

THE CAVALIER DAILY

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LEIGH BAILEY, KAYLA MOORE, CALEB REGAN & CAT WHITE | THE CAVALIER DAILY

EDITORIAL: Shared governance is dying while our Board prospers

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Following Ryan's community initiative

as the University 10th president

Weighing their place in U.Va. presidential search, students hope for Mahoney? leader with integrity

University community leaders gather at the Rotunda to speak about interim President Mahoney

Student Council passes resolution to uphold student voices during presidential search

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Paul Mahoney, former School, selected as interim

DOJ reveals admissions policy



Ryan's resignation & the aftermath

CD Staff Writers

U.Va. President Jim Ryan announces his resignation

University President Jim Ryan announced his resignation to the University community Friday afternoon, following the Board of Visitors' acceptance of his resignation Thursday. In his statement, sent via email to the entire community, Ryan said that choosing to remain in his position would threaten employees' jobs, researchers' funding and students' financial aid and visa access.

"I am inclined to fight for what I believe in, and I believe deeply in this University. But I cannot make a unilateral decision to fight the federal government in order to save my own job," Ryan wrote.

Robert Hardie, outgoing Rector of the Board, confirmed in a statement to The Cavalier Daily that he had accepted Ryan's resignation on behalf of the Board "with profound sadness."



Jennifer Wagner Davis to serve as acting University president

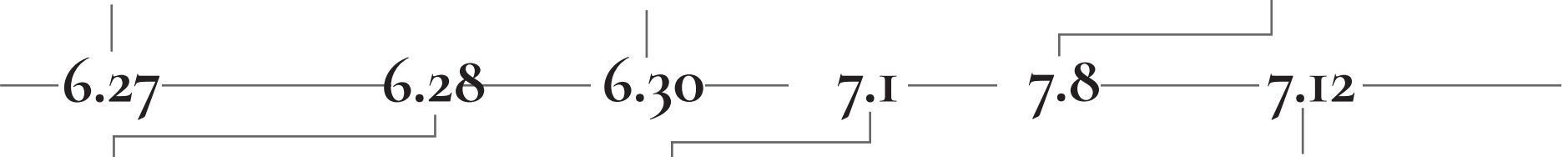
Robert Hardie and Rachel Sheridan, outgoing and incoming Rectors of the Board of Visitors, announced Monday that Jennifer Wagner Davis, executive vice president and chief operating officer, will serve as acting University President effective on the date when President Jim Ryan formally leaves his position and until an interim President is appointed.

Virginia Senate threatens consequences if U.Va. Board chooses a new president

Following the resignation of University President Jim Ryan, the Board of Visitors is now tasked with the responsibility of finding an interim and later, a permanent president. But Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell, D-Fairfax, says if they move forward with choosing one with a particular ideology, there may be consequences.

"I think they should be careful about who they pick as an interim," Surovell said.

The top Democrat in the Senate warned in particular about choosing former Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli, or any other candidate without a higher education background.



Charlottesville community protests University President Jim Ryan's resignation

University students, staff and Charlottesville community members gathered on the Lawn Friday afternoon to demonstrate their support for University President Jim Ryan following the news of his resignation earlier that day. Hundreds of community members turned out with individuals chanting, giving speeches and waving signs to express their anger and fear at the federal government's interference in higher education.



Letters from DOJ reveal threats to U.Va. over admissions policies, Ryan's leadership

Between April 11 and June 17, the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division sent seven letters to University officials, according to documents obtained by The Cavalier Daily through a Freedom of information Act request.

In these letters, the Justice Department sought confirmation that the University had removed affirmative action from its admissions policies and had ended Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives. Some letters also alleged that the University had failed to protect students against antisemitism. The letters did not confirm whether or not the Justice Department's demands had been met.

U.Va. Faculty Senate overwhelmingly adopts a no confidence vote in Board of Visitors

The Faculty Senate held an emergency meeting Friday as part of ongoing discussions surrounding the University's next steps towards choosing a new president. In the meeting, the Faculty Senate passed a resolution for a vote of no-confidence in the Board. The resolution passed 46 to 6, with eight senators abstaining.

"The Faculty Senate expresses no confidence in the Board of Visitors for not protecting the University and its president from outside interference, and for not consulting with the Faculty Senate in a time of crisis, actions that are inconsistent with its duties under the Code of Virginia and the Board's Statement of Visitor Responsibilities," faculty said in the resolution.

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA

SEARCH

FACULTY SENATE

COMMITTEES CONSTITUTION AND BY LAWS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FACULTY SENATE HANDBOOK SENATORS SENATE RESOURCES

HOME / RESOLUTION ON THE OBLIGATIONS AND CONDUCT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA BOARD OF VISITORS

Resolution on the Obligations and Conduct of the University of Virginia Board of Visitors

WHEREAS, the code of the Commonwealth of Virginia states that the University's Board of Visitors, shall "grant to the president of the University supreme administrative direction over all the schools, colleges, divisions and branches of the University;"

WHEREAS, in its Statement of Visitor Responsibilities, the University's Board of Visitors states that "Visitors actively safeguard principles of academic freedom for the University and its faculty and endeavor to protect the University from outside influences seeking improperly to shape it;"

WHEREAS, we are aware that in the spring of 2025, the University's Rector and Board of Visitors were in receipt of a series of letters from representatives of the United States Department of Justice objecting to alleged violations of federal law and policy and demanding information;

WHEREAS, the tone and content of the letters from the Department of Justice can reasonably be understood to constitute outside influences seeking improperly to shape the governance of the University and the power of the president of the University to control the administrative direction of the institution;

Ryan's resignation & the aftermath

U.Va. announces search committee for permanent president

The University announced a new special search committee to find its 10th president and replace former University President Jim Ryan, a spokesperson announced Friday. The committee features 10 sitting Board of Visitors members — including the faculty and student representatives. Additionally, there are also current University administrators, faculty and alumni. The only current undergraduate student on the committee is the student representative to the Board.

Ryan resigned at the end of June following pressure from the Department of Justice to resign or face losing federal research funding and financial aid. Jennifer Wagner Davis is currently serving as acting president.



Paul Mahoney, former dean of Law School, selected as interim president

Paul Mahoney, the former dean of the School of Law between 2008 and 2016, will serve as the University's interim president following former University President Jim Ryan's resignation at the end of June. The Board of Visitors announced his appointment at the end of the special meeting Monday.

Jennifer Wagner Davis, executive vice president chief operating officer, has been serving as acting president since Ryan's resignation per the University's Continuation of Operations Plan. The Board did not specify at the meeting when this appointment will be effective or when Davis will officially step down.

Student Council passes vote of no confidence in the Board of Visitors

Student Council passed a resolution Friday declaring no confidence in the Board of Visitors, expressing frustration with the current presidential search process and condemning what the resolution called the Board's failure to engage in dialogue about this process with student leaders. The resolution was adopted by Student Council and on behalf of the Fourth Year Trustees and the Second and Third Year Class Councils.

The resolution says that the Board violated its responsibilities by failing to protect the University from outside interference which led to former University President Jim Ryan's resignation. However, much of the reasoning within the resolution's language focuses on the Board's decisions since Ryan's resignation.



Blocked Youngkin Board appointees are not allowed to serve, judge rules

Eight individuals appointed to serve on statewide universities' governing boards by Gov. Glenn Youngkin will not be allowed to sit on those boards, a Fairfax County judge ruled Tuesday. Judge Jonathan D. Frieden said that the plaintiffs — Virginia Senate Democrats, led by Sen. Louise Lucas, D-Portsmouth — demonstrated that allowing these appointees to serve would cause "irreparable harm."

The ruling is a major development in the ongoing battle between Senate Democrats and the state Republicans and officials at three universities. This includes former Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli, appointed by Youngkin in March but blocked by the Senate Privileges and Elections Committee in June.



U.Va. Counsel conducting University-wide compliance review, document shows

Following a series of Board of Visitors resolutions and inquiries from the federal government earlier this year, the Office of University Counsel sent a four-page document to University leadership outlining directions for compliance with civil rights law in late May. This document was intended to be used as a guide in a University-wide review of all policies, programs and practices to ensure that they comply with federal and state laws, according to an email sent from Christa Acampora, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, to department chairs within the College.

Presidential search committee holds first meeting, introduces search firm

The University's presidential search committee — composed of 28 members with connections to the University — met Friday to discuss the search process and to hear from committee members. Board of Visitors Rector Rachel Sheridan also introduced external search firm Isaacson, Miller, which will assist the committee in their search for the University's next permanent president.

Representatives from the firm, which assisted with the 2017 presidential search, provided advice to search committee members and answered questions regarding how the University will recruit and select candidates.



A look at Charlottesville City Council's work over the summer

From school modernization to affordable housing, the Charlottesville City Council used its summer meetings to shape the city's long-term future

Brendon Bordwine | Senior Writer

While much attention this summer was focused on the actions of one of Charlottesville's largest institutions — the University — the Charlottesville City Council spent the summer advancing initiatives on schools, housing, transportation and more. In meetings from May through August, members authorized millions in new investments, made key administrative appointments and reviewed major community needs.

But the season's most significant controversy came in June, when the city attorney's office missed a filing deadline in the lawsuit challenging the Council's 2023 adoption of a new zoning ordinance which designates the type of buildings that can be built in each part of the city. The lawsuit alleges that the city did not follow the law in passing its zoning ordinance because only part of it was approved by the Virginia Department of Transportation.

The mistake temporarily left Charlottesville without any zoning code in effect, but the plaintiffs succeeded in asking the judge to reverse the default judgment while the case plays out in trial.

Proponents of the ordinance say it is designed to spur housing density by allowing more multi-family and mixed-use development, particularly along major corridors. It also includes a requirement that at least 10 percent of units in large projects be designated as affordable, a figure that varies by the median income of the neighborhood.

The implications for University-adjacent housing projects are particularly relevant. Alongside the zoning code, which aimed to create more building density and affordable housing citywide, the Council approved two large developments near Grounds in late 2023 — one on Jefferson Park Avenue and another on Ivy Road. These projects were intended to provide new housing options for students. While development on the projects will continue, new projects like them in Charlottesville could face uncertainty going forward until the lawsuit is resolved.

Charlottesville Mayor Juandiego Wade said he hopes residents will see progress in the near future, adding that the ripple effects of increased housing supply could improve affordability across the market.

"Right now, we have couples who can't get their first apartment because the people in that apartment can't find their first home," Wade said. "When [that] happens, things start to move and everyone can hopefully move up [to] that

next housing that they want. You're going to hopefully start seeing some movement in that over the next year."

Beyond zoning, the Council also turned its attention to longer-term housing solutions this summer. Members allocated more than \$460,000 in Housing Operations and Program Support funding for affordable housing and homelessness programs, extended the city's supplemental rental assistance program through December 2025 and approved business formation for two major redevelopment projects at Westhaven and Sixth Street.

The rental assistance program, funded locally and administered by the Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority, helps low-income residents bridge the gap between what they can afford and actual market rents.

At the Council's May 19 meeting, city councilors received a community briefing from organizations including the Blue Ridge Area Coalition for the Homeless and The Haven to examine tackling homelessness in Charlottesville.

Presenters explained how service providers maintain a "By-Name List," a real-time database that tracks every reported individual experiencing homelessness in Charlottesville. At the time of the report, that list documented 241 people without stable housing.

Wade said the presentation offered a reminder of the scale of the issue.

"We know that on any given night, between 220 and 240 individuals in Charlottesville do not have a place to lay their heads," Wade said. "That's something we are working on at this very moment, trying to find a long-term solution."

The Council also took one of its largest financial steps of the summer by approving the issuance of up to \$38 million in general obligation public improvement bonds on July 21. These bonds give the city authority to borrow money from investors for major construction and infrastructure projects, and then repay it gradually using taxpayer money over the next two decades.

The proceeds are earmarked for projects already included in Charlottesville's five-year Capital Improvement Plan, from fiscal years 2023 through 2027. About \$12.3 million will support public school facilities, while another \$6.6 million is directed toward transportation and access improvements. Nearly \$13 million is planned for upgrades to the city's water, wastewater and stormwater systems, with the remaining portion funding public fa-



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Charlottesville City Hall, located downtown and housing the City Council, seen photographed Aug. 27, 2025.

cilities, safety measures and parks.

Transportation was another area of focus for the Council this summer, with members advancing both immediate funding measures and longer-term planning. In June, the Council signed off on the Move Safely Blue Ridge regional safety action plan, a federally backed initiative that identifies dangerous corridors across the region and makes the city eligible for future grant funding to improve intersections, crosswalks and bike and pedestrian routes.

Members also selected a preferred design change for the East High Street demonstration project, a project which aims to improve safety for pedestrians and drivers along one of the city's busiest corridors.

The Council paired those planning steps with major financial commitments. In July, members approved a \$23.3 million appropriation to cover the city's share of VDOT projects already underway, from bridge replacements to intersection upgrades.

They also advanced more than \$6.6 million in federal transit grants that will help Charlottesville Area Transit purchase and maintain buses. In addition, the Council added \$1.4 million to the Emmet Street Streetscape, a multi-year project that will add sidewalks, bike lanes and transit stops near Grounds.

Wade said the city's long-term goal is to reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and make it easier for residents to walk, bike or ride transit.

"It's important that the public knows that in the future, we really want the focus of our transit to be away from single occupancy vehicles, and more focus on walking, bike lanes and transit," Wade said. "We understand that it's going to be a transition period."

Council members also joined the Charlottesville School Board Aug. 4 for a joint work session that reviewed the condition of school facilities across the city. The review highlighted aging infrastructure across the district, with several schools built in the early to mid-20th century now requiring significant maintenance and modernization.

The presentation noted that schools face widespread issues with outdated mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems, worn flooring and bathrooms that do not meet modern accessibility or design standards.

For example, Greenbrier Elementary School, which was built in 1962 and located in the city's Greenbrier neighborhood, will require an estimated \$8.3 million in capital maintenance projects, including a major HVAC overhaul, new windows and roof replacement. Sum-

mit Elementary School, constructed in 1930 and located off Belmont Avenue, faces an estimated \$6.8 million in repairs, while Trailblazer Elementary School, built in 1925 and located just behind the Corner on 14th Street, requires about \$3 million just to address maintenance concerns.

Across the system, the packet estimated \$101 million in modernization costs spread across multiple fiscal years.

"It costs a lot to maintain the schools, particularly the roofing and the HVAC systems, and many of them have aging electrical systems," Wade said. "It's really expensive."

Looking ahead, Wade said his focus is on stability and follow-through. He emphasized the importance of maintaining core city services despite uncertainty at the federal level and continuing to pursue the goals laid out in the council's strategic plan.

"My personal goals for the city are that we are able to maintain the services that we have in spite of what's happening at the federal level," Wade said. "But basically, it's to create a city where everyone has the ability to thrive, not just live, but to thrive. And if we can do that, man, it'll be awesome."

AI at the University: Preparing for the future

Students and faculty weigh in on artificial intelligence's role in academics as the University continues to adapt to the new technology

Lidia Zur Muhlen | Senior Writer

As generative artificial intelligence becomes increasingly accessible to students since the launch of ChatGPT in 2022, University faculty, administrators and students are all grappling with how to integrate and regulate AI use in classrooms. The University's response spans faculty training programs, department-level policy setting and a student-led governance experiment, all of which work to contend with the ways in which AI is transforming both academic practice and workforce expectations.

Two years ago, the University launched the Generative AI in Teaching and Learning Task Force with a clear, short-term goal — to assess AI's role in education and deliver recommendations to the University. This task force included professors from several of the University's schools and a former chair of the Honor Committee.

Those recommendations have since led to initiatives such as the online course, Teaching in a World of Generative AI, developed by the Center for Teaching Excellence, and the Faculty AI Guides.

Although the University has developed resources to assist students and faculty in their approaches to AI use, Michael Palmer, a member of the GENAI Task Force and director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, stressed that developing a universal policy around AI at the University is not realistic nor desirable. He said that how AI is used looks different on a case by case basis because the ways AI can be used vary depending on the discipline.

"Some disciplines have really leaned into it. [In McIntire], there's lots of potential around data analysis and forecasting and marketing and those types of things," Palmer said. "And then [in] other disciplines, say philosophy, where it's really about ideas and discussion, there's a different approach to how AI can help in those spaces."

For students, however, differences in policies can create confusion. Second-year Commerce student Claire Clark said that while some professors explicitly outline expectations, others do not mention AI at all, leaving students uncertain about how — or whether — they are allowed to use it.

Palmer believes that clarity in each class is critical and that instructors should explain their rationale to students. But creating explicit policies can be difficult, he added, given the pace of AI's evolution.

One solution has been the Fac-

ulty AI Guides, a network established in 2024 and composed of 53 faculty members from 10 schools across the University who have been trained to serve as departmental resources on AI. In this application-based program, faculty guides attend a one-day course for teaching and learning with AI. Guides continue meeting in small groups throughout the year, covering AI literacy, pedagogy, policy development and assignment design. These AI guides also lead workshops, presentations and/or consultations, offering support to faculty, whether they want to integrate AI into their teaching or limit its use.

Each guide is supposed to serve as an ongoing source of knowledge and is responsible for being as up-to-date as possible about recent advancements and uses of the technology.

Kiera Allison, faculty AI guide and assistant professor at McIntire, said her role combines learning, sharing knowledge and helping faculty adapt policy to their curriculum.

"[Faculty are] not going to know who's using AI, so we have to find ways to motivate students to do their own work," Allison said. "It's fine if you don't want your students using AI, but you have to be able to tell them why ... because the tool is available."

Reza Mousavi, AI Task Force member, faculty AI guide and as-

sociate professor of commerce, frames the University's approach as preparing students for a future that is both more technologically advanced and more deeply human. In McIntire, that means recognizing AI's analytic power while emphasizing the human creativity and ethics that turn data into strategy.

"We're not just teaching students how to use a specific AI tool. That would be like teaching someone a particular model of a calculator that will be obsolete in a year," Mousavi said. "We are teaching students how to think, question and create with AI as a partner."

Economics professor Anton Korinek also pointed to the calculator as a useful analogy for AI's role in education.

"When you go to primary school and you learn what multiplication is, you're not allowed to use [calculators] because otherwise, you wouldn't learn basic algebra," Korinek said. "But at higher levels, of course we use them, because otherwise it would be a gigantic waste of time."

He noted that the rapid pace of AI's development makes adaptability as important as technical knowledge. He thinks that all students hold a new responsibility of being "AI-literate" and believes that students should focus on integrating AI into whatever they are studying.

"Ideally, every student should

be their own AI guide," Korinek said. "One of the most valuable things that [professors] could do is ... educate them [on AI] ... Let's stop with the abstract discussions, and let's just make everybody who hasn't [used AI] significantly yet ... have conversations with these systems about what they can do."

Graduate Batten student Ella Duus believes students should have a direct role alongside faculty and administrators in shaping how AI is used in classrooms. She is helping to lead the creation of a Student Technology Council at the University alongside Mona Sloane, assistant professor of data science and media studies.

The council aims to formalize student participation in technology governance — including AI policy — through listening sessions and participatory design workshops that determine its structure and scope. Supported by the office of Online Education and Digital Innovation and the Karsh Institute of Democracy, the project will also produce a research-based blueprint other universities can use to launch similar initiatives.

Duus noted that if AI use is not directly prohibited, many students feel compelled to use it to remain competitive, even if they would prefer to work without it. Clark felt similarly that even without clearcut policy students are missing out if they do not take advantage of the tool.

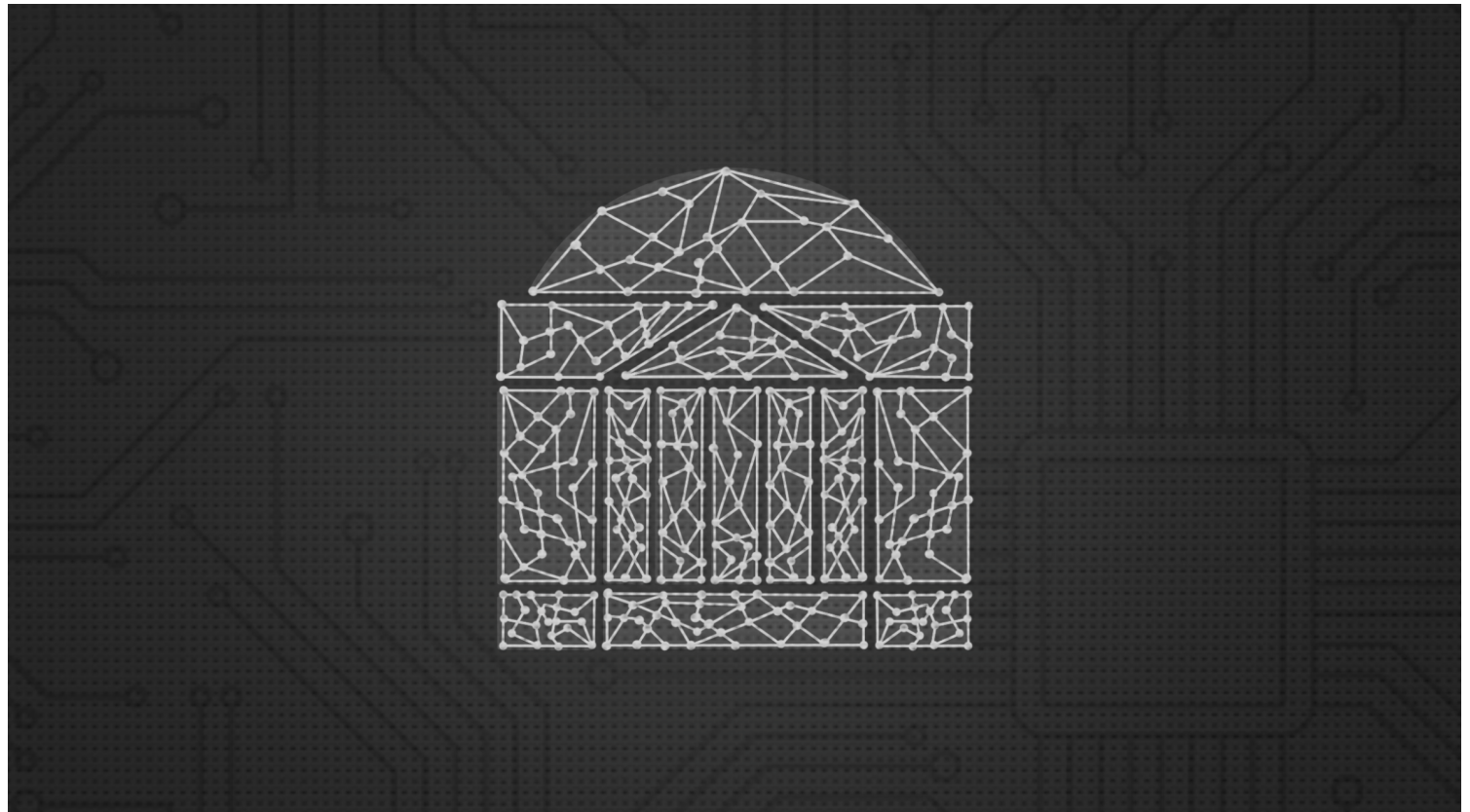
"It's a really valuable resource, and if you use it correctly, it can just really improve any work that you're doing yourself," Clark said. "So if other people are using it and you're not, you're just putting yourself at a disadvantage."

This dynamic, Duus said, makes it critical for students to help define policies that balance AI's potential benefits with the preservation of skills it cannot replicate, such as long-term planning, original idea generation, sound judgment and emotional intelligence. Without student input she says policies risk overlooking the lived realities of how AI is influencing academic choices.

"Anytime the University is soliciting feedback or comments on AI use, even if it's not explicitly from students, take the time to write an email to fill out the form and make your voice known," Duus said. "Every investment that students make now [in] deliberating around AI use is only going to serve them in the long run."

Allison also emphasized the need for education to adapt to new AI technologies.

"We do not exist in a vacuum where we can pretend that education is what it was four years ago," Allison said.



SARAH ST. JOHN | THE CAVALIER DAILY

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Commerce Street Books amplifies local literature scene

Founder Philip Lorish has uniquely tailored the business to connect with readers

Benjamin Apostol | Senior Associate



COURTESY PHILIP LORISH

The store is located on Main Street just minutes from the Downtown Mall in the rear of the Doyle Hotel's lobby.

Commerce Street Books, the newest bookstore in Charlottesville, opened June 28 and hopes to pull its customers both closer to literature and closer to one another. The independent bookstore was founded by Class of 2015 alumnus Philip Lorish, who hopes to support what he calls the “practice of reading” in the Charlottesville community.

“We’re creating value for a community and for folks who want to have an in person experience,” Lorish said.

According to the website, Commerce Street Books is “the modern bookshop Charlottesville deserves.” The store offers shopping and direct communication online as well as membership subscriptions for discounts and exclusive events. The membership model is also meant to create cohesive relationships among customers through occasional members-only programming.

“What makes us unique is that we want to be easy to use, and we want to be as transparent as we can be,” Lorish said. “We want to get people

closer to the prices that they see on Amazon or elsewhere by offering them significant discounts on books with their membership.”

The store is located on Main Street minutes from the Downtown Mall in the rear of the Doyle Hotel's lobby. The space reinforces the openness and modernity Lorish envisioned for his bookstore, with elevated ceilings, full length windows and a minimalist white finish.

“Bookstores should be places where you lose time ... We want to have comfortable seating around and lots of light,” Lorish said, “You should be able to browse without feeling like you’re trapped ... I’ve wanted the store to feel like a relief or a respite.”

Another source of inspiration for Lorish came from his understanding of Charlottesville’s intellectual curiosity. Lorish has spent the better part of two decades living in Charlottesville — the first decade revolved mainly around his studies at the University. Upon finishing his Doctorate in religious studies in 2015, the city became a permanent home. In 2021,

Lorish began independently consulting for business start-ups before being inspired by modern bookstores popping up nationwide.

“I thought to myself, ‘this seems like a great use of time and energy, and it’s something that Charlottesville would respond well to,’” Lorish said.

To that end, Commerce Street hopes to serve as an important intellectual conduit for the entire broader public.

“Charlottesville is a super interesting place for people who want to be around ideas ... There is a really interesting reading public that’s not all attached to UVa. and then there are folks within the UVa. world who want places to speak to other folks,” Lorish said.

During its grand opening — “Big Weekend” from Sept. 5-7 — the store will host three in-store events targeted at varying audiences, with the details of these events available on the store’s Substack and Instagram.

Friday’s event is titled “Books and Bubbles” with Bruce Holsinger, Uni-

versity English professor and bestselling author — followed by Saturday morning’s child-friendly “Doughnuts and Storytime.” The store will then host a used book exchange on Sunday using donations made during the preceding week.

“Reading is a practice in the sense that it requires attention and effort and it’s a real skill,” Lorish said. “A good bookstore can’t read books for you, but it can put the right kinds of books in your hands and surround you with people who are helping you develop your own reading practice.”

To him, the practice of reading is not at all characterized by the allure of instant satisfaction and infinite refreshability that exists in modern entertainment — meaning it requires systems of support.

“There’s always a shiny new object out there that is demanding your attention and is really good at capturing your attention ... Reading requires effort and sometimes support structures,” Lorish said.

Commerce Street will continue with programming throughout the

fall and hopes to broaden its customer base. Lorish says that students in particular could benefit from a broader exploration of Charlottesville, which Commerce Street’s downtown location actively welcomes.

“I would make an explicit appeal to UVa. students to walk down Main Street and get away from the Corner for a little bit, largely because there’s a wide wonderful group of people in Charlottesville that are not afraid of undergrads,” Lorish said. “This place is intended to be comfortable for students and also a place where they can meet people that they otherwise wouldn’t run into.”

In addition to comfortability, Lorish hopes for Commerce Street to evoke the sense of freedom and fulfillment concurrent with the practice of reading.

“Bookstores are a place where people can explore without being graded,” Lorish said. “You get to read stuff because you want to read it. I think that’s really valuable because it’s a good way to live, whether or not it gets you anything.”

The legacy of Jim Ryan's inspirational Arts on the Hill

The monthly performances at Carr's Hill have had a lasting impact on the University's arts culture

Carter Horner | Senior Writer

Hosted at Carr's Hill each month, Arts on the Hill has been home to performances from national staples of pop culture like Sesame Street to University students such as the UVa. bluegrass band and University Singers. Music, poetry, puppeteering and more have filled the space, with the series defined by its diversity of art on display.

From its inception, Arts on the Hill has aimed to take these diverse types of art and present them in a smaller setting with an audience of barely more than a hundred. Jody Kielbasa, vice provost for the arts, said that these tighter-knit performances are a core part of the identity of Arts on the Hill.

"The concept was an intimate experience," Kielbasa said. "Almost like the French art salons they had, in which people would gather together in a home or a smaller environment to share an experience in the arts."

In 2020, former University President Jim Ryan started the ongoing collaboration between his office and UVa. Arts as a way to highlight a variety of artistic performances for students and faculty. The series was a key

part of Ryan's time in office and will continue to define art on Grounds for countless students and staff.

Kielbasa recalled meeting with Matt Weber, chief creative officer and senior advisor to the President, to flesh out specifics for the intimate-style performances which would provide a unique experience that brought everyone on Grounds together. With free admission via a ticket lottery, the monthly events are accessible for students, faculty and staff alike.

The experience of sharing the arts with one another goes beyond just witnessing these performances, with artists often using the space to share tidbits about their work. For example, in his November 2023 performance, Grammy award-winning musician Jon Batiste included insights into his life and creative process. He broke down how he wrote each song and what inspired him to do so.

Similarly, when the cast of Sesame Street came to the University for Arts on the Hill in March 2025 to do a puppet show, they also hosted a workshop where students could talk to the people behind the show and even use the puppets themselves.

The University's own organizations also have ample opportunity to explore their craft with the rest of the student body. Michael Slon, Music professor and director of choral music and director of University Singers, said that Arts on the Hill enabled him to delve into the technicalities of his craft in a way he could not for a typical performance.

"In one case, I took apart a single measure of music with a huge 11-part chord and showed the audience how we build up that harmony," Slon said. "It gives you a view into the magic behind the art."

The opportunity to share these creative processes reflects a larger quality of Arts on the Hill — the sense of closeness between performer and audience. Kielbasa talked about one particularly resonant choral performance that highlighted this quality.

"The guests that were standing with their feet on the floor were sharing the same stage as the singers," Kielbasa said. "You could feel it coursing through your feet, into your body. It was really a very unique experience."

The close company of the Arts on the Hill performances are also a great

place to meet like-minded people. Marilyn Wright, senior associate director of the UVa. Parents Fund, has been a regular attendee of Arts on the Hill event and said that the small audiences gave her a chance to interact with the people around her.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, gatherings like these were not possible. Yet Ryan, Kielbasa and Weber were determined to continue fostering community through the arts. In December of 2020, in place of the annual in-person holiday concerts, the three had the idea to record and upload the concert to YouTube and send it out to nearly 30,000 students, faculty and alumni.

"During that time, they couldn't convene for public events, especially arts events, in an enclosed theater or hall," Kielbasa said. "It really warmed everybody's hearts, and it brought them back to the Grounds of the University in a deeply meaningful way."

Arts on the Hill is not just beneficial for general students and faculty, but also for those performing. It is a great way for artistic students to try performing for the first time and to give themselves exposure.

Second-year College student Erin Stapleton, who performed for Arts on the Hill with the Virginia Women's Chorus, noted the positive impact the event had on her and her peers.

"It gives artists a platform to showcase their skills to a crowd of people who are ready to appreciate and discuss what they see," Stapleton said.

Wright emphasized how Arts on the Hill is not just a performance series, but a space where the University community can revel in the arts and connect with one another across roles and generations. For her, that sense of belonging is at the heart of what makes the program meaningful.

"It's really beautiful, it's happy, it's positive," Wright said. "It brings us all together, all the different ages and reasons for being at UVa., whether you're a student or a faculty member or an employee. It helps build family."

According to Kielbasa, interim President Paul Mahoney has expressed a desire to continue Arts on the Hill in the 2025-2026 academic year, and UVa. Arts is working with him to schedule future events.

Upcoming local arts events offer more than meets the eye

This fall promises an eclectic mix of music, theater, dance and more

Zoe McFarland | Staff Writer

As the fall semester begins, University students are looking forward to enjoying the constellation of arts that the University and Charlottesville have to offer. This fall's arts season does not disappoint, boasting a breadth of events from trusted University drama department productions to momentous visits from big names like Adam Sandler and Tyler Childers.

On Grounds, the University Department of Drama will proceed with their annual Mainstage fall production. This year's show is a darkly comic play entitled "Continuity," written by Bess Wohl and directed by Doug Grisom. The story follows a film crew in the New Mexico desert working against the clock to produce a blockbuster. The crew's struggles with environmental threats and Hollywood pressures invites audiences to engage with and reflect on timely, real world issues. "Continuity" will run from Oct. 30-Nov. 1 and Nov. 5-8 in the Helms Theatre.

Third-year College student Virginia Keen, cast as the produc-

er's assistant, is excited to share what she believes will be a very unique show with the Charlottesville community.

"I think it is very provoking in a way," Keen said. "I hope that audience members will go home and just continue to think about their impact on the world, what role they have to play, and I hope that they also find humor. I hope this makes them feel [and] I hope this makes them laugh."

The Fall Dance Concert, another staple of the Department of Drama, will run Nov. 20-22 in the Culbreth Theater. The concert will be produced by Kim Mata, associate professor and program/artistic director of dance. This annual production will showcase works by students, faculty and guest choreographers, incorporating both live and recorded dance to create innovative worlds of movement.

Throughout the rest of the University, there are numerous ways — both subtle and obvious — to get involved with the arts as the year progresses. Students can audition for a cappella groups like

the Virginia Belles or Hullabahoos, pay a visit to local exhibitions at the Fralin Museum of Art or Ruffin Gallery, attend comedy performances, or even show face at a Saturday darty to hear a student band play.

Beyond Grounds, greater Charlottesville will host a variety of other arts events, staying true to the city's roots in country, folk and bluegrass while also incorporating more eclectic and experimental events.

American country singer-songwriter Tyler Childers will be making a stop on his tour in Charlottesville Sept. 22, set to play in John Paul Jones Arena. Third-year College student Ford Chapman, who has secured tickets, views this event as a quintessential representation of the Charlottesville music scene.

"I think that the music that comes here reflects the people pretty well, and having bluegrass with the Blue Ridge Mountains nearby gives a good overall feel," Chapman said.

Chapman also said that the variety of venues in Charlottesville

affords students opportunities to explore arts and entertainment genres they might not otherwise encounter.

For example, The Jefferson Theater music venue will not only host the bluegrass band "Mountain Grass Unit" Aug. 28 but also recently wrapped up a 2000's Dance Party event Aug. 3, demonstrating the diverse spectrum of Charlottesville's entertainment.

Third-year College student Clarissa Russo acknowledged the variety of arts events and opportunities within Charlottesville. As a music major, Russo is alerted to some artistic offerings due to her academic environment but otherwise feels a disconnect between available opportunities and student awareness. She pointed out that many of these occurrences — such as the concerts featuring other types of music besides the regionally popular Americana, country and folk — can go unnoticed by students, as information regarding the events is not always well advertised.

"I feel like I never know when it's happening, and the only rea-

son I would know is because my Music professors talk about it," Russo said.

Russo hopes to explore more of the local music scene, expressing special interest in the jazz scene in Charlottesville. The Downtown Mall offers a plethora of venues to investigate, like Miller's Downtown, which offers a 6 p.m. Jazz Jam every Sunday, and the Whiskey Jar restaurant, which features live music on Fridays and Saturdays.

As academic and personal commitments grow, students should continue exploring Charlottesville's artistic avenues. Information on upcoming events can be found at UVa. Arts and Visit Charlottesville, which both offer online calendars and email newsletters.

"I'm really excited to just get to share [Continuity] with more people ... and to hopefully share an impactful and meaningful story," Keen said. "It'll make you laugh, it'll make you cry. It'll make you question your own opinions and feelings towards real world issues right now."

LIFE

From Oxford to Cape Town, these Hoos go global

University students share their thoughts leading up to, and after completing, summer study abroad programs

Dana Douglas, | Life Editor

The University is renowned for taking its students far and wide — academically, professionally and, well, literally. This summer alone, various study abroad programs welcomed a whopping 1,080 Wahoos, 82 percent of whom participated in University faculty-led or partner programs.

The Cavalier Daily spoke to three students before and after their study abroad programs to get a sense of how the University curates participants' experiences. While crossing the pond poses many logistical challenges and may engender some nerves for students, many of this summer's participants agree that when it comes to study abroad, the University outdoes itself in preparation, organization and support.

Listed No. 15 by the 2022-2023 IIE Open Doors Report in total study abroad students, the University certainly encourages its students to take advantage of its study abroad opportunities. The University itself administers 36 offerings, consisting of education abroad and global internship programs in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Central and South America and Europe.

According to Emily Graber, senior education abroad advisor and program manager, while the academic aspects of an education abroad experience are valuable, the benefits extend far beyond the classroom.

"Professionally, [studying abroad] provides students the opportunity to work on developing and practicing career competencies," Graber said. "And personally, it provides students space to learn and practice important life skills — critical thinking, independence, flexibility, adaptability, resilience, the ability to interact and communicate across differences and more."

Pre-study abroad:

While it is an understatement to say that study abroad is popular at the University — and for good reason — such a trip also poses a unique set of challenges. For this reason, the International Studies Office works diligently to adequately prepare students for their experience. Through constant, extensive emails, in-person meetings and a mandatory Education Abroad Workshop, the ISO ensures that students have all the information and resources needed to thrive throughout their journey.

Niki Patel, participant in the U.Va. in Cape Town summer program and fourth-year College student, said that she and her peers were provided with a packing list, climate expectations and information about the financial and

cultural norms of their host site. She said that this information was especially helpful for the first-time travelers in her program.

"I have traveled a bit before ... but there are a few people on the trip who had never been on a plane," Patel said. "I felt like [the information] was really good for the people who are well-traveled and then people who aren't [well-traveled.]"

In her program, Patel planned to work toward her Global Public Health degree by observing and working in the South African healthcare system. Before she departed for her two-week immersive experience in Cape Town, she said that she felt assured about going abroad with a professor she had previously studied under.

However, she said that she harbored some apprehension about finding her place among local medical professionals. She also said she worried that she wouldn't get as much out of the experience as she would want to, given the short duration of the trip.

"Mainly [I] just stress about ... making sure that I'm not stepping on other people's toes," Patel said. "And because the program is very short ... there's not much substantial work we can really do just because of the time limitation. I want to make sure that what I'm doing is impactful."

Third-year College student Sophie McLaughlin was set to participate in the U.Va. in Lyon six-week program where she would take two French courses — one taught by a local Lyonnais professor, and the other with a University visiting professor. Like Patel, she said that she was both excited and nervous ahead of her trip.

Despite working toward a minor in French, McLaughlin was apprehensive about the language barrier she would encounter in France. Nevertheless, she remained optimistic leading up to her departure and prepared to welcome these new challenges with grace.

"It's nerve wracking heading to a new country to live in a city where English isn't commonly spoken, and my French ... [is] pretty underdeveloped at best," McLaughlin said. "I'm nervous, but I'm also excited to experience an unfamiliar culture and improve [my] language skills."

Despite her worries about the language, McLaughlin credits the College language requirement — having pushed her to study French through the 2020 level — for putting study abroad on her radar.

"It definitely was a plus that U.Va. pushes [students] to take languages at the University," McLaughlin said. "By taking a language [course], I was ex-

posed to many different study abroad programs."

Patel and McLaughlin agreed that among the plethora of resources provided by the ISO in advance of the trip — from packing suggestions to financial aid awards — there was a large emphasis on how to navigate cultural differences. By prefacing regional norms on wardrobe, transportation and conversation with locals, they said that the insight into their upcoming cultural context provided a sense of reassurance.

To supplement the cultural information distributed by the University, Patel opted to conduct outside research on the Cape Town region. However, she said that she expected her preparatory efforts to only go so far, and she said the most important thing would be to maintain an open mind and absorb social norms in conversation with the locals.

"I'm doing my background research ... reading the websites, watching videos. But there's only so much you can do, just through a screen or through a book," Patel said.

As for fourth-year College student Aliza Susatijo, who planned to embark for the U.Va. in Oxford six-week program, watching online creators' travel vlogs was a good way to prepare herself for the cultural differences she might encounter in the United Kingdom. She and her fellow program participants would live and study at University College, exploring the history of Britain both in the classroom setting and through cultural activities.

Like Patel, though, Susatijo said that staying open to cultural learning when she got to Oxford would ultimately be the best way to manage the transition.

"Keeping an open mind and observing everything going on will help me adapt to any cultural differences," Susatijo said.

Post-study abroad:

Following Patel, McLaughlin and Susatijo's post-program return to the United States, the three participants offered reflections on their experiences abroad. The general consensus regarding the structure, organization and community of each program was overwhelmingly positive.

Patel described the invaluable learning environment of her classes, in which she was able to observe Cape Town's healthcare system firsthand — an experience that she said could not have been replicated in an ordinary classroom on Grounds.

"I still felt like I was in the school setting, but it was more applicable. I



COURTESY: NIKI PATEL

Niki Patel, participant in the U.Va. in Cape Town summer program and fourth-year College student, said that she and her peers were provided with a packing list, climate expectations and information about the financial and cultural norms of their host site.



COURTESY: ALIZA SUSATIJO

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COURTESY: SOPHIE MCLAUGHLIN

Third-year College student Sophie McLaughlin was set to participate in the U.Va. in Lyon six-week program where she would take two French courses.

LIFE

wasn't sitting in a lecture hall ... It felt very interactive," Patel said. "As soon as I stepped out of the classroom, I felt like I was immersed in the community that I was just learning about."

Beyond the structure of the classes, Susatijo cited her professors as playing a significant role in her experience studying in Oxford. She said that she enjoyed learning from a diverse array of instructors, and she thinks they got a lot out of the experience, too.

"The professors were all sourced from universities throughout Britain, which made for a great learning experience because they had different perspectives," Susatijo said. "I like to think that the professors also learned a bit from their students when it came to modern-day cultural exchanges."

As for program administration, Patel said that she appreciated the safety measures that University faculty took to ensure that students felt supported and comfortable.

"When we first got there, we were all put in a WhatsApp group chat, and ... if we were going out at night ... we shared locations with the professor," Patel said. "[The faculty] were always recommending safe places to go."

While she appreciated these precautions, Patel said that she never felt unsafe in her host city. Aside from two pickpocketing incidents during the program, she said, her visit to Cape Town was largely uneventful on

that front.

"We were in a very safe area [and] they gave us all the safety protocols beforehand ... [to] make sure you have zippers over your purses [and] make sure you're not walking around with your phone out," Patel said.

While the primary goal of these summer programs was to provide a safe and enriching educational experience, these students said that they found equal value in the time they spent with their cohorts. McLaughlin noted that the structure of the Lyon program facilitated strong connections between herself and her peers, which enabled her to be part of a group of girls who traveled together on the weekends.

"I really liked how [the University] had planned out a lot of trips and restaurant outings for the 30 students and the two professors ... It was really easy to get close to other students in the program," McLaughlin said.

Alongside all of these high points, however, each participant did share a few notes of constructive criticism for the University's study abroad staff. For McLaughlin, the six-week program in Lyon felt a little too short.

"If I could change one thing, maybe I would have just made [the program] longer," McLaughlin said. "I felt that while [six weeks] was enough time to get adjusted to life [and] improve my French speaking skills, I'd say between eight and 10 weeks is probably an appropriate amount of time for a study abroad."

Patel expressed a similar gripe

about her trip's duration. She said she wished she could have been immersed in the program for longer. To prime — and extend — her period of learning, she said she would have appreciated it if her professor had assigned readings or videos prior to the program's start.

On a different note, Susatijo wished that there had been an opportunity for program participants to meet each other on Grounds in the spring, before they arrived in Europe. She said that if she had already formed acquaintances, it would have eased her nerves about making friends and allowed her to plan a travel itinerary.

"A lot of people didn't know anyone going into the program," Susatijo said. "I think it would've been helpful to have some type of event with more time to mingle and meet each other."

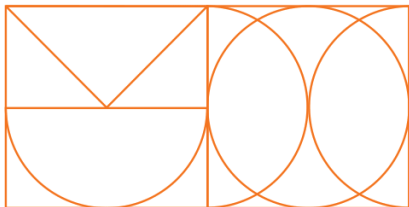
Regardless of where they ventured to, it is safe to say that these globe-trotting Hoos had a summer to remember. They all shared that studying abroad shifted their worldview and taught them to listen, adapt and keep learning beyond the classroom. McLaughlin said her stint in Europe, however brief, was a transformative experience indeed.

"I would definitely recommend studying abroad ... It allows you to experience new cultures and new people," said McLaughlin. "[It] really widens your mindset and the way you see things. I think that's really important."

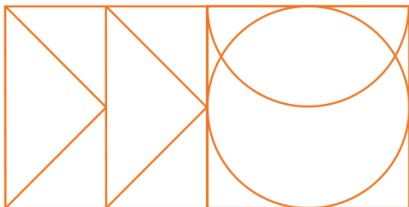


COURTESY: SOPHIE MCLAUGHLIN

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Student Affairs

‘I Run With Jim’ T-shirt campaign raises over \$8,000

Ragged Mountain Running & Walking Shop honors Jim Ryan’s love of running and community

Xander Tilock | Life Staffer

After former University President Jim Ryan announced his resignation June 27, the student body and greater Charlottesville community rallied to support one another. The first public manifestation of this was an impromptu, student-led “Run For Jim” the morning after the news broke.

Immediately, the team at Ragged Mountain Running & Walking Shop stepped in to help. A friend of Ryan’s, Ragged Mountain founder Mark Lorenzoni emailed Ryan to make sure he knew about the run and implored him and his wife, Katie, to attend. And so they did.

The two of them ran 2.8 miles that Saturday morning in the company of hundreds of students and University community members, who all came out to pay tribute to Ryan’s leadership with one last jog around Grounds.

After that heartfelt showcase of community ties, Mark and his son Alec Lorenzoni, Ragged Mountain co-owner and Class of 2007 alumnus, wanted to do more. Just a week later, they started selling their own “I Run With Jim” T-shirts to raise

funds for local charities. Ragged Mountain has since sold over 1,000 shirts and donated over \$8,000 in proceeds.

The recipients of the “I Run With Jim” fund — PHAR Cville, Big Brothers-Big Sisters of the Blue Ridge, the Charlottesville Free Clinic and the local Special Olympics chapter — all have ties to the President’s Council on U. Va.-Community Partnerships, an initiative spearheaded by Ryan in 2018 to strengthen the relationship between the University and the surrounding community. According to Ragged Mountain’s website, the causes are “near and dear” to Ryan’s heart.

Modeled after the cotton T-shirts that were distributed at Run With Jim events, Ragged Mountain’s shirts are emblazoned with “I Run With Jim” on the back. On the front of the shirts, Ryan’s running silhouette appears alongside the number 9 — a nod to his tenure as the University’s ninth president.

Alec said the shirts were initially pre-ordered, but the demand has

grown so high that another order of 300 shirts was placed last week, and they may place even more orders down the line.

For Mark, the success of the project, and its impact, are a testament to Ryan’s reputation in the community.

“[The shirt] is something positive and tangible that [community members] can put on and feel part of his legacy, and also say, ‘I’m behind this man, supporting him,’” Mark said. “It’s been almost therapeutic to do something like this, because it’s been so positive.”

The Lorenzoni family has known Ryan for decades, spanning from his time as a faculty member at the School of Law to the present day. In fact, Mark is Ryan’s running coach.

But their connection runs even deeper than friendship. The elder Lorenzoni was the spark behind the idea for the Run With Jim program in the first place, back when Ryan became president in 2018. Mark suggested that Ryan use his love of running as a way to connect with students, never thinking that it would become a touchstone of his

presidency.

“You can use your running as a means to connect people, to do some real good,” Mark said. “[Ryan] brought people together in that commonality on foot and [with] the whole notion of being able to converse in a relaxed, safe setting. He’s had a profound influence.”

As an alumnus, Alec said he felt compelled to bring some positivity to the aftermath of Ryan’s controversial outsting, which was fueled by the Department of Justice and the Board of Visitors. For Alec, the T-shirt campaign was an effective way to spread joy and uplift the community during a period of uncertainty.

“[Ragged Mountain] has been right across from UVa. for 40 years, but [my sister and I] both went to UVa. and just feel very strongly about the positive relationship between the University and in the Charlottesville community,” Alec said.

Even after promoting the “Run For Jim” in June and selling over 1,000 shirts in Ryan’s name, the Lorenzonis continue to stand up for

Ryan. Like many have already, Alec expressed disappointment over Ryan’s resignation.

“I think a lot of people in the community still have questions about how it transpired,” Alec said. “What’s going to happen next? Obviously, we have an interim president, but I think there’s just a lot of uncertainty right now.”

For now, the monthly Run With Jim events are on hiatus. But the true essence of those events was community, a value that still runs deep at the University. The Lorenzonis would agree that community is something Ryan cared deeply about with all of his heart, and his inclusive, cheerful runs were a way to make that clear. According to Alec, Ryan’s legacy will live on — and the T-shirts are simply a reminder of his indelible footprint.

“The beauty of the sport, and sports in general, is that kind of team connection,” Alec said. “And so we’ll be sad to see [Ryan] go. But maybe, maybe the next president will continue that tradition.”

A summer in STEM: Students take on the tech industry

Back on Grounds, students reflect on a competitive recruitment process and a summer full of learning

Charley Thomas | Staff Writer

People often say technology is the future, but for some University students, it is also the present. Each summer, tech companies — from software engineering firms to cybersecurity platforms — search for skilled college students to fill their coveted intern roles. The high demand for these jobs often creates a competitive and exhausting recruitment process.

However, the University students who manage to secure these tech internships gain highly valuable work experience. In addition to the technical skills they learn from experts in the industry, interns also get first-hand experience navigating the professional world. Now that they are back on Grounds, these students discuss how their summer projects helped fuel today’s innovations — and how they have been inspired to return to the field to build the tech of tomorrow.

Fourth-year College student Eva Fong is one of these students. For her, stepping into the workforce this summer only enhanced the passion for technology she has cultivated as a computer science major at the University. As an intern for CoStar, a

commercial real-estate information and analytics platform, she spent most of her days in their Richmond office working on a new mobile application for field researchers collecting data on real-estate properties.

“Having this position actually made me want to pursue tech even more,” Fong said. “Because I [previously] didn’t really have any professional experience, I [wondered if I] only like it because I enjoy it in classes. Now that I have this experience, I know I would love to pursue this in my career.”

Like Fong, fourth-year College student Kylee Laczkovich also held a sought-after internship this summer. She spent her time in McLean, Va. at Booz Allen Hamilton, a technology consulting company.

Through Booz Allen Hamilton’s Summer Games Internship Program, Laczkovich and three fellow interns spent to weeks collaborating on a project that simulated a real “start-up accelerator,” or a program that supports early-stage companies with mentorship and funding. Through this project, Laczkovich and her teammates explored how

artificial intelligence may be useful for reducing fraud within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

Before Fong and Laczkovich could channel their long-standing interest in technology into a professional position, though, they had to endure an extensive recruitment process. While the pressure to find a summer job can create a competitive “internship culture” at the University, Fong said that this collective ambition pushed her to pursue greater opportunities than she would have otherwise.

“Students at UVa. are very high achieving, so my peers were definitely doing the same thing that I was by trying to find internships,” Fong said. “That does feel like some sort of pressure, but it also motivated me to go out there and find an opportunity for the summer.”

Laczkovich endured a similarly intense recruitment process. Early last year, unlike students at many other universities who tend to start their internship search in the spring, Laczkovich underwent multiple rounds of interviews before fall set in on Grounds.

“I felt the pressure to apply [for internships] all the way in August of the previous summer for something that I wouldn’t be doing until the next summer,” Laczkovich said. “That’s just what everyone around me was also doing.”

Even after enduring a long application process and ultimately receiving internship offers, the challenges for Fong and Laczkovich did not quite come to an end. The two had to navigate complex projects and unfamiliar work environments throughout their summers — but by doing so, they underwent periods of profound personal and professional growth.

For Laczkovich, the first challenge emerged as she worked with her fellow interns to generate more ideas for their startup accelerator project. Collaborating could be difficult, given that her three teammates all studied different computer science languages at their respective universities.

“From the technical side, sometimes it’s a bit hard to collaborate if one person wants to use a certain language and no one else knows it,” Laczkovich said.

Figuring out how to work together productively with her fellow interns allowed Laczkovich to harness the relational skills she had developed at the University. Her humanities experiences, not just hard skills, proved indispensable to her success during the internship in a variety of endeavors.

“Being able to think about your audience and how to deliver information to a certain group of people in a way that they will understand [is important],” Laczkovich said. “Some of my English classes have helped me with that.”

Fong also said that her internship spurred professional growth. Along with progress she reported making with React — an open-source JavaScript library CoStar uses to build commercial real estate interfaces — and technology in general, Fong said that she made strides in fostering professional relationships.

“The best advice I can give to someone who is going into an internship is to ask questions,” Fong said. “Your mentors and managers want [you] to succeed.”

HUMOR

Navigating the office hours gauntlet: a guide

Editor's note: This article is a humor column.

With the fall 2025 semester here, it is time for every first-year to face their inevitable rites of passage. From recovering from Block Party to dazedly wandering through three separate locations for one fall activities fair, they'll somehow end up on the email list for 17 clubs they'll never show up for.

No amount of Wahoo Welcome events, however, can prepare a first-year for what lies beyond — actually taking classes. Ask any orientation leader or resident advisor and they'll say only "Office hours.... you HAVE to go." and leave it at that.

But what really is the mysterious prospect of office hours? Is it tutoring, group therapy or a strategic move to make the professor remember your name before you ask them for a recommendation? Consider this your guide to navigating the fever dream that is office hours.

1. Learn what they actually are

Contrary to the name, office hours are not some corporate ritual where your professor goes to their office to grade with red pens or stare contemplatively out the window. They are instead scheduled blocks of time where professors and TAs are contractually obligated to let you spiral about your choice of major. These encounters can take place in locations ranging from Kerchof Hall's broom-closet offices to overcrowded TA rooms where whiteboards outnumber chairs. Some even occur on Zoom where everyone forgets to mute and the professor's cat makes an appearance.

Early on, your mission might be to decode two out of fifty homework problems or make a few new study buddies who will ghost you after the semester ends. And maybe, just maybe, you'll be able to upgrade your email opening to your professor from "Sorry to bother you, my name is...." to "Following up on our last chat..."

2. Prepare for battle

Of course, the only time slot for your Calculus I office hours will be during your evening discussion and SpongeBob club — you obviously can't miss either, so you must attend during the 15-minute gap between them. Make sure to mentally prepare by rehearsing phrases like, "I was just wondering if you could help me understand this small thing I totally almost get," and brace yourself to ask five random students if they are the TA before actually finding out who it is.

And remember, contrary to popular belief, you don't need to be struggling in the class to attend office hours — this is also a great time to discuss how bad other students are doing in comparison to yourself or learn how your professor got tenure for proving that rectangles are rectangles under special conditions.

3. Wait — and wait and wait

If you're unlucky enough to be in a class whose title involves the words

"discrete" or "algorithms," you may have to join an online queue for office hours. Make sure to wear a distinct outfit so that the TA can find you based on your description — I recommend an inflatable Cavman suit holding a whiteboard that says "pls explain Q4."

As you wait, it would be helpful to trauma-bond with the students around you to build a support system. Be careful though, because 45 minutes later, you'll finally reach the top of the line, but you'll have forgotten your question. And whatever you do, don't leave to go to the bathroom — the moment you do, it will finally be your turn, except you won't be there and the TA will move on to your in-class eyecontactship.

4. Expect the unexpected

You might have your professor walk you through a concept. Or, you may start sobbing uncontrollably because the TA keeps answering your questions with questions. In these

cases, nodding like you understand is always in fashion. Just nod until you begin to dissociate. Out of nowhere, you may find that understanding will dawn upon you. This is what you're here for! Don't forget to thank your TA or professor before leaving — they have to deal with students who email at 4 a.m., forget their own questions mid-sentence or ask to round a C+ up to an A.

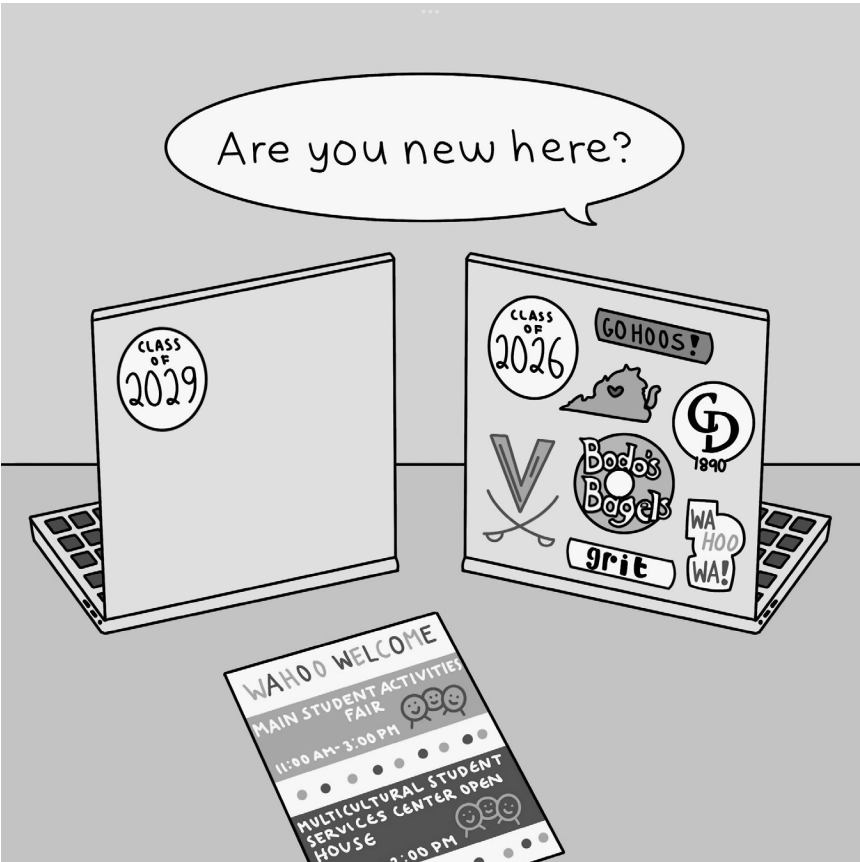
Whether you want help on homework or a new LinkedIn connection, the first-year experience would be incomplete without office hours. Or, you could forgo the opportunity to build human connection, like many of us are doing these days, and just ask your favorite AI to "explain this to me like I'm five."

NIKITHA PRABHU is a humor senior associate for The Cavalier Daily. She can be reached at humor@cavalierdaily.com

CARTOON

It Sticks with You

Jasmine Xiang | Cartoon Senior Associate



Application Season

Ada Malpani | Cartoon Editor



SPORTS

Is 2025 the program-defining year for Virginia football?

High expectations and a ticking clock define a pivotal season for Coach Tony Elliott

Theo Moll | Staff Writer

With great resources come great expectations. That has been the most relevant theme for Virginia football over the past few years.

Those expectations expanded even further when, in June 2024, University and Virginia Athletics leaders opened the doors to the program's new \$80 million practice facility. The Hardie Football Operations Center awarded Cavalier football 93,000 square feet of pristine strength and conditioning, locker room and meeting space.

The FOC represents a University-wide commitment to football — one that has given rise to lofty expectations, both internally and externally. But will results follow? That question will shadow the Cavaliers throughout this 2025 season.

To the players, with an unwavering belief in the program, the answer is a resounding yes. Perhaps, this excitement radiating from these Cavaliers is the greatest differentiator between this season of Virginia football and those in years past.

"This group is coming with a full steam of energy," junior cornerback Ja'Son Prevard said. "There's going to be a lot of exciting plays, and it's going to be very fun."

This season will be the fourth year of Coach Tony Elliott's tenure, which is now in the second half of a six-year contract. During his time at Virginia, Elliott has finished third, second and fifth from last in the conference.

But those close to Cavalier football have not lost faith in the head coach. Former Virginia quarterback Bryce Perkins, who played for the program from 2018-2019, praised Elliott's leadership amidst an ever-changing college football landscape.

Though the quarterback departed Charlottesville before Elliott took over, the two have spoken about the current state of Virginia football. The main subject of those conversations? Building a program culture, which includes support and education around NIL.

"The big thing of it is getting the culture right — getting guys to buy into the culture," Perkins said. "Especially now, even more so with NIL ... And every time I come and talk to [Elliott], he talks about 'Man, we want to do it the right way.'"

Part of that culture is to believe in your ability to be the best. In fact, some of the attitudes from the Cavalier program are suggestive of a team that went 9-3 last year, not 5-7. Junior defensive tackle Jason Hammond — a 2024 starter in four games before suffering a season-ending injury — outlined those high expectations in a vid-



MARIAM SESHAN | THE CAVALIER DAILY

eo aired by Virginia's NIL collective, Cav Futures.

"We're not here to just accept going to a bowl game," Hammond said. "We're trying to go win a [national championship]."

It is a high bar, one surely scoffed at by many. But the objective is one Elliott supports in full force.

"Why would you play this game if you don't believe that you can go compete for a championship?" Elliott said at the beginning of fall camp.

Aspirations to make an impact on the national level could be more realistic than they seem. In Virginia's favor is an era of collegiate athletics defined by volatility. The ever-pervasive transfer portal allows programs to make platoon swaps on entire rosters. Indiana and Arizona State turned 3-9 records into College Football Playoff berths within a year, driving their respective turnarounds through intense portal usage.

The Cavaliers sought out a similarly large crew of reinforcements, bringing in 31 transfers. Including true freshmen, Virginia's roster boasts 54 new faces. This includes an experienced quarterback, a crop of successful rushers and more depth on both lines

— and in the secondary — than the Cavaliers have seen in years.

Per recruiting sites 247 and On3, Virginia's portal class ranks 26th and 27th, respectively, among all FBS schools. Such statistics represent marked improvements — and more consistency — than the program's No. 54 and No. 35 rankings just last year.

But, according to Elliott, it is difficult to know just how impactful those additions will be.

"It's really hard to tell," Elliott said. "Because pretty much everybody has got a new team."

Many national reports have looked upon Virginia's "new team" less favorably than those in Charlottesville. The Athletic's ACC football predictions place the Cavaliers second-last of 17 teams, at an unimpressive 4-8 overall and 1-7 in the ACC. The ACC's preseason media poll has Virginia 14th in the conference, while ESPN — the kindest of these three — places Elliott and company at 11th in its preseason power rankings.

This comes despite Virginia's portal rankings and weak schedule — per ESPN's strength of schedule metric, the Cavaliers have the easiest 2025 slate of all Power Four teams. When asked

about the 2025 ACC media poll, Elliott smiled.

"At least they didn't put us in the same spot [16th] they had us last year," Elliott said. "So, at least they acknowledge some progress that we're making."

Interestingly, just about every media outlet aside from ESPN predicted a less favorable conference finish for the Cavaliers than their 2024 13th-place result. Elliott and company are not affected by the rankings, whether positive or negative.

"This team knows that nothing externally is going to get us to where we want to go," Elliott said.

That internal focus, while preached by just about every coach across all high-level athletics, may be just the piece the Cavaliers need in 2025. And at least right now, it has players eager for the season to come.

"I'm feeling great," senior receiver Trell Harris said. "The vibes are very high. We've got a bunch of good players, a bunch of new players, so everyone's excited to just get up, get around each other and play ball."

Players across the roster have put behind them the woes of losing seasons before — after all, many were not even wearing orange and blue then.

And those that were are determined to right the ship.

"One thing we talked about — the seniors — is we just want to finish," senior tight end Sage Ennis said. "And when we finish, it's not just about self-preservation and getting through the line. It's about, 'I'm going to dominate this and I'm actually going to finish.'"

At such a crucial juncture for Virginia football, Ennis and his fellow seniors hold in their hands the fate of a floundering program. Should the Cavaliers live up to expectations, Virginia Athletics gains proof of concept for its investments in facilities, the transfer portal and its personnel, both on the field and on the sideline. If not, the program grows ever closer to hitting a reset button over which it has long hovered.

"It's going to be a show," senior linebacker Trey McDonald said. "We're going to go out there and we're going to play our a—s off."

Xander Tilock contributed reporting.

The nation's top high school player is up to the challenge

Virginia's attack has gained another catalyst who is ready to rise to the occasion

Peter Kratz | Staff Writer

Acclimating to college soccer is a difficult task, especially within the ACC, the best conference in the nation. Freshman forward Addison Halpern is going through that struggle right now.

"The speed of play is the biggest thing for me," Halpern said in an interview. "It's a lot quicker, and you just have to make decisions faster."

But if there is anyone who will be able to adapt quickly and make a mark on this Cavaliers squad, it is her.

Halpern was announced as Gatorade National Player of the Year in June, becoming the nation's top high school player. On top of that, she has been training with Virginia since the spring. In her first few games, she has already navigated the changes in play that come with sharing the pitch with college soccer's best.

Hailing from Middlesex, N.J., Halpern has impressive instincts in front of goal, bagging 180 goals in her high school career en route to a state champion-

ship three-peat from 2022-2024 at Rutgers Prep School. That kind of talent did not go unnoticed, earning her a call-up to the United States squad at the 2024 U-20 Women's World Cup.

With all those accolades, Halpern had the choice of the lot when it came to her college recruiting. Yet the beauty of Charlottesville and the pedigree of both the team and the University shone through. When push came to shove, the choice to commit to Virginia was easy.

"I had a talk with one of my teachers at the time," Halpern said. "And he said to me, 'There's only a few times in your whole life where you feel like you step into a place and feel at home.' And I truly did feel that when I came onto campus ... I knew that this is where I belonged, and this is where I wanted to be for the next four years."

Once Halpern arrived in the spring after graduating high school early, she got right to work, enrolling in classes and training with the team, trying

her best to make the change in pace from high school to college soccer more manageable.

Now that the season has started, the Cavaliers' attack is sure to be bolstered with Halpern on the field. Her speed, craftiness and prowess with the ball at her feet will make defending her one-on-one a tall task. Whether it is taking on her opponents on the wing or finding the perfect through ball, having a player like Halpern is exactly what Virginia needed.

"On the field, [I'm] just taking every day one by one and taking the little lessons that come with it," Halpern said.

In her first two regular season games, against West Virginia and then against Xavier, Halpern was sharp. Never afraid of calling for the ball, she fearlessly took on opponents on the ground and was rewarded with a plethora of playing time — the most of any non-defender Cavalier in the game against the Musketeers.

That crescendoed into Vir-

ginia's game Sunday at Liberty. Halpern started for the second straight game, a major milestone, playing 71 minutes in a 2-0 win.

Despite all the flashy success Halpern enjoyed prior to joining the Cavaliers and her promising early appearances with the Virginia squad, her focus has remained unselfish.

"Whether that's assisting, scoring, defending hard, making tackles, making runs, whatever it takes to get the team to win," Halpern said. "It's not really about me personally, but just the success of the team as a total."

With the ACC looking as strong as ever, Halpern's team-first mantra needs to be contagious. The Cavaliers are set to face each of the top three ranked teams in the nation and will also have to suffer through a tough midseason travel streak. And with three victories already under Virginia's belt, Halpern will need to continue to be an outlet for the Cavaliers' stalwart midfield, including the likes of fifth

year midfielder Lia Godfrey and junior midfielder Ella Carter.

If the skillset of Virginia's front line is to be wielded effectively, the ball will need to be at their feet early and often. As anyone could guess, Halpern cannot wait to face these challenges headfirst.

"It's good to get the experience and the playing time and just the experience with these other players on the field," Halpern said. "It's always a challenge. And I'm just very grateful to have teammates that are supporting me, coaches that believe in me."

10 must-attend home games for Virginia fans this fall

Whether it be rivalry matchups or chances at revenge, there's plenty to look forward to

Ben McNiff | Senior Writer

The 2025-26 school year is upon us, and the minivans and rented U-Hauls have departed Alderman Road and Jefferson Park Avenue. Whether this fall will be your first at the University or your last, one of the best ways to make the most of your time is by supporting the Cavaliers across multiple sports.

As a reminder, all home games are free admission with a student ID, as part of the University's student ticketing system. And this year, there is a marvelous slate of home games to attend. Without further ado, here are some recommendations in no particular order — aside from the obvious showdowns against Virginia Tech — to attend this upcoming semester.

1. No. 11 men's soccer versus No. 21 Denver, Oct. 19 at 5 p.m.

Denver has been a power of late, and although Virginia has had a men's soccer team since 1941 and Denver has since 1961, they have only matched up three times. The Pioneers are up 2-1, so this meeting gives the Cavaliers a chance to even the series against a ranked opponent.

2. No. 13 women's soccer versus No. 6 Florida State, Oct. 23 at 6 p.m.

In last year's matchup, the Cavaliers lost 4-0, their worst margin of defeat last season. Virginia has not beaten Florida State, a national superpower, since 2019. Since then, though, the Seminoles booted the Cavaliers out in the spring 2021 NCAA Tournament semifinals. A win is crucial, not just to snap the winless streak and earn revenge, but for possible seeding in the ACC Tournament.

3. Football versus Coastal Carolina, Aug. 30 at 6 p.m.

Twenty-three players left Virginia football in the transfer portal this offseason, and 32 players joined the team. This year is an exciting make-or-break for Coach Tony Elliott, so heading over to Scott Stadium for the always-important first game of the season Saturday is a must for any Virginia sports fan. Make sure to wear orange.

4. No. 4 field hockey versus No. 13 Maryland, Oct. 28 at 4 p.m.

Maryland is among Virginia's most hated out-of-conference ri-

vals. Historically, the Terrapins have a 25-6 advantage, but with the Cavaliers winning two consecutive matchups for the first time ever, the tide may be turning. In the final National Coaches Poll for last season, Maryland ranked fifth, while Virginia ranked eighth, so this meeting could prove to be a tight battle.

5. Volleyball versus NC State, Nov. 21 at 7 p.m.

Last season, Virginia was upset by NC State, breaking its eight-match win streak. With that loss, the Cavaliers' winless streak against the Wolfpack extended to 13 games — the last time Virginia won this matchup was exactly a decade and a day before this next match. This fall, they'll get a chance at revenge not just for last year, but for a decade of defeat on a big stage — the match will be played in John Paul Jones Arena.

6. Women's soccer versus No. 3 Duke, Sept. 11 at 7 p.m.

From 2018 to 2022, the Cavaliers played six matchups without losing to the Blue Devils. Since then, however, Duke has the advantage in two out of three meetings, with the third

being a tie. A matchup against them is an opportunity for a win against a conference opponent and an upset against a title contender.

7. Field hockey versus No. 2 North Carolina, Oct. 10 at 5 p.m.

Senior midfielder Daniela Mendez-Trendler, Virginia's back-to-back leading scorer, joined North Carolina in the transfer portal after three years in Charlottesville. The Cavaliers are still dangerous, now led by a pair of preseason All-ACC selections in graduate midfielder Suze Leemans and junior midfielder Mia Abello. On top of all this, the Tar Heels are the winningest program in NCAA history, providing an excellent mix of narratives to follow.

8. Men's soccer versus No. 5 Wake Forest, Sept. 19 at 7:30 p.m.

Via a 5-1 drubbing, Wake Forest ended Virginia's 2024 ACC championship hopes. The Demon Deacons would go on to win the tournament. The last 10 matchups between these programs are perfectly split, 4-4-2, so this Friday night showdown is a get-back opportunity and a possible

tiebreak.

9. Volleyball versus No. 6 Stanford, Sept. 27 at 1 p.m.

Stanford ended last regular season as the fifth-ranked team in the country, and Virginia will face the Cardinal in John Paul Jones Arena this season. This will only be the third meeting in both programs' histories, and through two, Stanford has the undefeated advantage. While this is a young rivalry, it could grow over the next few years, with Stanford joining the ACC and with both programs on the rise.

10. Football versus Florida State, Sept. 26 at 7 p.m.

It has been six years since these two programs last matched up, and Virginia prevailed in the last bout in a thrilling fashion. More than half a decade later, both programs will be looking to rebound after rough 2024 seasons — the Seminoles, in particular, went 2-10 in their worst season since 1974. This game is set to be nationally televised on ESPN in Friday night primetime — if there's one Virginia Athletics event to attend, it's this one.

OPINION

LEAD EDITORIAL

Back to Grounds, and back to repairing institutional credibility

Rebuilding the University community is necessary to establish trusted channels of shared governance and community trust

Earlier this week, interim University President Paul Mahoney greeted first-years at their convocation ceremony, marking his first formal public appearance. Mahoney and other speakers imparted wisdom to the new class of first-years, giving them advice about how best to navigate these four years. But looking back at the past summer — one of troubling developments at the University — the advice they imparted is not only relevant to students. Rather, it is advice that our entire community, including University leadership themselves, would benefit from. So as we begin this new year together, let us walk through the valuable pointers that can best ensure our continued strength as a community.

Form genuine relationships with your peers

Committed and collaborative relationships are at the heart of the institution which new first-years have entered — from the historic principle of student self-governance to the

very notion of an Academical Village, our University has always centered around an active and authentic community. Yet, more and more, the University's Board has denigrated the autonomy of these relationships. It does not transparently or sincerely engage with peers at the University, from student self-governed organizations to the Faculty Senate. Individuals and groups that were previously given seats at the table have been left largely shut out from these discussions and shut down from holding real influence on their own community.

With three top positions — the president, provost and CEO of UVa. Health — being occupied by interim individuals fresh to their roles, there is an opportunity for restorative changes. To do so requires realizing that the intended transparency of town halls and informative resources is not enough to repair the lack of trust University leadership now faces. New administrators must ensure that the principle of shared governance is tangibly reinvigorated at our Univer-

sity. And while these administrators will hopefully support shared governance, all students must remember that they also play a role in creating and maintaining shared governance.

Get to know your way around Grounds

Recent political events have viscerally affected University life in a personal manner, and have placed our institution in a vastly different landscape than that which first-years applied to last school year. Administrative changes to University policy — whether they are guidance with anti-discrimination law, the dissolution of diversity, equity and inclusion or federal research funding cuts — will have a critical impact on the student experience here. If the Board should like to be a body that truly cares about the realities of its constituents, it must observe the consequences of its resolutions, and react with empathy and transparency to these circumstances.

This insecurity felt by many in

our community also provides an opportunity for our University's new administrators to prove that they are understanding and attentive to our circumstances. Collaborating with all groups within the University community, rather than viewing them as obstacles, would aid in ameliorating the perception of apathy which many have attributed to University leadership. Whilst giving these new administrators an opportunity to display empathy, students also must play a role in this governance — it is vital to learn more about the University's political landscape, and insert yourselves as vocal members towards desired change.

Learn from your mistakes

A lesson which colors the first-year experience is that of learning from inevitable mistakes. This is also a principle which the University more broadly must embrace — and soon. The rifts of the summer will continue to deepen unless the new administration takes careful and actionable

governance measures to restore trust with the University community. In this vein, University leadership should be very conscientious of the gamut of no-confidence votes and react with empathy and action, unlike the unilateral actions of the Board. Similarly, students must also ensure that the actions of the Board do not dissuade them from active participation across Grounds, but instead only strengthen their desire to advocate for change.

With these recommendations, we wish the University a great and good academic year — a year which will take significant administrative repair to heal this institution after some of its darkest hours.

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THE CAVALIER DAILY

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Why are Democrats the only ones defending Virginia's authority?

Republican officials continue to sacrifice the state to the federal government, leaving only the Democrat-led General Assembly fighting back

Virginians have the right to expect their government to defend the authority of the Commonwealth. Yet, as Virginia faces threats to its autonomy, Republicans prefer belittling the State's power to conduct its own business than defending it.

The Democrats are working to protect this autonomy. Recently, Democrats in the Virginia State Senate filed suit to stop eight nominees of Gov. Glenn Youngkin from serving on boards of various Virginia public universities after a failed committee vote. Despite Republicans' efforts to diminish legislative authority, a Fairfax County judge ordered that these nominees, including Ken Cuccinelli, who Youngkin recently nominated to the Board of Visitors, could not serve on the boards.

This suit represents a critical juncture in Virginia politics with Democrats defending the authority of the Commonwealth to conduct its affairs and the right to retain control of the Boards of Visitors at public universities. And yet, Virginia Senate Democrats seem to be the only officials defending the authority of the Commonwealth's own institutions. The Governor and Attorney General must stop abandoning their duty to defend Virginia.

While legislative overreach is a concern, the legislative power that Democrats are defending should not be controversial. The Code of Virginia entitles the General Assembly to reject a governor's appointments to boards of public universities. And a few months ago, they did — the Virginia Senate Committee on Privileges & Elections rejected eight appointments. It might seem reason-

enor's appointments. Despite this being an incontrovertible use of legislative authority, the Attorney General seems to buy into the absurd idea that the General Assembly does not have the power to reject Youngkin's nominations. In short, when legitimate state power wielded by Democrats comes into opposition with the Republican platform, the Attorney General bends a knee to

the Board to understand what went on behind closed doors. Combined with an Attorney General arguing against the General Assembly, Youngkin's passivity in response to federal intrusion breeds a government that has abandoned its duty to defend the State.

The saga between the General Assembly and the Board highlights a pervasive issue of Republican state

the face of unlawful overreach. Unless this authority is safeguarded in this way, the ability of Virginians to legislate statewide issues will be stripped away in favor of top-down directives from President Trump.

The University has already witnessed a taste of what a Republican-led administration is willing to countenance with the exit of Ryan, and Youngkin has not provided any reason to believe that his power is an extension of President Trump's power in the State. At this moment, Virginia and the University need officials who will defend it, whether it be from the federal government itself or from other state officials trying to usurp the power of other branches. In this new world, where political intrusion coming from the highest levels of government is the new *modus operandi*, Virginia requires officials who will fight for her, not ones who seek her subsumption.

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At this moment, Virginia and the University need officials who will defend it, whether it be from the federal government itself or from other state officials trying to usurp the power of other branches.”

able that a committee vote is not a proper decision of the legislature. However, committees are the first stop for any laws proposed by the governor, and many such laws die in committee. Should we consider all of these votes to be invalid, simply because the Legislature has decided to organize itself in this way?

Despite the self-evident case for state legislative power, Virginia's executive officials choose to shirk it. Among those officials is Attorney General Jason Miyares, who refuses to defend Democrats for exercising their authority to block the Gov-

defend his Republican colleagues instead of defending the power of the Commonwealth's representatives.

This indicates a larger trend of acquiescence to political currents rather than clear laws. Consider the federal overreach that forced out former University President Jim Ryan. Youngkin and his administration have remained tight-lipped over their role in the DOJ investigation, as has the University's Board of Visitors. Democrats, on the other hand, have taken the initiative on starting oversight, with State Sen. Creigh Deeds sending a letter to

officials abrogating their duties to maintain the State's relative independence. Even as Republican officials preach the importance of states' rights, such as abortion, they condone unprecedented federal interference in states' educational affairs and compromise the power of the legislature. Republicans' ignorance of inconveniences like ideological consistency will put Virginia under the thumb of Washington and decay legislative norms. The Democrats' actions, however, provide an example of how vigorously state officials should defend their authority in

Expand students' role at the administrative level now

Even with an active student government, student dissent can only go so far without a formal platform to translate protest into policy

When former University President Jim Ryan abruptly announced his resignation this summer, it kicked off a wave of community protests. This turmoil was the predictable result of a governance system that persistently sidelines students. By disenfranchising student voices, the University stripped itself of a stabilizing mechanism in its moment of uncertainty. The Student Council's subsequent resolution of no confidence in the Board of Visitors — which called for transparency and student involvement in the presidential transition — underscored a larger problem. So long as students' power is limited to an advisory role in the administration, governance at the University will remain fragile.

At the University, the student voice is often relegated to performative committees. Student Council serves as the primary vehicle through which students can engage in dialogue with the administration on University governance. Historically, the Council has played a key role in shaping University life — for example, successfully mobilizing influential public protests that convinced then-University President Edgar Shannon to publicly call for an end to the Vietnam War.

Today, it excels in organizing events, allocating the Student Activities Fee and raising concerns about dining hall quality.

However, when it comes to pulling institutional levers, Student Council is relegated to rubber-stamp status. Representatives may draft policy recom-

This institutional power imbalance was laid bare in the aftermath of Ryan's resignation. In response to the concern it sparked across Grounds, Student Council passed a non-binding resolution requesting to be included in the search for a new president. Yet, despite their careful and respectful po-

ity instead of guiding the University through transition.

Reversing this chronic disempowerment means overhauling the laws that restrict students to this position. The University and its alumni must work with state representatives to challenge the statute which relegates

student representatives sit on governance councils, affecting everything from tuition hikes to campus sustainability. In contrast, our Board's charter still bars students from binding decision-making. This exclusionary framework practically invites crises by leaving students without a formal recourse when decisions go against them.

In hindsight, the marginalization of student voices made the crisis that was Ryan's resignation all but inevitable — and that realization must guide our next steps. If our governance structure leaves students out on the curb, we invite future shake ups and Groundswide disillusionment. By contrast, a truly resilient university embeds student voices at its core through greater autonomy and the authority to hold its leadership to account. Only through these measures can we close the doors to disenfranchisement, before it opens up another controversy and further isolates students from this institution.

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So long as students' power is limited to an advisory role in the administration, governance at the University will remain fragile.”

mendations, only to see their “input” summarily overridden by senior administrators. Though Council members meet with the administration and often sit on advisory committees, they have no formal vote on the Board. This ensures that even when students gain access to the highest level of governance, they lack the authority to amend, block or ratify decisions that shape their own University experience. The consequences of this are a student government that is stripped of any meaningful mandate to insert itself into policies that directly affect students.

sition — contrasting notably with the Faculty Senate's more assertive stance — the final composition of the presidential search committee failed to reflect Student Council's requests for genuine student representation.

This goes to show how little weight their voice carries in moments of crisis. Frustrated by this exclusion, the Council formally passed a vote of no confidence in the Board — which itself will have no impact. Disenfranchisement means that at the very moment student leadership was most needed, their input could be dismissed without consequence, fueling instabil-

students to a non-voting role on the Board. Currently, Democrats in the Virginia Senate have launched challenges to contest Governor Youngkin's appointments, securing a circuit court ruling that removed several appointees. By leveraging this momentum and mobilizing bipartisan support, we can spotlight the suppression of student voices at our University.

Looking at institutions of higher education across the world, this sort of change should be entirely feasible. At many universities in Europe, for example, co-governance is a guiding principle. In the United Kingdom, elected



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