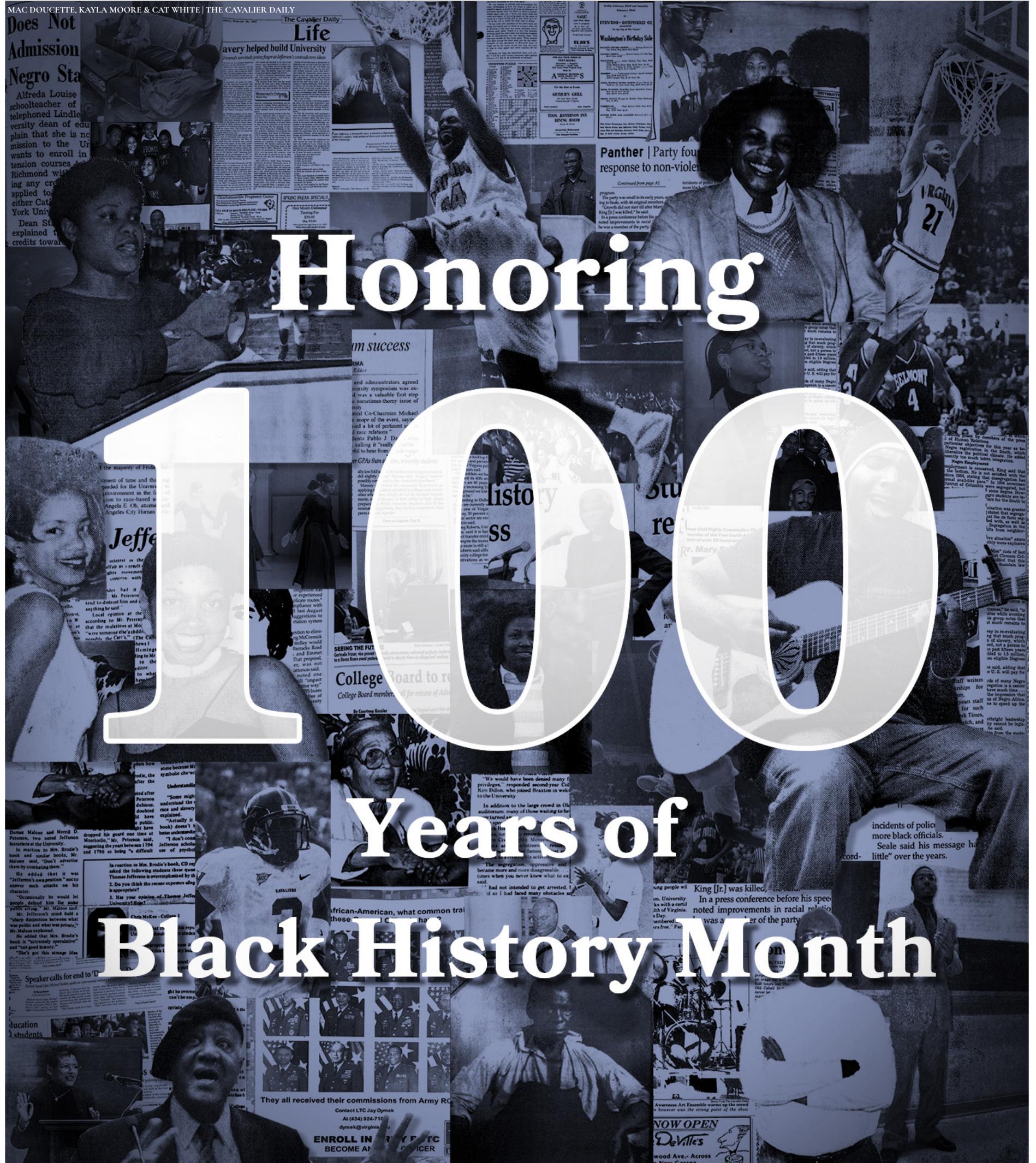


# THE CAVALIER DAILY

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Thursday, February 26, 2026



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**Panther Party four response to non-violence**  
Continued from page A1  
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# Honoring 100

# Years of Black History Month

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# NEWS

## African American, African Studies aims for interdisciplinarity

The Carter G. Woodson Institute and the Department of African American and African Studies aim to be welcoming communities for students and fellows

Edward Christopher | Staff Writer

The Carter G. Woodson Institute, which administers a fellowship program for students and organizes conferences and a lecture series, was founded in 1981 after the rise of expressed student interest in an African American studies program. The African American and African Studies department offers one major, two minors, Swahili and 25 course options.

Kevin Gaines, interim chair of the Department of African American and African Studies and Julian Bond Professor of Civil Rights and Social Justice, said that the subject of African American studies has increasingly adopted a global and interdisciplinary perspective across peer universities in the U.S. The University has followed suit — courses like AAS 2710, “Introduction to Afro-Latin America” and AAS 3157, “Caribbean Perspectives” offer students historical lessons from across the globe. In addition to increasingly global perspectives, course offerings focus on race and its broad intersections — the University offers AAS 3500, “Race, Ethnicity & Health in U.S.” and AAS 3500, “Race, Class, Politics, & Environment” as interdisciplinary courses.

“Africana studies departments [have always studied] ... the continuing relevance of race in American society ... but we don’t just do that,” Gaines said. “We’re taking an intersectional approach that looks at race, gender, sexuality and class within the same framework.”

Retracing the Department’s history, in 1969, students expressed interest in forming an African American Studies program, and the University created this program the following year. In 1981, the University created the Carter G. Woodson Institute to house the African American and African Studies Program and offers a fellowship for pre- and post-doctoral scholars. The Woodson Institute officially became an academic department in 2017, removing its dependence on other departments to hire faculty. In 2024, the Institute and Department became independent, leaving the major and minor programs to be overseen by the Department and the fellowship to be overseen by the Institute.

The Carter G. Woodson Institute offers a two-year program for fellows. Fellows who have finished their doctorate are required to teach an upper-level seminar to undergraduate students, and some fellow-taught courses include AAS

3500, “Black Women, Slavery & Freedom” and AAS 3500, “Black Power & Environ Movement.”

Professor Robert Trent Vinson, director of the Carter G. Woodson Institute, said the Woodson Institute is unique, as other similarly-focused fellowships typically last one year. In contrast, the Woodson Institute offers a two-year fellowship. There are six doctoral fellows and eight pre-doctoral fellows in residence, and since its founding, the Woodson Institute has had 250 fellows.

The pre-doctoral program allows fellows completing dissertation projects to learn from scholars across the nation to guide their research. The post-doctoral participants hold the positions of research associates and lecturers.

Vinson said he aims for the Department and Woodson Institute to be a place where students feel welcomed and represented. He recalled that when he was an undergraduate, he did not have any African American courses to take or professors to connect with.

“Representation, I think, is important for students who feel we’re a numerical minority here,” Vinson said. “There’s a lot of talk at UVA about belonging, that you belong here. This is your university. ... That’s important as a slogan, but for it to be more than just rhetoric, all of our students, have to feel, ‘I belong here, and I see myself represented in everyday life, in my classes.’”

Unlike similar African American and African Studies programs at other universities, the Department is home to Swahili language courses, which were housed in the Department of Anthropology prior to 2015. To globalize perspectives brought to the teaching, the Department hired faculty from Africa, the Caribbean and South America.

“All that cutting-edge research that [fellows are] doing while they’re here for two years, our students benefit from that research,” Vinson said. “I’ve had students talk about [taking] this course on Brazil, [and finding] out it’s one of our fellows who taught the course. [Without the fellows], there would not have been that course. So the fellows help with the curriculum mission.”

Alexandria Smith, assistant professor of Gender and Sexuality within the Department, said she sees interdisciplinary thinking as one of the unique offerings of the Department that makes it stand out from peer institutions. She has a doctorate in Women’s, Gender and Sexuali-



CAT WHITE | THE CAVALIER DAILY

The Carter G. Woodson Institute for African American and African Studies, photographed Feb. 25, 2026.

ty Studies with a focus on Black feminist and queer literature and theory, and she said interdisciplinary training is something that not only gives students knowledge, but also critical thinking skills and perspectives on how to ask questions.

“Relational learning, where you can learn the things that are presented to you within the framework of a traditional discipline, is important, but interdisciplinarity [thinking] can train you to ask questions that are best answered through drawing on methods and the kind of knowledge base of multiple fields,” Smith said.

Smith joined the faculty following her fellowship in the Woodson Institute from 2021-23. Vinson said that many fellows go to other universities to teach or to complete post-doctoral fellowships. Smith, however, chose to stay at the University.

Fourth-year College student Mikayla Williams said that the African American and African Studies major offers an additional perspective to her Global Public Health major. As someone interested in studying health inequities and pursuing the pre-medical track, Williams said the African American and African Studies major helps her understand a new perspective on health equity and its connection to race.

“I realized that [African Amer-

ican Studies is] perfect to couple [with Global Public Health], especially ... courses [in] public health but still [with an] African American background,” Williams said. “There are so many different disciplines that you can enter with [this] major.”

Third-year College student Joseph Jones said he was introduced to the Department through events held by the Woodson Institute, and he said he found community in the Department. Jones said the Department’s professors express support and interest in helping students succeed.

“UVA. was built on this idea of an [Academical] Village in which students were interacting constantly with the professors and [in] the African American [and African] Studies Department, it feels like those professors sometimes are your family,” Jones said. “They actually care about you. They care about your goals and where you want to go. They want to help you succeed.”

Over this past month, the Woodson Institute has held a series of events celebrating Black History Month. One of the events, which took place Feb. 18, hosted a panel on the Julian Bond Papers. Bond was a professor at the University and a civil rights leader, and after he passed in 2015, his widow donated all of his letters, books, speeches and newspaper articles to the University, where

they are now being catalogued and digitized for the public.

“The students actually get the experience of looking at real history, cataloging it, digitizing it, being able to talk about it,” Vinson said. “The Julian Bond Papers are a wonderful way of archiving and preserving, but it’s also helping our students get that real hands-on experience, literally working with these documents.”

Speaking to the relevance of the program in the current political climate, Vinson said the federal government’s recent attempts to remove Black history from educational curricula across the country reflects historical trends of attacking Black history. Vinson emphasized the importance of teaching Black history to everyone, despite efforts throughout the country’s history to prioritize the importance of white people and their history. He expressed his commitment to upholding the value of African American and African studies at the University, especially in the current political climate.

“We’ve always had enemies. We’ve always had threats to our funding, to our existence,” Vinson said. “It’s a moment of deep concern, but we have to keep going. Because if we just give up, then these other forces have won, and everyone loses ... It’s not just Black people losing, it’s everyone losing.”

# A look at the University's post-resolution DEI changes

Archived webpages, title revisions and compliance reports show changes across admissions, hiring and more following the dissolution of DEI programming

Brendon Bordwine | Senior Associate

Since the Supreme Court's 2023 decision in "Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard" barred the use of race in admissions, universities nationwide have faced intensifying legal, political and cultural scrutiny over how diversity, equity and inclusion efforts operate across their campuses. At UVa., that scrutiny evolved into direct federal intervention, culminating in an agreement with the Department of Justice requiring quarterly compliance reports through 2028 following seven federal civil rights investigations into the University's practices.

In the first week of his presidency, President Donald Trump signed two executive orders directing the elimination of race- and sex-based preferences across federally funded institutions. The orders instructed public universities to terminate the use of protected characteristics in decision-making and to reassess DEI-related offices and initiatives.

Less than two months later, the Board of Visitors voted unanimously to dissolve the University's Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Community Partnerships in accordance with the executive orders. The March 7 resolution directed University leadership to identify and eliminate any policy, program or role inconsistent with federal civil rights law — a decision that would become the foundation for a wider compliance review involving nearly every academic and administrative unit at the University.

Following that resolution, the University began a review of its policies, websites and programming. University Counsel created a guidance document for "all schools, departments and other units" outlining principles that inform the University's understanding of civil rights law.

The internal guidance emphasized race- and sex-neutrality in all University-sponsored programs, warned against using terms like "equity" or "underrepresented" as proxies for protected characteristics and instructed units to eliminate any eligibility criteria, messaging or decision-making processes that considered such characteristics — directly or indirectly.

The University publicly released its first compliance report since the agreement Jan. 29, which specified changes in program language and admissions to comply with civil law. The Cavalier Daily conducted an analysis of archived web pages, institutional materials and public records between the timeframe of December 2024 to the date of publication to examine how these changes manifested across individual schools and administrative units at the University.

## School of Medicine

At the School of Medicine, ar-

chived admissions webpages indicate several removals of diversity-related language between June 2025 and January 2026. Earlier versions of the site described applicants as coming from "broad and diverse backgrounds" and referenced a "holistic approach" to evaluating candidates. Current language retains references to evaluating academic achievement, experience and recommendations, but no longer includes those background descriptors.

Additional passages emphasizing the goal of building "a talented and diverse student body" and evaluating candidates with "the goal of building a diverse class" are no longer present on the admissions page.

According to the compliance report released Jan. 29, the School of Medicine's Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategists Education Program was disbanded. An archived website blog from 2024 describes the initiative as a collaborative framework between the School of Medicine and UVa. Health's Office of Diversity and Community Engagement designed to align diversity-related efforts across departments.

The archived description states that the program operated through designated faculty known as "JEDI Strategists" who were appointed within each department to monitor outreach activities, communicate scholarship and funding opportunities and help integrate diversity-related considerations into departmental practices.

The University's compliance report later stated that diversity-related training and outreach programs within the Medical Center were discontinued as part of its review process.

Public recognition tied to diversity initiatives has also shifted. The School of Medicine and School of Nursing received the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity award from INSIGHT — an organization that recognizes institutions that "demonstrate excellence in fostering campus environments where students, faculty and staff thrive" — for several consecutive years, but neither school appeared among the recipients in 2025.

## School of Nursing

The first quarterly compliance report also described revisions at the School of Nursing. According to the report, the Nursing School updated its admissions criteria to remove references to race and discontinued its holistic admissions model, and it revised faculty promotion and tenure criteria to eliminate evaluation based on diversity-related considerations.

However, some nursing faculty have challenged parts of that account. In a Feb. 18 news report, multiple

School of Nursing faculty members told VPM News that diversity considerations were not actually part of promotion and tenure evaluations in recent years and disputed the compliance report's characterization of changes to those criteria. In response, Glover said the University is reviewing the issue and that any necessary clarifications would be included in future quarterly reports.

## McIntire School of Commerce

Admissions materials at the McIntire School of Commerce reflect similar revisions. Archived versions of graduate admissions materials from August 2025 included a required essay asking applicants to discuss aspects of their background, including race, gender or community, that would serve as a "source of strength." Current application materials instead require an "Impact Essay" focused on academic or professional experiences, without reference to identity characteristics.

While some admissions materials were revised, not all socially oriented programming at McIntire has been discontinued. The school's M.S. in Global Commerce program continues to include its capstone social impact project, a five-week international consulting experience in which students work with nonprofit organizations, corporate social responsibility departments and social enterprises to "address real-world challenges."

## School of Engineering and Applied Science

At the School of Engineering and Applied Science, archived content shows the removal of a "Commitment to Diversity" section on the school's "About" page describing efforts to increase representation of women and underrepresented populations.

Current graduate application materials at the School of Engineering and Applied Science reflect a mixed approach. The application includes personal statement prompts focusing on academic motivation, research interests, accomplishments and career goals. The application also includes an optional statement inviting applicants to describe how their "background, perspective or life experience(s)" have influenced their decision to pursue this specific graduate study and what they hope to achieve.

## College of Arts and Sciences

Similar to the School of Engineering and Applied Science, the College of Arts and Sciences previously hosted a page framing diversity as central to its academic mission and strategic priorities. That archived web page — which discussed embedding diversity considerations across research and instruction — is no longer publicly ac-

cessible on the main website.

In addition to changes in website content and program language, the University has also modified its undergraduate application requirements. For the 2025-2026 admissions cycle, the University removed most supplemental essay prompts, leaving only the School of Nursing with a short written response requirement. In prior cycles, applicants were asked to respond to short-answer and background prompts beyond the Common App personal statement, including one that invited reflection on personal background and experience.

## Administrative Divisions

The revisions were not limited to only academic units. Administrative offices across the University have also seen revisions. The University Finance website previously hosted a diversity resources page that has since been removed. Within the University's procurement office — the office tasked with working with external suppliers of goods and services — a program previously existed that was known as "Supplier Diversity." It focused on outreach to businesses owned by historically underrepresented groups, and it is now referred to as "Supplier Engagement."

Structural changes extended into administrative roles across the University. Based on analysis of title listings, The Cavalier Daily identified more than 30 professional title revisions following the March 7 Board resolution that removed explicit references to diversity, equity or inclusion from leadership and staff positions.

Among them, Vice President Kevin McDonald's title shifted from Vice President for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Community Partnerships to Vice President for Community Engagement and Equal Opportunity. At the School of Engineering and Applied Science, an associate dean role previously designated for DEI was retitled to focus on community and engagement functions, and a similar renaming occurred within the School of Law. At the Darden School of Business, the position of Global Chief Diversity Officer was eliminated entirely.

Hiring and recruitment materials were also affected. An archived webpage from the University's website titled "Employment Equity" — that is no longer available in any form — previously provided recruitment and selection resources for new potential hires organized by phases of the hiring process. The page included materials such as "Comprehensive Search Plan Guide," guidance on "Considering Contributions to the University's Mission," resources on "Interrupting Bias in Recruitment and Selection" and a

description of "The Role of an 'Equity Coordinator'" in search processes.

## School of Education and Human Development

The School of Education and Human Development has also updated several diversity-related webpages and initiatives. Archived materials indicate that a webpage displaying student organizations in the school once was categorized under "DEI Student Organizations." The organization pages remain accessible, but they are now grouped under a broader "Clubs & Organizations" heading rather than under a DEI-specific classification.

The school also previously advertised a "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Small Grant" intended to fund interdisciplinary projects and events aimed at enhancing diversity, promoting equity and fostering inclusion among faculty, staff and students. According to archived descriptions, the grant provided modest funding for initiatives judged to have long-term potential impact and encouraged collaborative proposals across departments and centers.

Archived webpages also show the discontinuation of a Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Alumni-Student Mentoring Program within the School of Education and Human Development that had paired undergraduate students with alumni educators for professional guidance and skill development.

## Darden School of Business

In July 2025, the Darden School of Business ended partnerships with several organizations focused on expanding opportunities for underrepresented groups in business education.

The school broke ties with the Consortium for Graduate Study in Management — a relationship that lasted over 30 years — which aims to increase Black, Native American and Hispanic representation in business schools. Additionally, it terminated a two-decade partnership with the Forte Foundation — an organization advocating for women in business education.

Darden also cut ties with Reaching Out MBA, which provides scholarships and networking opportunities for LGBTQ+ students, and Management Leadership for Tomorrow, which focuses on economic mobility and workforce development.

Glover said in a statement to The Cavalier Daily that the compliance review remains ongoing and that its findings help inform the University's quarterly certifications to the Department of Justice under the October 2025 agreement suspending federal investigations into the University's civil rights practices.

# Where does the University 2030 Plan stand now?

Both plans are still ongoing despite recent changes in University leadership and operations, and key progress has been made towards increasing financial access

Melody Yuan | Staff Writer

It has been more than six years since the Board of Visitors approved the 2030 “Great and Good” Plan in August 2019 under former University President Jim Ryan. Since then, the University has undergone significant leadership changes and restructuring — here is a look at the progress towards initiatives and goals originally outlined in 2019.

The 2030 Plan is a detailed list of four goals and 10 initiatives that the University hopes to achieve and make progress towards by 2030. It intends to establish the University as the leading public institution in the country, with the four goals of the plan — strengthening the foundation of students, faculty and staff of the University, cultivating a vibrant community, enabling innovation and promoting service.

In a statement to *The Cavalier Daily*, University Spokesperson Bethanie Glover said that the University “remains committed to meeting the goals and initiatives outlined in the 2030 Plan.”

Glover affirmed the plan is on track even after multiple administration and policy changes that have occurred throughout the past year. The University was ordered by the Justice Department in late April 2025 to dismantle its diversity, equity and inclusion policies and initiatives, President Ryan resigned in June and in mid-December, University President Scott Beardsley was appointed as the next president.

The appointment of Beardsley, the former dean of the Darden Business School, came after a seven-month search. Just a few weeks later, Gov. Abigail Spanberger (D) reconstituted the Board — she requested five Board members resign and appointed 10 new members.

The UVa. Health System has also implemented their own set of goals in extension of the University’s greater 2030 Plan, with the timeline for this plan being from 2022 to 2032. Their first enterprise-wide strategic plan, the “One Future Together | Health and Hope for All” plan commits the UVa. Health System to be “Great and Good” by transforming patient care, research, education and engagement with the community.

## 2030 University Plan Academic excellence

The 2030 Plan’s overarching goal is to become the first-ranked public university in the country. The plan details how the University will achieve academic excellence and impact through investment in research infrastructure, and as a whole, the University is ranked fourth in the U.S. News & World Report 2026 Top Public Schools list.

The Darden School of Business, however, has already achieved the goal

of being ranked first amongst other national graduate business programs. In December 2025, Darden ranked first among public, full-time MBA programs in the United States, according to the 2025-26 Poets & Quants ranking. Poets & Quants is a news source dedicated to graduate business news, and their ranking is derived from five different evaluations of MBA programs around the country. This year marks the third consecutive year that Darden has ranked first among public institutions on their ranking.

The University’s School of Law is additionally ranked highly, and for 2025, sits at fourth out of 195 law schools around the nation — both public and private — according to the U.S. News and World Report. Further, the School of Law is ranked first among public law schools in the U.S.

## Access

In order to achieve academic excellence and attract a diverse population of students, the 2030 Plan outlines how the University will increase financial access to prospective students. The first initiative of 10 in the Plan, SuccessUVA, aims to significantly expand financial aid to low- and middle-income students and attract more underrepresented students.

According to Glover, many of the goals outlined in the SuccessUVA initiative have already been achieved. Most significantly, Glover said that the 2023 expansion of the AccessUVA financial aid program made attending the University possible for more students.

AccessUVA is the result of the December 2023 Board of Visitors’ approval of a new financial aid program, which provides the full cost of tuition and fees for in-state undergraduate students with a family income less than \$100,000. The threshold was increased from \$80,000 and the program also covers the full cost of tuition, fees, room and board for in-state undergraduate students with a family income less than \$50,000, up from the previous \$30,000 threshold.

“The University’s All Virginia program engages Virginia high schools with high rates of socioeconomic disadvantage and low rates of UVa. applications and enrollment,” Glover said. “Students who may not have believed college was an option are encouraged to apply to UVa. thanks to this program.”

According to a statement to *The Cavalier Daily* from All Virginia Director Tomika L. Brown, the All Virginia program began in 2023 as a pilot initiative supported by the State Council for Higher Education for Virginia’s Pell Initiative for Virginia. The Pell Initiative encourages public institutions to improve recruitment and

retention of Pell-eligible students, and the All Virginia program is still being expanded and developed.

“One exciting new focus this year is early awareness,” Brown said. “The University is hosting three visits from local middle schools this year to introduce them to college life and give them an early opportunity to explore our Grounds.”

Another University outreach program, AdviseVA, formerly known as the Virginia College Advising Corps, is a division of the Provost’s Office that aims to expand postsecondary access for students across Virginia. The program celebrated its 20th anniversary in the Fall 2025 semester and has since advised more than 100,000 high school seniors in exploring options after high school, like applying to the University.

## Housing

Housing is another focal point of the 2030 Plan, with the second initiative of the Plan — Citizen-Leaders for the 21st Century — stating that the University intends to house all first- and second-year students on Grounds by 2030. The 2026-27 on-Grounds housing application, which concluded in late January, marked the first year that rising second-year students were given first priority in the process rather than returning upperclassmen residents.

The University has made progress towards this initiative with the construction of the Ivy Corridor, located at the intersection of Emmet Street and Ivy Road, which is set to be complete by 2027. Planning for the Ivy Corridor began in 2016 and will expand not only the number of academic buildings, but also upperclassmen housing options, with two six-story buildings and a total capacity of 750-800 beds.

## Strengthening Faculty and Staff

The third initiative of the Plan — the Third-Century Faculty Initiative — details how the University will recruit the “best researchers, teachers and mentors,” and that the faculty will be “diverse by every measure.”

In March 2025, the Board voted to dissolve the University’s Office of DEI, which included removing DEI initiatives from the staff hiring process. The University did not share an update on the dissolution of the DEI policies for more than a month after the Board’s vote, leaving questions about the future of diversity at the University.

However, according to Glover, the University is still working towards the goals outlined by the Third-Century Faculty Initiative.

“The goals listed in the Third-Century Faculty Initiative are fluid and ongoing,” Glover said. “We continue

to recruit a diverse, world-class faculty and recognize current faculty for the outstanding research and teaching environments they curate for, and with, their students and colleagues.”

The fifth initiative of the Plan — Cultivating Staff Success — details the University’s priority of a “diverse workforce and the creation of an inclusive and supportive environment.”

In her email, Glover mentioned how the Pipelines & Pathways career placement program — specifically designed for students seeking entry-level positions — continues to connect job seekers to opportunities at the University. Glover also highlighted the positive work environments at both the University and the UVa. Health System.

“It’s also worth noting that UVa. and UVa. Health frequently receive top rankings as one of the best places to work in Virginia, and as one of the best employers for women,” Glover said.

## 2022-2032 UVa. Health Plan Expanding access

The three mission areas of the 2022-2032 Health Plan include “cultivating healthy communities and belonging for all,” “strengthening our foundation” and “expanding our excellence and enabling discoveries for better health.”

In a statement to *The Cavalier Daily* from UVa. Health Public Information Officer Eric Swensen, UVa. Health has made progress towards the goal transforming health and inspiring hope for all Virginians and beyond by opening and expanding care sites across the Charlottesville area.

“[Access was improved] across Charlottesville, Zion Crossroads, Culpeper, Haymarket and surrounding counties,” Swensen said.

Throughout 2025, new care sites were launched and expanded upon in these regions. UVa. Health also launched a Mobile Care Unit in January 2025 that provides care services directly to neighborhoods with limited access.

According to Swensen, other signs of progress towards expanding access include the initiation of the South Tower expansion of the UVa. Hospital, which will add inpatient beds and enhance critical services by 2027 to 2028, and the relaunch of the UVa. Health and UVa. Children’s Health websites, which improves online access to care.

## Clinical excellence

Another one of the four mission areas of the 2022-32 Plan is research, committing the UVa. Health System to transforming discoveries into new therapies for patients.

In 2025, the UVa. Health Chil-

dren’s hospital was ranked first in the U.S. News & World Report’s ranking of children’s hospitals in Virginia for the fifth consecutive year.

In his email, Swensen mentioned how the statewide clinical trials network launched in September 2025 is “bringing cutting-edge care closer to home for more Virginians.” The clinical trial centers were opened in the Culpeper and greater Prince William areas and allow patients to access potential treatment that is still being researched and not yet released.

Additionally, Swensen noted the announcement of the opening of a new nationwide program focusing on Ehlers-Danlos syndromes and other hypermobility disorders in June 2025. The announcement mentions that with only 15 treatment programs for the condition in the country, UVa. Health leaders hope the program will expand access to those seeking care for the condition in Virginia, expecting it to open by early 2026 in the Fontaine Research Park.

## The Manning Institute

The Paul and Diane Manning Institute of Biotechnology was first announced in January 2023 and backed by a total \$300 million in gifts and investments. Former Board members Paul and Diane Manning, who are healthcare entrepreneurs and active University community members, donated \$100 million of that gift. The Institute aims to transform healthcare and be the forerunner of new biomedical discovery and treatment, particularly focusing on the University’s existing strengths in cancer, neuroscience and immunology research.

The 350,000-square-foot facility is located in the Fontaine Research Park and reached a major construction milestone in October 2025, according to Swensen. The milestone involved a “topping out” ceremony at which the final steel beam of the building was placed.

According to Swensen, the facility is expected to open in 2027 and has already entered a research agreement with healthcare industry leaders like AstraZeneca to offer their new technology capabilities in developing treatment.

## Looking forward

Despite changes in University leadership and expectations of its operations, the University is still dedicated to carrying out the 2030 Plan, Glover said. The UVa. Health System has made significant progress on its strategic plan with expanded care and construction on the Manning Institute.

More information on the progress of the 2030 Plan can be found on its official website.

## SPORTS

## Perris Jones on courage, identity and imposter syndrome

The former Virginia running back's memoir, "Ashes to Endzone," is set to be released in the coming months

Aimee Crosbie | Sports Editor

Perris Jones paused before delivering a line that, in many ways, distills everything about his life into a single phrase.

"Courage isn't the absence of fear," Perris said. "It's going forward, in the presence of it."

Some readers may be familiar with Jones' name. In his fifth season on the Virginia football team in 2022-23 — his penultimate season and first as a starter — he was a team captain and the second-leading rusher behind then-quarterback Brennan Armstrong.

The University community may also remember his involvement in a severe head-to-head collision in the third quarter of the Cavaliers' Nov. 9 game against Louisville in 2023.

The collision left Jones motionless on the field of L&N Federal Credit Union Stadium with a potentially life-threatening spinal cord injury. He was rushed to the UofL Hospital, and his football career was brought to a sudden and terrifying close.

Jones said his injury, and the subsequent three weeks spent in the UofL Health ICU and Frazier Rehabilitation Institute, profoundly changed what he wanted to do with his life — but more importantly, how he wanted to go about it.

"I felt [a lot of] imposter syndrome while I was in the ICU," Jones said. "Because the people that were around me were dealing with so many different things ... Some of them were inside of machines that had to breathe for them. And I was like, 'Man, what can I do for them?'"

His experience in the ICU and rehab further expanded his perspective on "servant" leadership — what you can do for someone else.

"I tried to do anything I could," Jones said. "Whether that was giving them some flowers that they could look at, or writing a letter that they could read, or making sure that I walked by and smiled and waved, just small things ... And that's kind of how I try to live my life now as a result of that."

That life-changing incident was just one of many hardships that forged Jones into who he is today — he said his trials really began in his hometown of Arcadia, Fla. Jones noted that he grew up in a neighborhood where opportunity was scarce, and trouble was not.

"Growing up in Florida was rough," Jones said. "My mom was a single mom ... She had my brother at 15, me at 17. She was really young and had a lot of responsibilities at a young age. And sports was kind of

introduced as a way to keep us out of trouble."

A different set of trials soon came, as Jones entered college as a walk-on player at the University in 2018 — Jones spent four years doing everything asked of him and more, and received almost nothing in return. After four years of knocking on a door that refused to open, he began to wonder whether he was knocking on the wrong one.

"It's a lot of thankless jobs being a walk-on," Jones said. "You do a lot and get so little reward, and that was hard, being someone that was expecting to play and have a significant role, or even base level just be significant at all."

His breakthrough came during fall camp in 2022, under then-new Coach Tony Elliott. Jones said that time period was when he felt something click, and he was right to feel that way. He finally earned a starting spot as a fifth-year, right before the first game of the 2022-23 season. But after five years on the outside looking in, standing in the center of Scott Stadium felt wrong.

"I felt more of an imposter when I got the starting role than I did [as a walk-on]," Jones said. "I worked so hard for years for this one thing ... And when I finally got it, I was like, 'Is this actually what I wanted? Am I supposed to be here?'"

These lingering questions were silenced by the tragedy of Nov. 13, 2022, when three Cavalier football players — Devin Chandler, Lavel Davis Jr. and D'Sean Perry — were killed in a shooting on Grounds. The program and the surrounding community were shattered. The tragedy also left two others wounded — Marlee Morgan and Mike Hollins. Hollins, a fellow running back, was Jones' roommate.

"He's an inspiration," Jones said of Hollins. "After dealing with so much it's hard to feel sorry for yourself. If he can do it, I can do it, so we kind of motivate each other and build off one another."

Jones' resilience would be tested again nearly a year to the day after the shooting. During that fateful football game between Virginia and Louisville, the trajectory of Jones' life underwent a sudden and brutal redirection — and, against all odds, that redirection led somewhere remarkable.

Almost poetically, Jones is now pursuing a doctorate at the University of Louisville — the same university where his football career abruptly ended in 2023. Contrary to public



AHNA HAMPTON | THE CAVALIER DAILY

opinion, Jones said, he did not plan it that way. Louisville just so happened to have the program of study he wanted to pursue — a doctorate in Educational Leadership and Organizational Development — as well as the funding needed. But Jones said the symbolism is not lost on him.

"The way that it organically fit together was amazing ... You've got to turn your trauma into triumph," Jones said. "It's using the thing that was meant to break you, as a thing to take the next step in your life and grow ... When I look at that field I'm reminded of why I'm here, why I need to keep doing what I'm doing ... Hopefully it helps other people look at their hardships differently. You don't have to run from your hardships, you can grow through them, actually."

Jones has now channeled all of his trials into a personal memoir titled "Ashes to Endzone: The Fight for Identity, Faith, and a Future Bigger Than the Game." The title, he explained, traces his life from its volatile beginnings to the football field that closed one chapter in his life, but opened another.

Although it is Jones' story, the book might have never existed without Jonathan Cotten, The Good Feet franchise owner and CEO of Easy Step Enterprises. After hearing his story at a team meeting, Cotten told Jones he needed to share his story with the world — even offering to

fund the project. This literary project, Jones says, is a continuation of the servant leadership he aspires to each day.

"I try to live my life in a way that hopefully other people can look at and be inspired to do amazing things of their own," Jones said. "The driving factor behind [writing] it is that ... those kids can look and say, 'Damn, he came from the same project homes that I did, and he did that. I can do the same thing too.'"

For former athletes in particular, Jones hopes the book delivers something deeper than the familiar platitude of being "more than your sport."

"I feel like a lot of athletes feel like their only value to the world is what they can physically do, but there's so much more within them that they're capable of," Jones said. "So just to spend time with themselves, away from their sport, and figure out what they surely enjoy doing, what brings them peace, what lights their fire outside of their athletic space and diving into that."

Jones is candid in admitting his transition from football is far from over, and that a part of him still has not gotten over the fact he was not able to retire on his own terms.

"Every time I watch a football game or I see some of my other teammates that I played with ... I'm always left with that question, right?" Jones said. "Of, 'Okay, could I have done that?' I'll never be able to answer that.

And that bothers me at times, and it's something that I'm still working through."

Today, when people ask Jones about his past, he simply tells them that he graduated from the University — a bachelor's degree in African American Studies and English, as well as a master's degree in Educational Psychology. If they ask whether he played a sport, he says no.

"I don't even tell them," Jones said.

Now, when he is not studying, Jones spends his time attending events and conferences across the country as a motivational speaker. He also plans on starting his own nonprofit organization, prospectively named "No Stars," to help unranked young athletes, like Jones once was, reach their full potential by guiding them through college recruitment.

When asked what advice he would give to the wide-eyed walk-on who arrived at Virginia all those years ago, Jones' answer was simple — and characteristically rooted in the faith that has guided him through every closed door that eventually opened into something greater.

"I would probably tell him, for one, just to keep the faith," Jones said. "Yeah, keep the faith."

Courage, Perris Jones will tell you, is not the absence of fear. It is going forward in the presence of it. He would know — he has been going forward his entire life.

# 250 mph, Space Florida, racecars and Virginia Motorsports

For Virginia Motorsports, the commonwealth's 250th anniversary brings a unique opportunity

Emory Huffman | Sports Editor

Many undergraduates arrive at the University with some inkling as to what organizations they wish to dedicate their free time. Some make music. Others run for Student Council. Still others join the frenzy of Greek life.

Some of them build cars. Then, they test them. If they stick around through the spring, they race them, too.

This is Virginia Motorsports — a Contracted Independent Organization at the University consisting of 128 members. The team competes in Formula SAE, an international student design competition where college students design, build and race formula-style electric racecars. Virginia Motorsports builds one car each season from scratch, reusing some old components from previous seasons.

This unique organization attracts primarily Engineering students, thanks to its presence at University engineering expos. Besides a faculty sponsor, the team is primarily student-run — older members take on specific pieces of the design, ranging from aerodynamics to cooling to drivetrain and everywhere in between. Younger members spend their first semesters on the team learning and

figuring out what pieces of the project intrigue them the most.

For those willing to commit to this process, Virginia Motorsports offers the chance to participate in competitions against other college programs. This year, the team has been given a particularly special opportunity.

Joey Arrington, founder of Arrington Engines, former NASCAR driver and son of Buddy Arrington — also a former NASCAR driver — built the engine for the car that holds the modern stock car land speed record of 244 mph. A native of Rocky Mount, Va., Arrington is looking to break that record — partnered with the VA250 Car Project, Arrington has his sights set on 250 mph.

VA250 is the Virginia-based initiative celebrating Virginia's 250th anniversary. The program seeks to highlight Virginia's excellence in a number of fields, including racing and engineering. In recognition of this, the program plans to build a stock car in Martinsville, Va. that will take a shot at the record in Cape Canaveral, Fla. — known as "Space Florida" — from March 24-26.

Arrington and the VA250 Car Project enlisted Virginia Motorsports

to assist with wind tunnel aerodynamics analysis, vehicle design and performance analysis. Feb. 18, Arrington took a tour of the Virginia Motorsports shop at Lacy Hall, where the club meets and constructs its cars, and presented them with a \$5,000 check for their efforts.

"Anytime I get a chance to try to associate myself with a facility like this, we try to make the most of it," Arrington said following the tour. "There's ... so many opportunities here, bright minds, bright ideas, new ideas."

The students will have the chance to travel to Florida and see the record attempt in-person. They will also bring along some of their own cars to Cape Canaveral to test, something that might benefit them as they prepare for the competition season.

As far as the car-building process goes, the fall semester is primarily focused on design. The design process is thorough, requiring 3D printing, simulations, welding and a host of other processes all undertaken by the students themselves. In the spring, the literal rubber hits the literal road in competition.

The major competition takes place June 16-20 at Michigan International

Speedway. Colleges across the country — and the globe, in the case of a Singaporean team — bring their cars to Michigan to compete.

Many of these programs — which include Michigan, Georgia Tech, Illinois, Rochester Institute of Technology and Carnegie Mellon — have well-established motorsports programs dating back to the 1980s and '90s. The Virginia team, only in its sixth year of existence and its third year building electric cars, faces stiff competition as it looks to establish itself as a major player in college motorsports.

Alongside the competitive challenges come challenges associated with growth — particularly money management. The team receives funding from the University through several streams, but as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, they rely on sponsors and donors to support their material-heavy projects.

"We manage a lot of money, and so we need help doing that," Sanjay said. "We're all engineers, we don't really know what we're doing."

The challenge grows as the team expands. The team sits at 128 members, up from 115 last year and roughly 80 the year before. For some of the

members — such as Nived Sanjay, a third-year Engineering student, project manager and the VP of sponsorship — joining Virginia Motorsports was a no-brainer, a result of a longtime interest in cars originating prior to college.

"I've been a car guy for my whole life," Sanjay said. "Coming on on the first day ... I was like, this is something that I want to be invested in. And then it actually ended up panning out to be, like, what I really wanted it to be."

A \$5,000 check from a legendary engine builder and a chance to associate themselves with a historic attempt at racing history tell just part of Virginia Motorsports' story. In due time, these students hope their cars will consistently compete at the top of their class in Michigan. In pursuit of that goal, the members of Virginia Motorsports hope the Virginia student body will support them as they continue to grow.

"We are active at engineering expos," Ryley Butler, fourth-year Engineering student and Virginia Motorsports president, said. "Just come out and see what we're doing."

## 'It's about us, never about me': Bennett receives court dedication

Fifteen years, 364 wins and one national championship later, JPJ's court now bears Bennett's signature — and everyone who helped him write it

Jordan Zimm | Staff Writer

As the clock wound down with two seconds left and sophomore guard De'Andre Hunter secured the rebound before launching the ball up into the air, Virginia became champions. For Coach Tony Bennett, the moment cemented him as Virginia men's basketball's greatest coach.

Fifteen minutes before Saturday's down-to-the-wire win against Miami, the University formally named the John Paul Jones Arena court in honor of Bennett — a dedication that ensures his legacy and imprint on the program will remain at the heart of every possession played in the building for seasons to come.

The ceremony was packed with former players and staff, family and fans, all gathered to celebrate not just the countless victories, but also the imprint on the University that will last lifetimes.

When Bennett came to Grounds in 2009, Virginia was a struggling program searching for a stable leader. What followed was a transformation — regular and postseason titles, the program's first No. 1 overall seed in an NCAA Tournament and a national championship that com-

pleted one of the most remarkable comeback stories not just in college basketball, but in all of sports. But more than just the accolades, Bennett established an identity built on discipline, development and belief — one that changed everyone's expectations when stepping into JPJ.

For former players Anthony Gill and Malcolm Brogdon, who reached the Elite Eight under Bennett, the ceremony was less about the court dedication itself and more about the man behind it all finally getting the recognition he deserves.

"It's unbelievable," Gill said. "Coach Bennett put in so much work, not only to build a program, but to uplift his community."

Brogdon, the first player in ACC history to win Player of the Year and Defensive Player of the Year in the same season, emphasized what separated Bennett from so many in the profession.

"He's the most humble guy, [the] most humble coach," Brogdon said. "He's one of the legendary coaches, man, we're proud of him. We love him. We appreciate him."

Actions spoke louder than words. The humility was evident im-

mediately when Coach Bennett was handed the microphone. Etched into the hardwood is Bennett's signature, and to ensure credit was given to all who helped build the program, Bennett proposed an idea.

"I said, 'Is there any way' — and this is what I'm most excited about — 'is there any way inside that signature, we can put every name of every manager, walk on, player, support, staff [and] coaches?'" Bennett said. "So all your guys' names for the 15 years I've been the coach [are] inside that signature, so forever we will be on that court together."

Current Coach Ryan Odom, embracing the moment with Bennett on the court, remarked on how surreal the moment was and expressed his gratitude for having such a remarkable predecessor to look up to.

"Congratulations, and thank you so much from the bottom of my heart and all coaches out there for the example that you set for all of us," Odom said. "You are what college basketball was meant to be about, and what you did for this University, this program ... these folks right here behind you, it says everything."

The ceremony also included the presentation of a gift from Odom to Bennett — a painting of Bennett and his father in a moment of happiness, a tribute that symbolized the shared roots and familial connection between the two coaches.

"We do have a gift for you, one that I think you'll appreciate," Odom said. "I asked my friend Kyan [Patel] to paint something for you. You and I share one thing in common, and there's the real Coach [Dave] Odom over there. I know the real Coach [Dick] Bennett is proud of you as well, and we're both coaches' sons."

The gesture highlighted not only Bennett's profound impact on Virginia, but also the influence he continues to have on Odom, the current team and the roster as they strive to push the program back to where Bennett once had it.

Odom also proudly noted that the current Virginia roster still draws on Bennett's success day-to-day.

"These players over here are still learning from you every day," Odom said. "You don't know that, but we talk about you often, and your players and the history of the program,

and they're proud of you as well."

For freshman guard Chance Mallory, the ceremony marked a full-circle moment. The Charlottesville native originally committed to Bennett, decommitted after his retirement and later recommitted under Odom.

"It was cool to see all the names written down on there," Mallory said. "Even playing, I was looking down and seeing all the past people I was growing up watching, so that's pretty cool."

Bennett's speech epitomized the same theme that carried his program to numerous NCAA tournament games — gratitude over glory. Then, to bring the ceremony to a close, he returned to the same original foundation of the program he built from the ground up.

"My goal always was to honor the Lord as a coach, and I pray that this program and how we did was a bright light to all of you," Bennett said. "I'm so thankful for this. I feel like this is more than I deserve, but we're all in this together. It's about us, never about me."

# PUZZLE

Quinn Connor | Puzzlist

Answers are available on the digital version of this puzzle which is published at [www.cavalierdaily.com](http://www.cavalierdaily.com).

**ACROSS**

- 1 Course subdivision
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Island (Statue of Liberty locale)
- 10 Patriots quarterback Maye
- 11 Billy Joel song included in the soundtrack of "13 Going on 30"
- 13 Chloe Kim, in the 2026 Winter Olympics
- 16 Old \_\_\_\_ (popular hike in Shenandoah National Park)
- 17 Chicago alternative?
- 18 The Harry Potter books or BTS
- 20 Go out on \_\_\_\_\_
- 23 Frat. recruits, collectively
- 26 Periods in office
- 27 Sticker on the door of every 7-Day in Charlottesville
- 29 Vulcano of "Impractical Jokers"
- 30 Minestrone or French Onion
- 31 Largest city in the

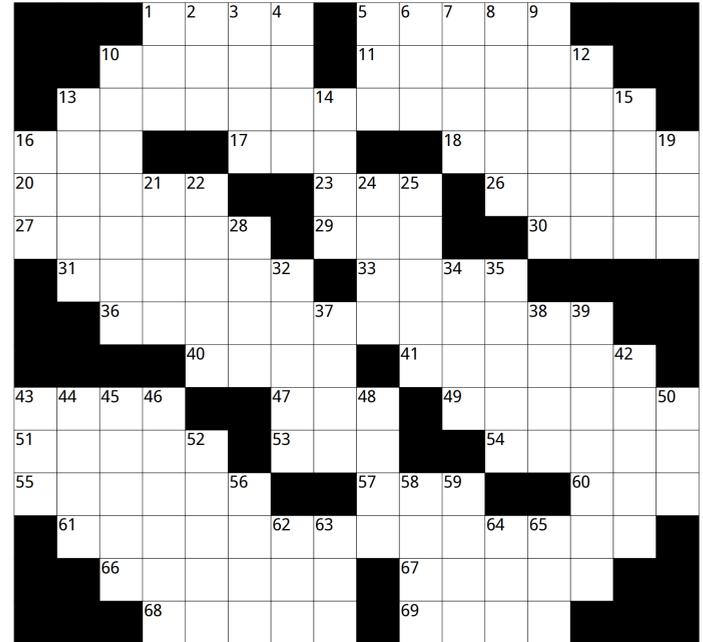
- Brazilian Amazon
- 33 Fidget with one's nails
- 36 Winner of the 2026 Student Council presidential race ... wait ... are the polls still open?
- 40 Power co. product
- 41 Lasting for a very, very long time
- 43 Low singing voice
- 47 Kind of bulb in many dorm fixtures, for short
- 49 Supercontinent of the Paleozoic Era
- 51 Member of the oldest intercollegiate historically Black fraternity
- 53 Alma mater for Shaq and Joe Burrow
- 54 Modelo \_\_\_\_\_ (dark beer)
- 55 Artifacts
- 57 Con's con
- 60 ER hookups
- 61 Kelly Clarkson mega hit featured in the "Pitch Perfect" audition scene

- 66 Missionary Mother with a Nobel Peace Prize
- 67 "Aura," "lowkey" and even 69-Across
- 68 Minor offered by U.Va.'s drama department
- 69 Float or boolean, in CS 1110

**DOWN**

- 1 <https://studentelections.virginia.edu>, for one
- 2 "Among Us" room with the "chart course" task, for short
- 3 Maker of the Djungelskog orangutan that comforted Punch the baby Japanese macaque
- 4 Nickname for a College Park athlete
- 5 She lived in Eden
- 6 Tupperware component
- 7 Pastoral expanses
- 8 Chesapeake Bay feature
- 9 Uses a Hunting Rifle, in Fortnite

- 10 Accessory of a friend that snaps?
- 12 Rival of an Angel?
- 13 Spot for a witch trial in 1692
- 14 Cartography creations
- 15 Low-budget Chinese shopping site
- 16 A little too rare, perhaps
- 19 1/48 of a cup (abbr.)
- 21 \_\_\_\_\_pedi
- 22 Prepare for impact
- 24 Nautical nickname
- 25 Use a mandoline
- 28 It's for two
- 32 Defense mechanism for some animals
- 34 Cut off
- 35 Thompson of "Saturday Night Live"
- 37 Sends a shot past the net untouched, in an Olympic sport
- 38 Word following red or fine
- 39 Dropping, in a way
- 42 One of over 7 trillion in

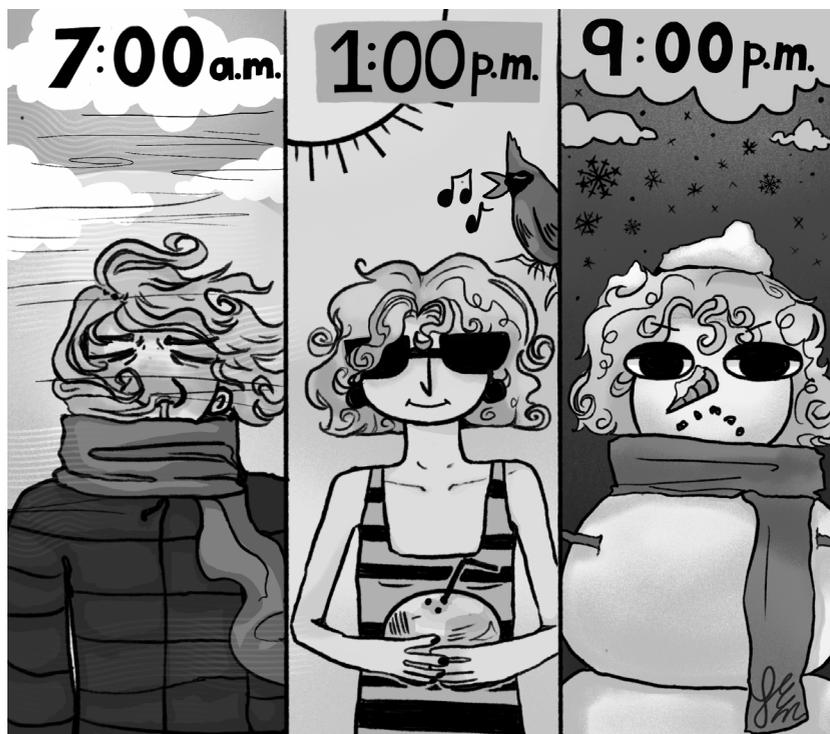


- the human body
- 43 The Virginian, but not the Marylander
- 44 43-Down offerings
- 45 Tricky bowling situation
- 46 Twinkled
- 48 A "luxury" 15-Down listing, often
- 50 Some Energizers
- 52 Capital of Ghana
- 56 Instagram message indication
- 58 Musical reprieve
- 59 Nothing but
- 62 L.A. school that joined the Big Ten in 2024
- 63 Love of texting?
- 64 Floss target
- 65 Final word spoken in the calendar year, for many

# CARTOON

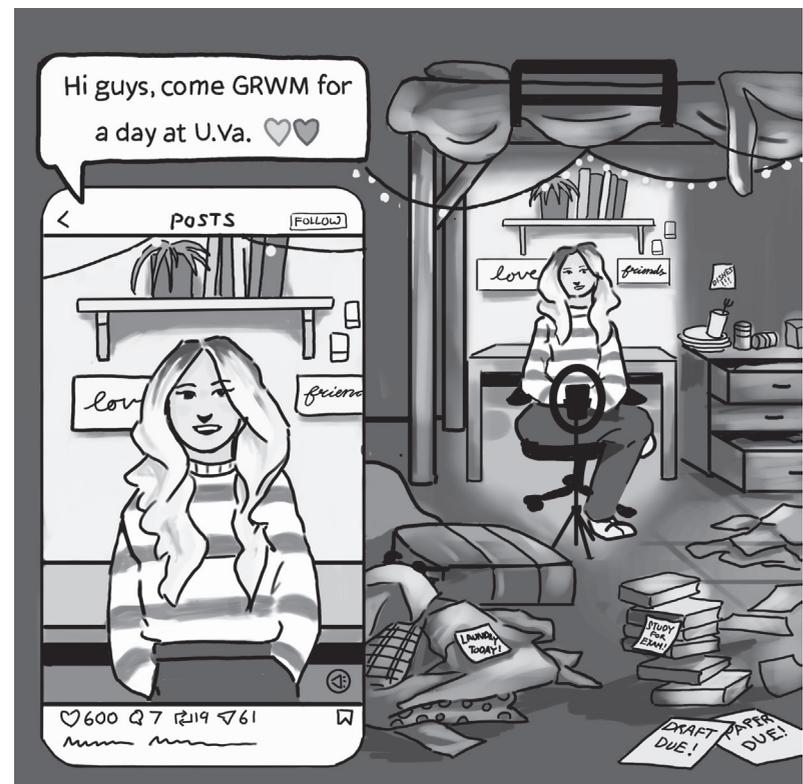
## Virginia Weather

Sarah Meisner | Cartoonist



## Instagram Aesthetics

Melody Moore | Cartoonist



# A LOOK INTO BLACK HISTORY MONTH

CD Staff Writers

## University organizations come together to celebrate Black History Month

As the University commemorated Black History Month, the University's Carter G. Woodson Institute for African American and African Studies centered its Black History Month events on the 100th anniversary of Negro History Week — a weeklong observance founded in February 1926 by historian Carter G. Woodson to recognize African American history and achievements. Negro History Week later received recognition as Black History Month under President Gerald Ford in 1976. The Office of African-American Affairs and Luther Porter Jackson Black Cultural Center also hosted a range of events throughout the month of February.

Vinson wrote that this year's events reflected Woodson's vision of Black history as a global and community-driven intellectual project — the events celebrated both the local Charlottesville-Albemarle community as well as the storied global history of the month.



LEON ARCEO | THE CAVALIER DAILY



CAT WHITE | THE CAVALIER DAILY

## 'Move in ways that insist on your humanity': the legacy of Carter G. Woodson

Nearly 20 University students, fellows and faculty members funneled into Minor Hall 110 — home of the Carter G. Woodson Institute — Tuesday evening to tune in to the third leg of the Institute's four-part Black History Month event series. Dr. Robert Trent Vinson, director of the Carter G. Woodson Institute for African-American and African Science, delivered a presentation highlighting Woodson's role in establishing Black History Month and continued influence on shaping the global understanding of Black history.

Situated within the African-American and African Studies department, the institute pursues its mission of making Black history accessible to the University community through a variety of avenues. Besides offering courses that cover "the whole Black world" across disciplines, mentoring 16 international research fellows per year and collaborating with the Jefferson School African American Heritage School, the institute hosts events year-round that honor and celebrate Black history.

## During Black History Month, Monticello reflects on America's founding

Thomas Jefferson's Monticello commemorated Black History Month with a series of events centered around sharing the history of Monticello's enslaved community this February. Programming began with the Black Family History Symposium, followed by a conversation Feb. 10 with Christopher Brown, professor in the Department of History at Columbia University, and concluded with an Archaeology open house Feb. 14.

The first event of the month was the third annual Black Family History Symposium, held Feb. 7 at the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center. The free, day-long gathering explored the theme "Refounding Legacies" as the nation approaches the 250th anniversary of its founding.

"This milestone [of the 250th anniversary] invites us to confront the gap between the nation's written history and lived reality," Monticello's website explains.

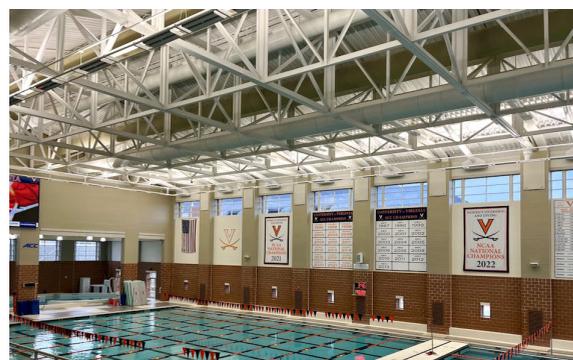


COURTESY MARTIN FALBISONER VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

## Trevor Freeland's journey from PDR to the Virginia record books — and beyond

In 1987, Trevor Freeland was the first African American athlete in the ACC to help Virginia earn an ACC Championship — the team's first — marking a major milestone for the program Bernardino was building. But despite the accolades, looking back, Freeland believes the true value of the sport was the dividends it paid in character, instilling a resilience that he says cannot be lectured into a person.

Those lessons remained applicable as he transitioned into the next phase of his life. After graduating from the University and later earning his Master's in Business Administration from Duke's Fuqua School of Business, Freeland built a career on Wall Street. Once again, he often found himself in the minority.



CAT WHITE | THE CAVALIER DAILY



VERONICA HASS | THE CAVALIER DAILY

## February Book Club: Four books exploring narratives of Black experiences

February is Black History Month — a time marked by the recognition of the Black experience in the United States both today and throughout history. Literature is one of the best mediums for expanding this recognition, immersing readers in stories of Black history and identity as they turn the page. These four works explore varying facets of that identity, providing a nuanced picture of narratives that speak to the Black experience. Throughout this Black History Month, be sure to appreciate and digest the narrative and historical diversity offered by these excellent literary works.

## Black Girls United fosters sisterhood and belonging on Grounds

For many first-year students, arriving on Grounds can feel like stepping into an entirely new world. Lecture halls are larger, expectations seem higher and forming new friendships can feel daunting. For Black women at the University — a predominately white institution — this transition can come with an added layer of isolation. In 2022, the University's chapter of Black Girls United was founded to address exactly that.

BGU has hosted a range of events — dance workshops in partnership with Asambé, to panel events to hear stories and experiences from BGU members and a brand-partnered session to learn about skincare with Good Molecules — all designed to help students build community and find a sense of belonging.



COURTESY ANTWAN BRANCH

## Black History Month Concert celebrates Black excellence through gospel music

The Paramount Theater on the Downtown Mall had a line out the door Friday for the Black History Month Gospel Concert featuring opening act Madison Ryann Ward and five time-Grammy Award Winner Chandler Moore. The concert — presented by the University's Division for Community Engagement and Equal Opportunity — was rooted in Christian faith and served as a worship event as well as a musical one.

The concert opened with a short video that reminded the audience of the importance of gospel music in Christian faith and the African American community. The video grounded the music in its historical context as a part of American history and emphasized how the evolution and dynamic nature of gospel over time reflects the growth of the Black community in America.



NATASHA STONE | THE CAVALIER DAILY



AHNA HAMPTON | THE CAVALIER DAILY

## Meet Virginia's own Shohei Ohtani

The face of Major League Baseball is Los Angeles Dodgers superstar Shohei Ohtani — the only player to be an all-star at both pitcher and designated hitter in MLB. Virginia baseball now has its own Ohtani. And this one was tailor-made to be a Cavalier.

This multifaceted phenom is junior utilityman Kyle Johnson — a Duke transfer who is set to start as a left-handed pitcher, hit right-handed and also play right field. Johnson, who followed Coach Chris Pollard from the Blue Devils this offseason, could be a major contributor this season, as Pollard noted at preseason media availability.

"Kyle Johnson really emerged this fall," Coach Chris Pollard said. "So proud of that dude, and his growth, not just physically, but just his growth as a person ... going through some of the struggles that he went through last year has just made him a tougher competitor."

## Nakeya Brown's 'Refutations' is a story of identity through Black hair and history

For photographer Nakeya Brown, hair has always been a path of self-expression. Through her photography, Brown is guided by this link between hair and self-presentation, fighting the societal perceptions of "good hair." Her new exhibit at The Fralin Museum of Art, "Refutations," evokes themes of self-expression and memory, documenting Black hair and the women who lived with it.

The exhibit features six of Brown's photo series, each of which uses photography to highlight the ways in which identities remain in the face of pressure to adapt and fit into a mold. The objects and models tell stories of refusals and nonconformities, highlighting Black experiences that are not often showcased in art and photography.



JAMES GALGANO | THE CAVALIER DAILY

## From the Archives: March 27, 1963

"King Gives Appeal For Equal Rights"  
By John Omwake

On Monday, March 25, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at Old Cabell Hall, after a press conference earlier that day in the South Meeting Room of Newcomb Hall. During the press conference, he argued that segregation in the North was "potentially explosive" and resulted from de facto housing policies, rather than laws like in the South. "Segregation is on its deathbed," King said. "The only question is how much cost the U.S. will pay for its funeral."



## From the Archives: February 12, 1963

"Rosa Parks remembers civil rights movement"  
By Angela Handley  
Photos by Lynn Manning

Civil rights activist Rosa Parks gave a speech in 1990 for the University's celebration of Black History Month. Parks detailed the experience of her arrest when she refused to sit in the back of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Parks urged audience members to vote for a peaceful world and for change, stating that many people had been injured, arrested and even killed in an effort to make sure



Rosa Parks greets students and area residents after her speech. The civil rights activist discussed segregation in the early 1950s.

## Rosa Parks remembers civil rights movement

By ANGELA HANDLEY

"Did you ever think about what it would be like if Rosa Parks had given up her seat on that Montgomery bus on December 1, 1955?" asked Brad Hinton, director of Black Values. "We would have been denied many freedoms and privileges," responded second-year College student Kim Dillon, who joined Hinton in welcoming Parks to the University. In addition to the large crowd in Old Cabell Hall, many of those waiting to hear the speech were turned away. The speech was part of the University's celebration of Black History Month. Parks, nationally renowned as the "Mother of the Modern Civil Rights Movement," told University students and Charlottesville residents about the events leading to her famous arrest and her continuing work as a civil rights activist. "The segregation, oppression and humiliating, because more and more disrespectful... one of those times when you never knew what to expect," Parks said. "I had not intended to get arrested, but was not afraid as I had faced many obstacles and threats. She said in a press conference prior to her speech. "In order to express the idea to be a free person, I had taken action regardless of consequences. "It did not seem to me that it was helping me as an individual or us as a people to comply in a way to make them feel we wanted to be treated that way."

"All people should join together for a just, peaceful and prosperous world," she said. She said she hopes people will not dwell on the negative but instead concentrate on the positive. Parks placed great emphasis on the importance of registering and voting in local and national elections. "One of the most critical needs we have today is the need to fulfill our destiny by exercising the power of the ballot, registering to vote and holding office." She explained that many people had been injured and sometimes lost their lives trying to exercise the right. Parks asked the audience to take advantage of the voter registration table set up outside the auditorium. Parks, along with her husband Raymond, was an active civil rights worker in the Montgomery Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Parks worked with youth groups to teach passive resistance and also aided in organizing the celebrated Montgomery bus boycott that lasted 381 days and culminated in the desegregation of public busing. Parks commended the election of Douglas Wilder as governor and "hopes he will not remain the only one. I hope more young people will aspire" to these heights. "Ending the program, University President Robert D. Woodson presented Parks with a certificate from Wilder and the Commonwealth of Virginia, establishing Parks as the first African American woman to be honored in 1990 as Rosa Parks Day. "I'd like to be remembered as a person who wants to be free and so others free," Parks said.

## From the Archives: February 23, 2007

"Black Panther co-founder Seale speaks to University students"  
By Katt Henry  
Photo by Zoya Khokar

Bobby Seale, co-founder of the Black Panther Party, delivered a speech called "The History and Impacts of the Black Panther Party." This speech was one of the celebrations hosted at the University in honor of Black History Month.

## Black Panther co-founder Seale speaks to University students

Founding member of the controversial Black Panthers spoke about the party's impact

By Katt Henry

Cavalier Daily Features Editor

Black Panther Party co-founder Bobby Seale delivered a speech yesterday called "The History and Impacts of the Black Panther Party" as part of Black History Month celebrations at the University. Seale discussed his involvement with the party and its history.

According to an Office of African-American Affairs press release, "Bobby Seale and Huey Newton founded the radical, revolutionary Black Panther Party for Self Defense in 1966 as an alternative to the non-violent civil rights

movement." Seale's speech was sponsored by the Black Student Alliance, the OAAA, vice president for student affairs, vice president and chief officer for diversity and equity, the University libraries and the Carter G. Woodson Institute. Matthew Hughey, adjunct instructor in sociology and media studies, who was a member of the party as a teenager, said revolutionary figures like Seale are often "over-romanticized." It is "good that we should remember that they are living people," Hughey added.

History Prof. Claudrena Harold echoed this sentiment in her introduction, asking audience members to "not simply focus on the rhetoric."

Seale cited Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and Malcolm X as three primary influences on his work during the civil rights movement. In its early days, Seale said, the party created a "functional definition" of power. "Power is the ability to define phenomena, then in turn make it act in a desired manner," he said. The party also outlined a 10-point program that addressed issues including unemployment and due process, Seale said. Seale added that the party created free health clinics and a breakfast-for-children



Bobby Seale, a co-founder of the Black Panther Party, spoke last night about power and the history of the party. Seale was invited to speak as part of the University's events for Black History month.

# My story, woven into my hair

How my relationship with my hair has evolved from exclusion to empowerment

Phoenix Banks | Staff Writer

Some of my fondest memories come from hair salons. I can still feel the booster seat settled beneath my thighs before I was big enough to sit in the chair. I can still see the stylist behind me, ratted comb pinned between her teeth, scooping copious amounts of hair gel out onto the back of her hand. I can still smell the aroma of peppermint and herbs saturating the room, knowing I will be sitting in that salon chair for hours to come.

To say hair is a pillar of the Black community is an understatement. Black hair comes in many different styles, textures, colors and lengths — from protective styles like braids and locs to looser, more natural styles like afros and twists. It is the very thread that has connected Black people throughout generations — the piece between Black Americans of the 21st century and the very slaves that landed in the Americas in 1619.

However, despite the memories and sense of gratitude that I store in my hair today, for a very long time, I felt differently. Like many other Black girls, there came a day when I recognized that I stood out — when I looked at all the TV screens and movies and realized that Barbie doesn't have cornrows with brightly colored ball hair ties and barrettes at the ends.

We live in a world where Black hair isn't celebrated on the big screens — movies and TV shows tend to focus on white characters, and when they do feature Black characters, they're almost always given minor, underdeveloped roles. Even more so, many Black characters on the big screen almost never wear their hair naturally, making it exceptionally difficult for young Black girls to find themselves, and their hair, represented in characters.

Beyond the media, there also came a day when I realized that the other girls in my classes didn't come to school with tightly plaited hair that their mothers spent all night working on, that while my night was spent sitting between my mother's knees on the carpet of her room, my classmates were watching late-night television. Without people who look like me represented in the media, nor in my inner circle, there came a day when I realized that my hair was uniquely my own. But instead of feeling special, it made me feel incredibly odd.

I was embarrassed whenever my hair made noise from all the beads. I was embarrassed by the smell of ironing combs and fruity

shampoos and conditioners. I was embarrassed by the questions my classmates asked. Each new hairstyle came with questions from "How does your hair just change like that?" to the infamous "Can I touch your hair?"

I became uncomfortable every time it felt like people only focused on my hair — something that made me "different" — over who I was as a person. I began to hate everything in relation to my hair — talking about it, thinking about it and I especially hated getting it done. Every new class became a humiliation ritual, a circus show in which I was the main attraction. And every year until high school, the circus would come back to town. My hair became the elephant in the room. So I avoided it by all means.

At times, I felt completely alone — probably because up until high school, I was usually the only Black girl in my class. I had no one to talk to about how I was feeling about my hair, the way I talked or about my culture at all.

It took a long time, too many years of stressful hair-straightening processes, for me to appreciate my hair exactly as it is. In order to fully appreciate my tresses, I had to fully understand the history and culture that came with them. On my journey, I decided to engage with more Black media, listen to music by Black musicians like Stevie Wonder and Lauryn Hill and follow social media creators who looked like me, such as @phaithmontoya and @ava.tocloo. My older sister became one of my biggest inspirations — I would see her confidence grow with each new style she donned.

Since Black hair isn't a topic discussed in school, I had to do a lot of research on my own. I learned that many hairstyles have deep roots in slavery and Black history. Slaves used to stylize maps into their braids for when they needed to escape slavery, and even used braids to carry small items like seeds that they would need on their journey.

In more contemporary times, Black hair has been used to symbolize a closer connection to ideas of freedom and resistance, as seen in styles like afros. Once I truly understood the background of these styles, I was able to appreciate my hair and wear it with pride.

My journey was not always linear, but the circuitousness of the journey gave me the patience I needed to discuss my hair with confidence and love.

In addition to my increased



CHLOE PANOS | THE CAVALIER DAILY

cultural understanding, I also found that hair is best appreciated when it makes you feel beautiful. For me, this acceptance was accelerated by finding a style that fit me best. After about 12 years and what felt like millions of hairstyles, I discovered that locs — a protective style made up of matted, rope-like strands — were my crown.

After speaking with some of my other Black friends, I found solace in knowing that I wasn't the only person to have a complicated relationship with these twisted strands of DNA. Finding people who understood what I was going through was one of the best things to ever happen to me.

Today, I love being able to look at all my friends and appreciate their different hairstyles. One of them wears her hair in relaxed waves, some others have tightly coiled curls and another has locs just like me. We all wear our hair proudly, chins held high, with big, bright smiles — something my younger self could only dream of.

It is at those times I reflect back to times of loneliness as a child, where I felt like the odd one out in every environment. I remember nights where I would dream of having friends who looked like me and understood me, just to wake up to the same homogenous nightmare that was my reality. Now, it is an honor to be surrounded by people who don't just love their hair, but who constantly push me to love my hair as well.

Black hair is a conversation. A conversation you have with your

stylist about what you think would work best for your scalp. A rowdy conversation over FaceTime with your sister about her fresh silk press. A conversation with your niece about what kind of bows and barrettes she wants to wear for the day. A conversation with yourself in which you realize the hair on top of your head means more than you ever thought it would.

I learned that every conversation about Black hair reveals that hair is not just about aesthetics and practicality, but about who gets to live comfortably. It raises questions about what deserves to be policed and points to the history of criticizing Black aesthetics to begin with. It opens the door to a history of struggle between Black people and the pursuit of practical autonomy.

Not every hairdo is a statement, a declaration against the world. Sometimes it is just a return to comfort, a re-discovery of what feels natural. The recognition that wearing your hair naturally isn't just about defiance, but about freedom, serves as a revelation for many Black girls — including myself. The freedom of being able to wear your hair however you want without rules and regulations, to present your authentic and natural self to the world around you is a blessing that I will always appreciate.

This history does not just live in textbooks — it lives in me. It lies in the chair that spins me toward my reflection at the end of every appointment. I move in front of the

mirror and smile at my fresh hair. Staring back at me, I see the little girl who felt so uncomfortable in her skin. She would never believe that leaving the hair salon, I feel excitement. I'm excited about the way I look. I'm excited about how confident I feel. Most importantly, I'm excited about my hair. I look really good.

These days when I leave the hair salon, I pay for my style and walk back to my car. I put on my favorite playlist and roll down the windows to feel the air brush over my freshly-parted scalp. I am no longer six years old, teetering on the edge of anxiety every time I get a new hairstyle, but showing my hair off to my mom is still my favorite thing.

I bet, inside of her too, was once a little girl who felt her hair made her different — lesser than. So when I finally pull into my driveway and walk through my front door to show her my beaming smile and freshly done hair, it is about so much more than just my tresses. At that moment, the little girls inside each of us finally find the solace they had been searching for for so long.

# The fall and rise of Boylan Heights

Boylan Heights outgrows its first-year bar reputation and hones in on its sports bar branding to spike its resurgence

Lindsay Lian | Staff Writer

Sitting at the intersection of 14th and W Main Street, Boylan Heights has been a staple of the Corner life at the University since 2008. As part-restaurant, part-sports bar, Boylan draws students and Charlottesville locals to experience its University-themed menu and abundance of TVs placed around its two floors, especially on game days.

Many fourth-year students recall Boylan during its glory days — colloquially known as “the first-year bar,” with droves of underclassmen dancing upstairs three nights per week. However, students said that the once-bustling environment has been scarcely present since the 2023–2024 school year, replaced instead by eerily short lines and an empty dance floor.

Lauryn Kumpe, Boylan server manager and fourth-year College student, described how the bar’s reputation as a first-year bar is what once caused its popularity — yet is what eventually led to its downfall, according to Kumpe.

“All the first- and some second-years ended up coming to Boylan, and the upstairs was always packed,” Kumpe said. “[But the] reputation for being a first-year bar sort

of became a detriment.”

Lately, however, Boylan appears to have surmounted this lull and is in the midst of a comeback, building a new reputation with a specific customer base and an emphasis on student leadership.

“Over this past winter especially ... [Boylan] is kind of getting its mojo back a little bit,” Kumpe said.

Specifically, Boylan has honed its niche to lend itself to different competitive positioning. Employees said that whereas Boylan’s atmosphere used to be that of a college bar, primarily attracting underclassmen students, management is now focusing on its sports bar identity.

According to Jay Dixon, Boylan regular and Charlottesville resident, Boylan’s advantage as the only real sports bar on the Corner makes it the optimal spot for students to cheer on their favorite sports teams accompanied by dinner and a cozy, friendly ambiance. Still, he said that day-to-day nightlife turnout has yet to catch on.

“If there’s a UVa. basketball game, everybody comes here because it’s just a great place to watch games,” Dixon said. “[If] we’re talking about a night

out, then it’s gonna be eight people at the bar, and half of them are gonna be employees ... There’s a lack of a crowd outside of game days.”

Employees attribute much of Boylan’s rise in popularity to a managerial culture shift. This winter, many of its salaried operational managers sought new career opportunities. Their places were filled by student managers paid hourly, giving Boylan a stronger student-focus.

Jaiden Beckett-Ansa, long-time Boylan employee and fourth-year Engineering student, saw this reorganization first-hand as a customer, server, barback, bartender and eventually, student manager at Boylan. He said that while the shift to student management was a substantial restructuring, student employees stepped up to take the transition in stride.

The Boylan staff had deliberate conversations surrounding their vision for the bar’s rebrand. According to Grace Mozolewski, regular Boylan patron and fourth-year College student, management has made an effort to reach out to different organizations, encouraging them to host events at Boylan.

“I definitely do see the resur-

gence,” Mozolewski said. “Recently, I had a date function there, and it was super fun. And I think recently people just go to get food and hang out more and go get drinks because it is a great bar.”

Along with trivia held upstairs every Thursday night, as well as the option for private groups to rent out the venue, Boylan hosts public gatherings for sporting events and other holidays like Oktoberfest and St. Patrick’s Day, often featuring themed drinks and decorations.

Kumpe echoed how this collaboration, creativity and commitment to open discussion of the employee culture with Boylan’s rebrand has led to a more positive work environment.

“Before, I felt like there would be a lot of blame,” Kumpe said. “Now I feel like there’s a much more open environment with that ... even my relationship with people who come in has changed ... I am just happier when I’m working.”

This openness carries over to employees off the clock as well. For Beckett-Ansa, working in a connected environment like Boylan has even posed unexpected perks. On an ordinary Monday on the job, he met his

current mentor who went to dental school at Virginia Commonwealth University. According to Beckett-Ansa, this connection influenced his decision to attend VCU School of Dentistry next year.

“If it wasn’t for me working on a random Monday where I met my mentor who went to dental school at VCU, I don’t think I would have had the opportunity to be going to VCU next year for dental school,” Beckett-Ansa said. “The networking and the community I’ve been able to build around, it has just been so amazing.”

Ultimately, Boylan’s rebrand has shown promise for its revitalization. Gone are the days of being exclusively “the first-year bar” — with new versatility, management and event-planning opportunities, Boylan is evolving alongside its patrons to remain a staple of University life on the Corner.

“It’s just a jack of all trades, in my opinion,” Beckett-Ansa said. “You get to watch your sports ... You get to eat amazing food ... It can be a place where, if you just want to even go there and do work on a casual Monday, you can still do that.”

# Virginia Guides centers Black History on Grounds

Student guides highlight the untold stories of African Americans’ impacts on the University’s foundation

Ingrid Gay and Phoenix Banks | Life Editor and Staff Writer

As one of the oldest public universities in the United States with a UNESCO World Heritage designation, the University has long had its page in the history books. What is often left out from its well-known past, however, is its connection to Black history — storied with deep roots in enslavement and segregation. The Virginia Guide Service has been working to change that.

Virginia Guides — previously known as the University Guide Service — has been serving the University and the greater Charlottesville community for 75 years. Virginia Guides has a focus on historical tours of the University, but also offers several specialty tours by appointment.

Following their 2024 suspension, Virginia Guides was formally separated from the University as a Special Status Organization and became a Contracted Independent Organization. As a CIO, they operate independently from the University, and the organization has shifted to primarily focus on historical tours.

In their History of African-Americans at UVa. tour, the guides center their trips around the complicated racial legacies of slavery and discrimi-

nation at the University. According to Rose Haron, Virginia Guides co-chair and third-year College student, these tours offer their participants a chance to conceptualize the oppression that transpired during the construction of the University.

“The conditions of how oppressive the system really was sometimes gets lost. Everyone knows that slavery happened, but when you’re on a tour, you’re standing in the Pavilion Gardens, and you have your tour guide being like, ‘there were 15 [to] 20 people living in this space,’ and you can physically see the space,” Haron said. “I just think it adds this new context to history. And I think that everyone needs to experience that.”

As a result, Virginia Guides has seen firsthand the impact their tours can have on community members’ lives. Kendyl Pugh, Virginia Guides vice chair and third-year Batten student, recalled a time after a tour she gave on the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers, where a patron stayed behind to speak with her, sharing that she had been completely unaware of this piece of the University’s history.

“[The guest] was crying to me, and I think that for me was my moment

of ‘wait — telling this history is really important,’” Pugh said.

Outside of regular tours, Virginia Guides is also working to expand its outreach into the greater Charlottesville community. Currently, they are planning a History Week to be held around Black Alumni Weekend April 10–12.

To become a guide, students must go through a trial tour and interview, followed by a probationary semester. During this first semester, new members take weekly history classes and receive a book on the University’s history, with assigned readings to contextualize their learning.

Natasja Stone, Virginia Guide and fourth-year College student, begins each one in the Lower East Oval Room of the Rotunda, focusing on a mural painted around the University’s founding.

The painting depicts an enslaved Black woman, lodged in a corner while holding a white baby, amidst a crowd of white male students. This is how she likes to introduce this history — hidden within the University, yet a pillar of its foundation — just like the woman in the painting. Stone concludes her tour at the Memorial to Enslaved

Laborers while discussing her current day-to-day experiences at the University as a Black woman.

“History is living. I consider my history to also be a very living thing,” Stone said. “I don’t practice [my last stop] beforehand. It’s just whatever comes to mind ... I would say that the Black student experience here, for me, is a little tough ... Everything going on [with the] current administration and DEI kind of honing in on a lot of things, stripping a lot of things that take away the Black identity here is hard to grapple with.”

Stone is not alone in this sentiment. In recent years, the University has experienced systemic changes — such as the Board of Visitors’ controversial 2025 decision to dissolve the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

These changes at the University are mirroring broader trends in American politics at large. In recent weeks, the Trump administration has removed informational signs discussing America’s history of slavery from Independence National Historical Park.

On Grounds, Stone speculates that the aforementioned 2024 suspension of Virginia Guides was tied

to concerns over the history that the Virginia Guides were teaching, specifically topics relating to the historical presence of enslavement, segregation and eugenics on Grounds.

“I was so angry at one point, of them taking away this history. I was just like, ‘I’m going to do more of this. I’m going to tell this truth. I’m going to just unleash all my rage and truth into these historical tours in the best way possible,’” Stone said. “And that’s what I did, and I fell in love with it.”

It is through the actions of dedicated students like these that African American history is shared on Grounds. For Virginia Guides, to ignore the impact of Black history is to ignore the very foundations of the University — as these things are inherently intertwined.

“At every single [University] ceremony, we talk about its founding, but we don’t talk about the entirety of its founding, and that is intrinsic to the history of African Americans,” Pugh said. “You can’t talk about UVa. without talking about African Americans here, because they’ve always been here. It’s just a part of telling a full history.”

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## ‘Visions of Progress’ photographs 1920’s Black history

The exhibit at Trinity Episcopal Church offers a collection of portraits reclaiming the stories of Black life as it existed a century ago

Maxwell Mitchell | Staff Writer

The “Visions of Progress: Portraits of Dignity, Style and Racial Uplift” exhibit — on display at the local Trinity Episcopal Church until March 11 — features a series of portraits capturing African American Charlottesville residents from the 1920s. According to John Edwin Mason, curator of the exhibit and professor emeritus of history, the portraits showcase the dignity and pride of their subjects amidst heightened oppression at the time.

The portraits come from a collection of 10,000 glass plate negatives — glass sheets that were the main method of capturing images before film — given to the University in 1978 from the Holsinger Studio, Mason said. As the primary Charlottesville portrait studio of the late 19th and early 20th century, the negatives provided by Holsinger were all taken between the 1890s and 1920s. The exhibition chose a small sample from the over 500 negatives that captured African Americans, and was originally displayed in the University’s Special Collections Library in 2022 and 2023, drawing record numbers of visitors.

Mason said he sees the existence of these portraits as an extraordinary act of refusal of exclusionary historical narratives. According to Mason, the portraits were a way for African Americans to demonstrate agency in telling their own story instead of accepting the depictions thrust upon them by society.

“These portraits were made at the height of the Jim Crow era, which is to say at the height of racial oppression in the United States,” Mason said. “And yet you cannot see oppression in these portraits. And that’s how people wanted it. They wanted you to know that they are not defined by their oppression.”

The African American figures are portrayed with an air of dignity and pride, defying the racist caricatures prominent throughout the United States at the time, particularly in the South. The portraits are full of personality and expression and highlight aspects of Black life like family, churches, schools and businesses.

This aspect of the photography is particularly evident in a portrait of Dr. George Ferguson, one of the first African American physicians to open a private practice in Central Virginia. In the



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The portraits come from a collection of 10,000 glass plate negatives—glass sheets that were the primary method of capturing images before film—given to the University in 1999 from Holsinger Studio, the primary Charlottesville portrait studio of the early 20th century.

portrait, Ferguson is sitting in a chair dressed in a stylish three-piece suit. To his left stands his daughter, Louise, wearing a white shirt and skirt and to his right is his son, George Jr., leaning on his father and crossing his legs. Louise would later become a career librarian at the Cleveland Public Library and George Jr. went on to become a leader of the Charlottesville National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He was a part of the organization in the 1950s when the group sued the city of Charlottesville to follow the Brown v. Board of Education decision to integrate schools.

The spirit of the portraits and the collection’s title reflect the “New Negro Movement” during the Jazz Age of the 1920s. This movement was characterized by upward mobility, progressive attitudes, demanding constitutional rights and cultural self-expression.

Mason started working on the project in 2015 with collaborators like Worthy Martin, Assoc. Professor Emeritus of Computer Science, exhibition curator Holly Robertson and a team of seven undergraduate researchers. Using the studio’s ledger book along with other documents like mili-

tary records, birth and death certificates, street directories and newspaper articles, the team did deep dives into the lives of the people captured.

The research is presented in the form of brief biographies of the subjects next to their portrait that explain the likely circumstances for which they would be getting their photo taken as well as what was recorded of their life afterwards. For Mason, these blurbs remind the viewers that each sitter was a person with a real life of joy and hardship that extended beyond the single recorded moment.

“Their words and pictures work really well together, because one is doing things that the other cannot,” Mason said. “The words can explain and words can make an argument, but the visuals can give you a much richer sense ... for what it feels like.”

Over the last few years, the exhibit has been mobile. After its longest stint at the Special Collections Library, it made stops at the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia in Richmond and the Westminster-Canterbury of the Blue Ridge retirement community before appearing at the Trinity Episcopal Church in Charlottes-

ville.

Trinity is no stranger to opening up its halls as an exhibit space for local artists, as the “Visions of Progress” collection will be its sixth exhibit in the past two and a half years. Mason said that the current location is very personal for him, as his father was ordained as an Episcopal priest and Mason himself has been a member of Trinity since moving to Charlottesville in the 90s. Mason said he believes having the portraits in a historically Black church like Trinity also symbolizes the importance of Black institutions, connecting the past and present through faith and local communities.

“There are African American institutions that have made it possible for African Americans not to be crushed by oppression. The church is certainly near the top of the list,” Mason said.

For Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church Cass Bailey, it’s been fulfilling to see members of the Charlottesville community who have ties to individuals in the portraits come to the church to see the exhibit.

“There are some people who still have some connections in the community who know the exhibit is here and they’ve seen

it,” said Bailey. “I saw the exhibit when it was at U.Va., but having it in your space, your home so to speak, it just gives a different feeling and a sense of pride. So it’s good to be a part of this.”

The exhibit’s next stop will be at Charlottesville High School, either later this spring or this upcoming fall, and Mason said he hopes to bring it to other schools in the region. Mason said that he and his team are excited about the idea of the collection reaching young people, and impacting them in the same way he was impacted when he first saw them. He hopes that the portraits and the stories that go with them remind people today of the resilience and strength demonstrated by these individuals in claiming their personhood, and that the fight is far from over.

“One of the things that looking at these portraits can do is remind people that we’ve been walking for a long time, and there’s a long way to go,” Mason said. “But we keep walking ... And no matter how bleak things look now, the struggle continues. It’s a long march, and we cannot be defined by outside forces. We have to be defined by what’s inside of us.”

# Decades Arcade offers retro gaming to new generations

With an array of retro video games and pinball machines, the downtown arcade offers a memorable experience in early-era gaming

Carter Horner | Senior Writer

One of the many entertainment hubs in Charlottesville's Downtown Mall is the ever-growing Decades Arcade, home to over 30 pinball machines and over 100 retro arcade cabinets dating as far back as 1957. Owned and founded by Assoc. Medicine Prof. Paul Yates, the business began as "Paul's Pinball Palace" in 2018, a small home for Yates' pinball collection before scaling to its current state. It stands out among other popular spots downtown for its nostalgic appeal and rare game collection. Currently overseen by Arcade Manager Lindsey Daniels, the arcade is open from Friday through Monday weekly from 12:30 p.m. into the night.

In addition to owning Decades Arcade and being a doctor of Ophthalmology at the University, Yates has a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from California Polytechnic State University. This skillset allows him to tinker with and repair old machines and arcade game cabinets — an aspect of operating a game room that often flies under the radar, according to Yates. He explained his appreciation of the unique opportunity to preserve and share these classic gaming experiences with the Charlottesville community as a motivating force for

balancing work as a University professor, doctor and business owner.

"Each of us gets a very limited amount of time on this planet," Yates said. "And the goal ... certainly for me, and I think for a lot of people, is to do as much good as you can in whatever way that you can ... Each of those things that I do bring some aspect of who I am ... to make some small, tiny, little bit of difference somewhere."

Down a dark staircase lit by blacklight is the pinball room, which rests in a former underground bomb shelter that is over 100 years old. The glowing pinball machines are laid out in order of their release dates, which range from 1957 to what will soon be 2026 when the newest Pokémon machine arrives.

Each pinball machine features a short blurb above it describing its technology and significance. As the decades progress, the evolution of components such as computers, sound effects and digital screens is evident. Decades' first machines featuring computers come from 1977, before they started to also incorporate sound systems and high definition screens. Many machines are evidently products of social trends at their time — 1976's "Pioneer," for instance, depicts

an astronaut, reflecting the space-race focused politics of the era.

While it started with just pinball, Decades Arcade quickly began acquiring video games as well, striving to preserve the art form's history through its robust collection. The rest of the arcade is composed of arcade cabinets ranging from the original 1978 version of "Space Invaders" to their most recent, 2021 acquisition, "Sound Voltex: Exceed Gear." The games are separated into several rooms by theme, which serves to highlight their historical evolution.

"You can see how games change," Daniels said. "Not only the gameplay, but the artwork. We talk a lot about the history of video gaming and computing."

One room hosts the classic games ranging from the late 1970s to early 1990s. These include popular cabinets like "Pac-Man" and "Dig Dug" as well as several lesser known titles mixed in. The mid-to-late 1990s have their own room to highlight the jump in graphical capabilities and controls between the 1980s and 1990s, with more complex, higher resolution games that enhanced their players' experiences.

Games with categories that do not fit the traditional arcade cabinet mold

also have individual rooms throughout the space. These include racing, shooting and rhythm games, most of which include an unconventional control scheme such as a physical gun or steering wheel. Decades is also home to a handful of active games such as air hockey, skeeball and shuffleboard.

According to Yates, one motivation for starting the business was providing another kid and family-friendly entertainment environment in downtown Charlottesville. Based around retro entertainment, Decades gives parents the chance to introduce their children to the games they played growing up.

"When it first started, there were very few entertainment options in the Charlottesville area for kids," Yates said. "And if there were, they weren't terribly affordable. And so part of the goal of Decades was to create a space that added to the community."

His efforts have proven successful, with Daniels noting that she sees a much larger variety of age ranges visiting the arcade than she initially expected.

"I'll mostly see people bringing in their kids," Daniels said. "And then the kids get turned on to it, which is great, because the kids who are born in the

2010s or even 2020s, they don't know about any of this stuff yet...they don't have access to it out in the wild like they used to."

Yates and his team employ an affordable pay-per-hour or all-day pass system, where customers can play an unlimited number of games for 2 hours for \$12, or \$17 over an entire day. Most pay-to-play arcades, in contrast, charge for single uses of each machine. In this way, a trip to Decades makes for an appealing outing, where families and University students can enjoy classic games without worrying about sinking in too much money.

"The idea is not making a ton of money," Daniels said. "The idea is really to be a steward of video gaming and pinball and STEM education and gaming history and all that. So that's what we focus on. And, of course, building community."

Yates echoed that idea, noting how almost all profit is turned around and reinvested into the arcade, enabling it to grow to severalfold its original size. This evolution has created a staple of downtown Charlottesville, capturing decades of gaming history in a soulful and vibrant arcade accessible to all.

## THE CAVALIER DAILY

### THE CAVALIER DAILY

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# OPINION

## LEAD EDITORIAL

### U.Va.'s everyday fees undermine affordable student access

*In order to improve financial accessibility, the University must work to minimize the general costs that students experience*

As elections for Student Council positions unwind, student leaders have considered specific ways to improve students' lives. While student financial security has been imperiled by major, apathetic decisions at the federal level, like cuts to student loan offerings, there exists also a smorgasbord of "smaller" issues at our University. These issues are represented in everyday costs, such as parking fees and laundry charges that, when combined, are burdensome indeed. The University's commitment to affordable access should be expanded, in concert with Student Council, to ensure that no student suffers overly burdensome day-to-day costs for necessities.

The list of these everyday costs is concerningly long — laundry costs \$1.75 per cycle, parking on Central Grounds costs \$2.50 an hour with exorbitant fees between \$55-\$65 for citations and printing costs \$0.08 per black-and-white and \$0.25 per colored page. Books, course materials, supplies and equipment alone are estimated by the University to have an

annual cost of \$1,520. The prices of all these academic and living necessities accumulate quickly and morph into onerous price tags for students at the University. The expensive daily costs particularly affect low-income students — nearly a quarter of Class of 2028 students receive Pell Grants, and 13.1 percent met the University guideline for low-income.

Struggles to keep up with these everyday items have become even more relevant amidst federal actions that raise the costs of University education. The workforce at the Department of Education has been gutted as part of President Trump's pernicious priority of eliminating the organization, creating administrative struggles. Additionally, the "One, Big, Beautiful Bill" created further difficulties around obtaining and paying off student loans throughout a student's university experience. These decisions not only impede the financial affordability of the University, but also deepen the burden of accumulating necessary costs for students, particularly those

classified as low-income.

Recent University events also create opportunities for improving financial accessibility for these everyday costs. The appointment of University President Scott Beardsley and the election for a new Student Council President create a moment where both students and the University have the opportunity to create a novel and expanded relationship. Recent events support the prospect of a collaborative relationship — both the financial gift promised by President Beardsley to Student Council and the Student Council resolution in favor of maintaining Beardsley indicate a willingness to work together. This future relationship is critical for efforts to support University students struggling with everyday costs.

Further, an expanded relationship between the Student Council President and Beardsley will combine the strengths of both institutions. Student Council remains attuned to the financial impediments across the University. Indeed, they already provide in-

itiatives such as the Textbook Access Office and UVA Mutual Aid to support low-income students struggling with these everyday costs, programs which could be expanded through partnership with the University.

Once Student Council identifies programs presently creating financial hardship for students, it is the University administration that possesses the greatest financial and organizational power to support the costs of programs dedicated to aiding students. Despite Student Council initiatives, the differences in financial power reveal clear limits on the ability of Student Council to provide assistance — Student Council's annual budget is less than \$275,000, whereas the University and the College at Wise's allocation for academic operations sits at roughly \$2.5 billion. In this way, both organizations possess the strengths to form a relationship dedicated to the broad support of students.

There are times when the financial promises of our University can feel disingenuous, where the claims of true

administrative support for affordable access seem fully disconnected from the experiences of students. At a time when broad student worries envelop a multitude of major issues surrounding tuition accessibility, the safety of international students and the independence of higher education, the greatest support may come from the most targeted of actions. Students are struggling with a myriad of crises — it is unacceptable for the price of clean clothes, important textbooks and accessible parking to be yet another cost to bear. In order to reduce the financial burden on students, it is incumbent on the University to work with Student Council and lower the everyday costs that perniciously accumulate throughout students' University experience.

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## ANDERSON: Undocumented students cannot be pushed out

*The recent lawsuit against in-state tuition for Virginian undocumented students threatens to price out many undocumented students from public universities*

With masked U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents patrolling American cities, mass deportations separating families and a barrage of anti-immigrant propaganda, the Trump administration is attacking undocumented immigrants on multiple fronts. Former Attorney General Jason Miyares entered into a settlement to end undocumented students' access to in-state tuition Dec. 29, spearheading another attack. The University community must defend undocumented students and prioritize their humanity over an ideological mission of hate.

Per Virginia law, undocumented immigrants pay in-state tuition for public universities if they have attended at least two years of high school in Virginia and submit evidence of taxes filed by themselves or a guardian for the past two years. While the Justice Department insists that this violates federal law, the National Immigration Law Center disagrees, arguing that tuition equity policies are compliant. Additionally, Attorney General Jay Jones plans to fully defend the policy, calling his predecessor's decision to support the Justice Department's lawsuit "legally incorrect." Time will tell

how these legal questions are decided, and decisions that will have a major impact on people must be made with humanity in mind.

The stakes are certainly high. Currently, 13,122 undocumented students attend Virginia public universities. If the Justice Department's lawsuit suc-

ceeds, undocumented students could lose in-state tuition eligibility immediately, raising their tuition by nearly \$40,000 and forcing many students to drop out of school. For some, that would mean never finishing their degree, despite their hard work or proximity to graduation. The cruelty of this alone — forcing so many students out of higher education mid-degree, after they might have already paid thousands in tuition — makes this action reprehensible.

**In times of scapegoating and persecution, it is not an option to sit idly by — not for individuals, communities or institutions."**

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The Justice Department would have you think offering in-state tuition to undocumented students is

unfair to Americans, but the truth is, it inflicts little harm. While in-state undocumented students are technically taking a small number of seats away from American citizens, one must remember that those students earned their spot due to academic merit, not immigration status. Moreover, undocumented immigrants living in Virginia deserve in-state tuition because they support the basic foundation of in-state tuition — state taxes. In 2022 alone, undocumented immigrants paid nearly \$700 million in state and local taxes, money that directly funds Virginia's public universities. By receiving in-state tuition, undocumented students are getting what they rightly earned through hard work.

Undocumented students' presence in higher education also adds to Americans' experiences. Meeting and making friends with people from all walks of life is one of the most valuable

features of attending a public university. While students might be able to educate themselves on the subjects they would take classes in, in no other place will they find such a broad collection of people all brought together to pursue a common goal — education. And while the inevitable differences that

stem from diversity can cause conflict, college exists for those disagreements to clash. Undocumented students bring an entirely new perspective to the table, a perspective that must be heard, understood and empathized with.

But putting aside their contributions to the rest of the University community, undocumented students should not have to justify their presence on Grounds. Despite the cruelty that the federal government has been levying against them, they are still humans who deserve the same respect as anyone else. While breaking immigra-

tion law is not right, many undocumented students had no choice in how they entered the country, brought into the United States as children. Depriving them of an affordable in-state college education would hurt the people who most need support. For a university that should still strive to be both great and good, supporting the most vulnerable is an imperative.

In times of scapegoating and persecution, it is not an option for individuals, communities or institutions to sit idly by. We must stand up for undocumented students' right to take part in higher education, acknowledging the significant good they do for our University, as well as their basic dignity. As students, that might mean voicing our support outwardly for undocumented students amongst our peers. For University leaders, that means policymaking that actively supports undocumented students and pushing back against anti-immigrant federal encroachment. Humanity must be prioritized over hate.

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# KURTZWEIL: LV Collective does not solve student housing

*City Council must stop this firm's development on West Main that is damaging vulnerable communities with no benefit for students*

Lyle Lovett told us that despite our not being from Texas, Texas would “want [us] anyway.” It seems that Texas has decided to come to us instead — the Austin-based real estate firm LV Collective has purchased the lot next to Yugo Crestline, formally the Standard, intending to build an 11-story student housing complex. Residents of Westhaven, a public housing complex, who live directly behind this proposed skyscraper, are demanding the City Council put a stop to this construction. Further, calling this project a student housing project is deeply ironic — the high cost of living only serves the fraction of students who can afford to live there. City Council needs to halt this development before it promotes a dangerous precedent for student housing and damages a community.

The impetus is that Charlottesville zoning law is in shambles. For most of 2025, there was no zoning law at all, meaning City Council exerted little control over development. While the City Council resolved the legal issues that caused this mess, it has now reduced its role in regulating development projects. When LV Collective proposed their development, they did not go to the City Council, but rather to the Board of Architectural Review, a body with only the power to delay,

not stop, development. If this sounds confusing, that is because it was designed to be so. It is a winding mess of regulation, approvals and buck-passing in order for unpopular projects like the one at hand to slip through.

When LV Collective presented their plans to the BAR, their ideas for Westhaven were tone-deaf to the existing community, which they would be entering. Around half of the

In a similar vein of ignorance, LV Collective manipulates Charlottesville's real need for affordable student housing towards its own purpose. No one doubts that student housing is a cause of strife in Charlottesville. It has clear effects on the cost of living for permanent residents, remains too costly for many students and creates pressure for University expansion. Yet, LV Collective is not only not the

Charlottesville to find more affordable housing, it only takes pressure off the University to provide housing. It does not provide relief to low-income students because, when students who can afford apartments like Yugo Crestline move out of middle-priced housing, only students who can already afford those middle-priced rooms can move in. In effect, the target of affordability programs like on-Grounds housing are

the development of citizen-scholars. The City Council should not strive to make money from student housing.

The LV Collective proposal aims to address two problems — a disparaged public housing community and a struggling student population. It fails dramatically at both because its actions are based on profit rather than community needs. Housing should not be removed from the community, and it all too often is — Morgan Stanley surely does not understand the needs of University students more than a local proprietor would. In light of this, the City Council has an obligation to put itself back into the conversation over development projects and halt this obstruction. The isolation of Westhaven and the mismanagement of student housing cannot continue. Perhaps an empty lot is not the best use of space, but whoever believes that the oxymoron of a luxury student housing site is the solution is firmly misguided. Perhaps a “cupcakery” would suffice.

**“Calling this project a student housing project is deeply ironic — the high cost of living at such locations only serves the fraction of students who can afford to live there.”**

meeting slides detail how Westhaven will improve through development in the coming years, a strange thing to mention when this development is primarily due to the hard work of the Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority and not Austin real estate firms. The CRHA highlighted a planned walkway from Westhaven to Main that will feature historical decorations, showcasing their commitment to community orientation. A project that will effectively cut a community off from the heart of Charlottesville cannot reconcile its deep unpopularity via an alley.

answer, but it is not even an answer. Building a luxury apartment only serves those who can afford it. It does not reduce price pressure for those who cannot. The supply of low-cost housing is effectively fixed by the University. Anything else is increasing the average rent. The power to avoid student housing unaffordability lies with the University and no one else.

The City Council might see it differently. They may look at studies claiming that any construction is beneficial to low-income residents. However, more luxury student housing does not allow permanent residents of

not these students, and developments like this will not lower prices. Landlords are smart, they know that enrollment is increasing, and one luxury development will not drop demand to a point where they must lower prices.

Similarly, the City Council may see tax revenue as more important than maintaining a healthy community. Charlottesville, however, is not a typical city. A hefty chunk of its economy is predicated on a rotating cast of students coming in with their parents' money. Therefore, a large portion of its housing market is controlled by an entity not dedicated to profit, but to

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## Here are the best ways to avoid sickness this flu season

The only As and Bs some of you are getting this semester are strains of influenza

With students finally settled back into life on Grounds and big assignments coming down the pipeline, the last thing any student needs is the influenza virus ruining their academic experience. At least 40 of you freaks are already down with the sickness, and I bet there are at least 40 more of you out there right now coughing in the back of a lecture hall. Perhaps some of you are neglecting to use the AFC wet wipes and ruining it all for the rest of us. Thus, as a desperate final appeal to save the University from a Hoo Flu pandemic, I'm going to take the time to give you some of the most evidenced ways that you can avoid getting sick this flu season.

First, you know how it takes the dining hall employees a few minutes to get all of the plates off of the rotating dish return and properly washed? Well, I've learned that, if you're quick with it, nobody will stop you from just reusing other people's plates — this is a huge part of how I've maintained flawless health during my collegiate journey!

The residual germs left by other students are usually enough to bolster one's own immune system and overall health, and while I generally try to lick any plate clean before I use it, I am sure that you can accrue similar health benefits without doing so.

But, of course, your immune system is only part of the broader illness puzzle — most people are not aware that sickness occurs largely as cosmic retribution for deeply personal failures of a moral nature. Then again, most people do not spend much time in the Contemplative Sciences Center. Marinating for even just a few hours every day in the center's dark, mysterious, crystal-walled room has proven benefits for the metaphysical health of students, which is itself a key defense against the B strain of influenza in particular. And don't even get me started on the ontological goodness that radiates from the Commons' 360-square-foot LED video display.

However, it is here that I must stress the importance of getting your information from trusted

sources like The Cavalier Daily. For example, the Department of Health and Human Services may try to tell you that the Dell's water has healing powers, but that's pure superstition and an utterly foolish belief to hold — coming into contact with stagnant water is never sanitary! On the other hand, some folk wisdom still holds true, such as the importance of avoiding people who are involved in a cappella. That advice is pretty self-explanatory.

Another key contributing factor in the spread of viral infections is cramped indoor contact, and unfortunately, that sort of contact is at its most frequent in your University-accredited courses. If you are attending your classes, you are sharing a breathing space with hundreds of students who did who-knows-what over the weekend. Were they in the sickbay that is Boylan Heights? Partying it up in a cramped frat house? You simply have no way of knowing, and so, the best way to reduce this risk is to skip class altogether.

Nevertheless, just because

you aren't going to your courses doesn't mean that you can't enjoy life on Grounds! You can think of this as an excuse to spend more time doing germ-free outdoorsy things, like attending an outdoor concert at Coupes' or making out with a stranger at a Madison Bowl darty.

Finally, it's super important that you drink plenty of fluids. This point cannot be stressed enough — fluids play a crucial role in keeping your body regulated, and that goes for whether you're sick or not! Some helpful fluids include raw milk, Celsius and Boylan double Hardbodies — alcohol has the added benefit of being a social lubricant! Additionally, you may want to drink some water, but only in moderation, and only if it has not been sourced from the Dell. You don't want any of that still water bacteria, now do you?

All told, the University can be a very scary place when it comes to sickness. However, with health research more robust than ever and an abundance of wellness champions to look up to,

weathering flu season has never been easier — just stay away from those a cappella people!

*OWEN ANDREWS is a Humor Columnist for The Cavalier Daily. He can be reached at [humor@cavalierdaily.com](mailto:humor@cavalierdaily.com).*

# HERE TO STAY: The Power of Women's Stories

*What happens when the stories of women stop being footnotes and start becoming the narrative itself?*

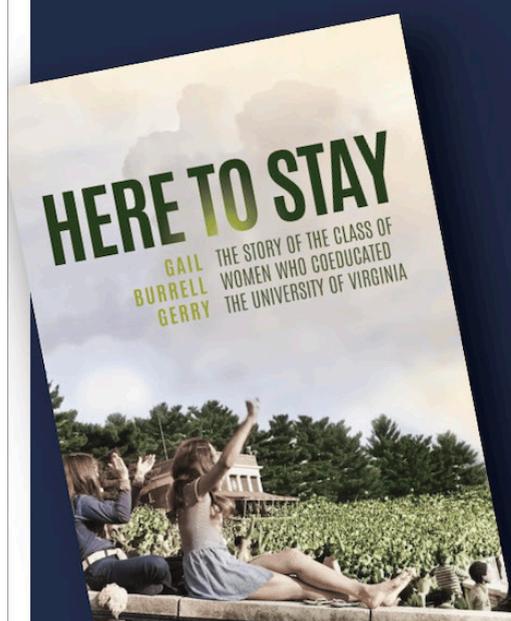
A conversation with Gail Burrell Gerry (Col '74), Akshita Tiwari (Engr '28), Chloe Barbosa (Com '26), Ruth Kramer (Col doctoral student), Allison Elias (Col '02), assistant professor at Darden, and moderated by Kate Byrne, WomenAdvancing podcast host with introductory remarks provided by Christa Acampora, dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.

**Join us for a thoughtful, cross-generational conversation** as we explore what it means to claim space, build community, and carry forward the stories that shape institutions and ourselves. Together, we'll reflect on the women who opened the doors, the women walking through them now, and the stories that ensure they are, indeed, here to stay.

Continue the conversation in the Dome Room for a post-event reception featuring light hors d'oeuvres and refreshments.

*This event is co-sponsored by the UVA Alumni Association and the Maxine Platzer Lynn Women's Center.*

Thursday, March 12th  
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
Dome Room  
Reception to Follow



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