment and treatment proposals to rule out or diagnose individuals on the autism spectrum or those with other developmental disorders. They also gain hands-on experience interacting with young patients and their families in cultivating a well-educated and comprehensive support system around the patient that meets their unique needs.”

“We’re having our trainees come in, observe, participate, learn the strategies or techniques associated with those evaluations,” Davis said. “Some of them learn much more in depth and for many more hours than others, but everybody has a minimum of 100 hours of clinical contact with children and their families with disabilities as part of this program.”

Anyone interested in the LEND program can become more involved through its Virtual Lunch & Learn lecture series. Each Friday, community members and individuals interested in learning about disabilities can join meetings to discuss and learn about the topic for that week. Topics are evidence-based and relevant to current topics in the health care disciplines pertaining to disabilities.

“The Lunch & Learn events provide the interdisciplinary nature Mazurek and Davis hope to establish within LEND. Practicing professionals — from dentists to teachers — can learn how to better serve children with developmental disabilities in their professions.

“Decades ago … we didn’t know that there were certain genetic diseases that cause or look like other things,” Davis said. “So many people out in practice even — not just the students who are learning it for the first time, but many practicing professionals are unaware of the field of developmental disabilities in autism. And so [the program is] an opportunity to provide up-to-date, evidence-based training.”

Next year, the program plans to introduce a self-advocate role for individuals with significant disabilities to be a source of input for improving their care. Davis hopes for it to be integrated into their leadership training program.

“The role models the importance of representation … and it also allows room for us to prioritize the quality of family-centered care,” Davis said.
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