

The Daily Tar Heel

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025

132 YEARS OF SERVING UNC STUDENTS AND THE UNIVERSITY

VOLUME 133, ISSUE 2

FUNDING

Summer research programs halted

Federal cuts target, affect initiatives that promote DEI

By Akash Bhowmik

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and Maria Sullivan

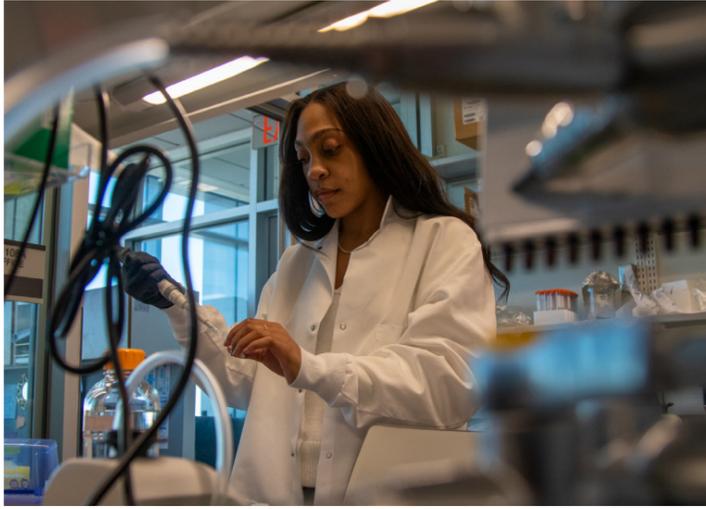
Senior Writer

Following threats of potential funding cuts from the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, multiple summer research opportunities at UNC in the life

sciences and social sciences have been put on hiatus or canceled.

Each summer, the University typically hosts internship programs that allow students, both from other institutions and UNC, to engage in mentored research. Many of these programs are intended for students with limited research experience or communities who are underrepresented in research, including students from minority groups, rural or low-income backgrounds and first-generation college students.

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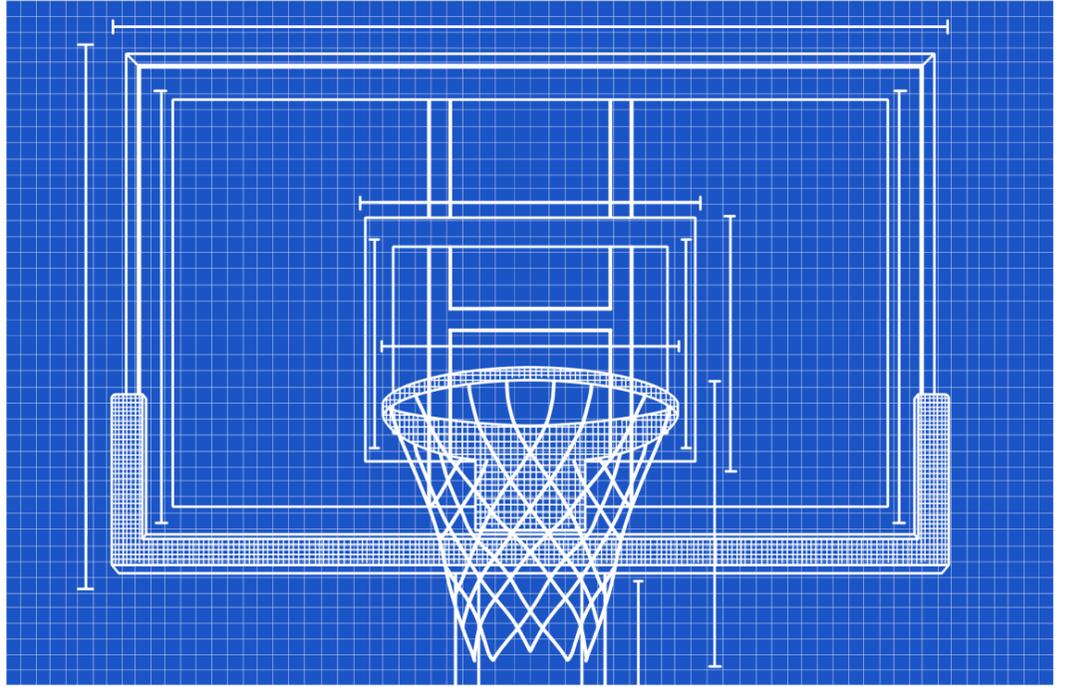


DTH/MICHAEL PEARSON

Doctoral candidate Leah Frazier conducts breast cancer research in her lab at the Mary Ellen Jones building on Monday, March 3.

DEVELOPMENT

Residents discuss potential Dean E. Smith Center relocation



DTH DESIGN/GRACE DAVIDSON

Arena may move to Friday Center or Carolina North

By Maddie Policastro

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As a 1988 graduate, Scott Bouldin watched the UNC men's

basketball team compete on two different home courts – Carmichael Arena as a first-year and the newly opened Dean E. Smith Center during his later academic years.

Bouldin, now a Chapel Hill resident, may soon witness the Tar Heels move to a new arena.

In August 2024, the University's Physical Master Plan Working Group presented a final report on campus redevelopment that

included six potential properties for the relocation and renovation of a new basketball arena, two of which are located off campus.

The University-owned properties include the William and Ida Friday Center and Carolina North, the former site of Horace Williams Airport that closed in 2018. According to an email statement

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PERFORMANCE

Kenan Theatre Company puts on 'At the Wedding'

Comedy follows a woman attending her ex-girlfriend's nuptials

By Jaya Nadella

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"At the Wedding," a comically expressive and heartfelt production

written by Bryna Turner, was performed by UNC's Kenan Theatre Company this past week.

As attendees took their places and waited for the show to begin, they were met with table settings and name cards at their seats, which were strikingly similar to a real wedding reception, making audiences feel as if they were actually at the wedding where the plot unfolds.

The play follows a woman named Carlo, who is attending the wedding of Eva, her previous partner who is now getting married to a man. In the play, the audience follows Carlo as she realizes that any chance of rehashing the romantic relationship with Eva is gone forever. Throughout the play she goes through feelings of uneasiness,

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DTH/MASON MILLER

Grace Wilkinson and Marguerite Stanley perform together in "At the Wedding" at Kenan Theatre on Saturday, March 1.

PREVIEW



DTH FILE/AVA SHARON

UNC guard Lanie Grant (0) looks to shoot the ball during the game against Duke on Thursday, Feb. 27 in Cameron Indoor Stadium.

Women's basketball's path to ACC Championship trophy

No. 5 seed UNC must win four games in four days to earn title

By Beckett Brantley

Senior Writer

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The ACC women's basketball tournament bracket was finalized on Sunday night, awarding UNC the No. 5 seed and a first-round bye. The Tar Heels will play

Thursday morning against either 12th-seeded Boston College or 13th-seeded Syracuse in First Horizon Coliseum in Greensboro.

After North Carolina's loss to Virginia on Sunday afternoon, UNC's performance in the ACC tournament will have big implications for hosting rights in the first two rounds of the NCAA tournament.

While Sunday's defeat took UNC out of double-bye contention and

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“ I must have flowers, always, always. ”

CLAUDE MONET

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INTERNATIONAL

'Great friends': UNC swimmers reflect on Olympics

Adam Maraana, Martin Kartavi represented Israel

By Anna Page Lancaster
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Adam Maraana placed a picture of the Olympic rings on his bedroom door at the age of 5.

His mother, Alexandra Nikonov, wrote in an email to The Daily Tar Heel that Maraana has a strong motivation to succeed. When he started swimming competitively, he always wanted to be first. The Olympics became his goal.

Last year, Maraana failed nine times over eight months to qualify for the 2024 Games. On his 10th and final chance, he tried a different approach: Go as hard as he possibly can.

He qualified on June 6, 2024, at the Israel Olympic Trials with a 100-meter backstroke time of 53.60. The cut was 53.74.

He punched his ticket to the Games in Paris alongside future UNC teammate and fellow Israeli swimmer Martin Kartavi, who competed in the 50-meter freestyle.

Together, the pair represented Israel in the 2024 Paris Olympics. Over the summer, Kartavi and Maraana lived together in the Olympic Village. They competed together.

Now, they are experiencing a new kind of challenge: collegiate swimming in a different country.

Journey to the Games

Kartavi, originally from Netanya, Israel, thought Maraana was cocky when they first met as teenagers competing internationally. Maraana thought Kartavi was a "dumb kid" and couldn't believe they would be swimming together.

When they started talking, they realized they had the same goals. From that point, they roomed together for every international meet. Their coaches worried the two would distract each other by joking around too much.

"They are great friends," Nikonov said in an email. "They have always been like that. They help each other in their daily life, university life. They give each other support in hard times."



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNC ATHLETICS/JEROME IBRAHIM

Marin Kartavi dives into the water during the 2025 Swimming and Diving ACC Championship meet.

In January — six months prior to Maraana's qualification for the Olympics — Kartavi qualified and set a personal best of 21.90 in the 50-meter freestyle in Geneva, Switzerland.

Maraana and Kartavi arrived with the rest of the Israeli team at the Olympic Village in June. It was the middle of the night. The pair had been training in Italy up until that point. Instead of resting, they rode bikes in circles around the facilities.

"We were screaming like little kids," Kartavi said. "We were just enjoying it."

Stepping onto the pool deck for the first time was something Maraana will never forget. The rings were on display everywhere — the same ones that hang on his door back home. The lights were always shining, displaying "Paris 2024" at every glance.

He said the water felt different. Magical, even. He gets goosebumps even remembering the experience.

"I was putting my hands on my head," Maraana said. "I was like, 'OK, I can't believe what I'm seeing.'"

Kartavi recalls the whole experience feeling unreal.

"When the whistle went off, that's when I felt all my energy

pushing through me," Kartavi said. "It was like a superhuman push."

He tied for 19th in the 50-meter freestyle.

Maraana placed 28th in the 100-meter backstroke, but he wasn't too hard on himself.

"I've never done that much hard work in my entire life in one season," Maraana said. "I sacrificed everything for it."

Life after Olympics

Maraana went back home in early August. In the middle of the month, he flew to the United States and started classes at UNC five days later.

Kartavi was fighting through an injury in the fall of 2024. He was unsure of whether he could continue swimming. UNC's coaching staff reached out to him and detailed what his life would be like if he chose to swim at North Carolina.

And he chose to keep going. Kartavi has been in Chapel Hill for less than two months, officially joining UNC's roster in the spring of 2025.

"[Maraana] helped me," Kartavi said. "He guided me. He told me what to say, what not to say. He told me what bank to go to. Basically, he's my dad."

Fifth-year UNC swimmer Patrick Hussey said Maraana and Kartavi have acted like big brothers for the team. They have experience at huge international meets and know how to manage high-pressure situations.

Head coach Mark Gangloff said there is a raised level of expectation for former Olympic competitors.

"You see so much potential in [Maraana and Kartavi], and you can see how fast they can become," Gangloff said. "Even as developed as they were, we ultimately believe that they're gonna be a lot faster once they're in our program."

Maraana said almost every swimmer's goal is to reach the Olympics. But once you do, you don't just stop there. His motto is "set no limits. He envisions a future for himself where he's back competing in that magical water again.

"If you ask those extreme athletes, those that actually live, breathe it, eat it every single moment of the day, they're all gonna tell you [that] they're not satisfied with anything they've done," Maraana said.

X: @aplancaster_

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DISCLOSURE

Lawyer sues UNC over records related to conference realignment

Claims University obscured plans to leave the ACC

By Beckett Brantley

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Triangle-based lawyer David McKenzie filed a lawsuit against UNC on Feb. 19, claiming that the University was not fully transparent with its legal activity while looking into leaving the Atlantic Coast Conference.

The lawsuit deals with the Carolina Blue matter, the “secret project” for the potential conference realignment, in which fees were made payable to the law firm Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP.

UNC Media Relations said in an email statement that the University used Skadden for “advice and counsel regarding the rights and responsibilities of conference membership and the ongoing environment of conference realignment.”

The lawsuit holds that McKenzie repeatedly requested documents related to the activity, but he was given vague and misleading descriptions. This avoidance was a “calculated effort to offer superficially responsive yet substantively meaningless documents while withholding the actual records that matter,” the lawsuit states.

UNC has paid the firm more than \$620,000 since 2022 in legal fees. McKenzie is attempting to uncover details about what the University was obtaining to justify the expenditures.

“The University generates revenue from lots of different places, but it’s

a public institution,” Hugh Stevens, a nationally-known First Amendment and media lawyer, said. “The administration and trustees have a fiduciary obligation to use that money for the ultimate benefit in the best interest of the University.”

The law firm used Relativity software to manage and analyze electronic data during its investigation. The software allowed UNC to limit its exposure to the records because the University would only see a simplified version of the invoices. According to the lawsuit, this way of handling the documents effectively obscured UNC’s legal obligations to release the records.

“They still have statutory obligations to disclose public information and it appears that they were well aware of that,” Pate McMichael, director of the North Carolina Open Government Coalition at Elon University, said. “And they concocted this billing scheme to make sure these open records requests did not reveal too much about that plan.”

There is no way for the public to know what exactly is in the documents, but Stevens said that law firm billing records include information about which lawyers were working, how much they charged per hour, how many hours they worked and a general description of what they were working on.

McMichael said that the lawyers may have been hired to look into UNC’s contractual obligations to the ACC and what the University would do if it decided to leave the conference. He said that UNC’s attorney-client privilege applies to more sensitive subjects than billing records, requiring them to release the documents if requested.

The North Carolina Public Records Act gives the public the right to access all documents from state agencies



DTH FILE/JEROME IBRAHIM

Bill Belichick speaks at a press conference in the Blue Zone at Kenan Stadium on Dec. 12, 2024.

unless they are specifically exempted from disclosure. All documents UNC has related to conference membership, in or communication with the ACC, should be subject to public records law.

Stevens said public records cases have priority in the court because of how they are handled. In this case, the University can either release more documents, or a judge would review the current records in private and decide which are subject to public records law.

The issue of realignment, or when a college or university moves athletic conferences to likely increase revenue, has been a hot topic in recent news.

The ACC gave UNC \$42 million in the 2023-24 fiscal year. The

Southeastern Conference, a potential realignment landing place for UNC, paid an average of \$52.5 million to its member schools, excluding two teams who joined mid-year.

In March 2024, Clemson University joined Florida State University in suing the ACC, claiming the schools should be able to leave the conference without having to pay the \$140 million fee. Days later, the ACC countersued, seeking declaration that schools pay the withdrawal fee and honor the conference’s broadcast agreement with ESPN, even if they are no longer in the ACC.

Brendan Marks, a reporter who covers UNC and Duke University basketball for The Athletic, said

the money from the conference can be put toward a variety of things, notably revenue sharing for athletes.

Marks said he believes that exploration with Skadden was a necessary due diligence. UNC likely concealed the dealings because it wouldn’t look good for a flagship university of the ACC to consider leaving, he said.

But in recent years, the ACC has fallen behind the SEC and the Big Ten in prestige and competitive caliber.

“Jockeying for third place is not where the ACC wants to be or where it has ever been at any point in athletics history previously,” Marks said.

X: @dailytarheel

Research programs impacted by federal cuts



DTH/MICHAEL PEARSON

Like doctoral candidate Leah Frazier, several graduate students conduct pharmacology-based research at the Mary Ellen Jones building.

Continued from Page 1

“These programs provide mentorship, skill building [and] networking that students from smaller institutions or non-research intensive schools may not otherwise have access to,” second-year pharmacology doctoral candidate Leah Frazier said.

The cancellations coincide with an announcement from the NIH proposing to lower the funding cap on “indirect” research costs, such as research facilities and administration, to 15 percent, rather than the previous cap of 55 percent, The Daily Tar Heel recently reported. The proposal follows a series of executive orders from President Donald Trump targeting initiatives

that promote diversity, equity and inclusion in the federal government and in federally funded grants.

In an email statement to The Daily Tar Heel, UNC Media Relations wrote that individual programs have the authority to make administrative decisions for their respective programs. They also wrote that the University does not collect demographic data on all undergraduate students involved in research.

“There are currently no university-wide plans for cancellations of summer research opportunities. The Office of the Vice Chancellor of Research has advised the research community to continue their work without

making changes unless they receive different instructions from OVCR or a federal agency,” the email said.

The NIH and NSF, which are government agencies, provide the majority of funding for various research experiences at UNC and at other universities nationwide.

Karen Guzzo, director of the Carolina Population Center, said in an email statement to The DTH that much of the research performed at CPC is funded by the NIH and NSF. She also said that there has been scrutiny on specific research areas at the CPC, such as efforts to understand disparities in health and well-being over time, through observing demographics and geographic regions and how social context and policy relate to disparities.

“If these topics truly become ‘unallowed’ in federally funded research, that will be a huge step back for our whole country,” Guzzo said.

Several NSF-funded summer research opportunities this year have been canceled, many of which list keywords in their projects that conflict with recent executive orders against DEI, including “diverse,” “institutional” and “historically.”

The CPC hosted an annual summer internship program, which was one of several research-related opportunities at UNC that was canceled this year.

Another program facing challenges is the NSF-funded Summer Undergraduate Research Experience Program in Biological Mechanisms which was canceled this year after operating for several decades. According to its program

description, the SURE-REU strongly encouraged applications from first-generation college students and students from groups underrepresented in the sciences.

In addition, the Summer Undergraduate Research Opportunity in Chemistry, a program offered for students outside of UNC to engage in chemistry research, is awaiting pending NSF grant information determining if the program will be held this summer. At the time of publication, the program’s website stated that summer applications are closed pending funding renewal.

Jacob Watson, a senior at Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania, was a participant in the SUROC program last year. Compared to his home institution, Watson said the program strengthened his laboratory skills and provided more exposure to research in his intended field of medicinal chemistry.

As someone currently applying for chemistry doctoral programs to later work in the pharmaceutical industry, Watson said he is now worried that more programs like SUROC are becoming a target.

“It just takes away an opportunity for anyone that wants to go to graduate school for chemistry or any other program,” Watson said. “All the stuff that we do is life-changing science.”

The SUROC program description encouraged applications from women, students with disabilities and underrepresented minority students, defined by NSF as African

American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, Alaska Native and Pacific Islander.

The same description is no longer on the NSF website. It was removed and archived.

Frazier said during her time as an undergraduate student she first gained exposure to research by participating in an NIH summer program for students from minority-serving institutions. She said she was saddened when her former program was dissolved as part of a Feb. 26 announcement canceling all NIH summer internship programs this year.

“I think shaking up the foundation of things is important at this time,” Frazier said. “You should not sit down and lay down and cry about it — you need to be taking actions that can affect people actionably. You know, today’s problems shouldn’t be the problems for people five years from now.”

Frazier said for the future, she hopes that incoming classes will continue to hold long-standing values of diversity, especially in fields like research.

“Minorities could mean being a woman, being first-generation, the zip code you were born in and not just being a racial minority,” Frazier said. “You know that program is under fire right now, and it really tears my heart apart that the one reason why I came to UNC is now being taken away from me.”

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HEALTH EDUCATION

UNC School of Medicine names new executive dean

Samantha Meltzer-Brody promoted to role in January

By Keerthana Gotur
Staff Writer

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Dr. Samantha Meltzer-Brody was no stranger to North Carolina when she first arrived for a clinical fellowship in 2000. She had driven down from her Ohio hometown for summers at the beaches while attending medical school at Northwestern University.

What she didn't know was that almost 25 years later, she would become executive dean of the UNC School of Medicine, a job she began this January.

The executive dean reports to the Dean of the Medical School Dr. Wesley Burks, and Chief Academic Officer Dr. Christy Page, co-leading the medical school's 2,221 faculty members, 813 medical students, 562 doctoral candidates and 497 health sciences students, while also managing the medical school's \$648 million in research grants. Meltzer-Brody also seeks to execute UNC's tripartite mission: education, research and clinical enterprise.

"It's a really unique position that we get to be in, to be important to the success of both the University and the health system," Dr. Page, former executive dean, said about the role.

During her psychiatry residency at Duke University, Meltzer-Brody became interested in the vulnerability of women's mental health during pregnancy. She came to UNC for a fellowship as a Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholar, a national leadership development program for health practitioners centered on equity.

She started the perinatal psychiatry program at the University, which joined the UNC Center for Women's Mood Disorders in 2006. With support from the medical school and UNC Hospitals, the program inaugurated the nation's first perinatal psychiatry inpatient unit, which allowed for clinical trials



PHOTO COURTESY OF SAMANTHA MELTZER-BRODY

Samantha Meltzer-Brody is the new executive dean of the UNC School of Medicine.

to develop the first FDA-approved postpartum depression medication.

"It's always about the partners, your colleagues and the team," Meltzer-Brody said. "None of us can do anything without all of those people, and so it really is a terrific story of collaboration, and I think the best of what we do at UNC."

Meltzer-Brody is the former director of the Center for Women's Mood Disorders. Along with Dr. David Rubinow, founder of the Center, she co-mentored Crystal Schiller when she joined UNC as a postdoctoral fellow in 2011.

Schiller, who is currently associate director of the Center, will be its new director.

"[Rubinow] said to me: learn everything you can from Samantha [Meltzer-Brody], because she knows how to build teams and how to lead people," Schiller said. "And so that's what I did—and it has worked out very well for me."

Dr. Roberto Blanco, clinical associate professor of child and adolescent psychiatry, first met Meltzer-Brody when he was a psychiatry resident. He said when she became the chair of the

UNC Department of Psychiatry in 2019, she successfully navigated the faculty through the COVID-19 pandemic, dealing with challenges such as telemedicine, supply chain disruption and increased costs.

"[We're] really sad to see her leave psychiatry," he said. "But we're really fortunate to be able to keep her as an executive dean."

Meltzer-Brody began her new position in January 2025 after an application process that took place when Dr. Page was promoted to president of UNC Health Enterprises and chief academic officer.

Meltzer-Brody said she aims to foster collaboration across the medical school's departments and institutions in her new role. She said her psychiatric background will allow her to better support faculty through stressful challenges, like recent NIH funding cuts.

"I'm hoping that we will be able to get on more stable ground sooner rather than later," she said. "But we'll get through this together by figuring out how to collaborate most effectively and synergize efforts."

X: @keerthanagotur

SOCIAL MEDIA

Sophomore spreads positivity through UNC Snapchat stories

Nathan Feldman fosters community of online encouragement

By Regan Butler

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The UNC community knows sophomore Nathan Feldman as many things: a former pasta-serving community governor, an economics learning assistant and UNC's very own Snapchat positivity influencer.

Feldman said they started posting on Snapchat more frequently after they were fired from their Ehringhaus Residence Hall community governor position.

Last academic year, Feldman said they held weekly pasta nights for Ehringhaus residents.

After word got out that Feldman was accepting payment for the meals, they were removed from the position. Feldman said they weren't aware housing guidelines prohibit the sale of goods in residence halls, saying they only sought reimbursement to fund future pasta nights.

A petition circulated shortly after their removal, asking for Feldman's reinstatement as community governor. Feldman said they urged fellow residents to let the situation go.

"My whole goal when running for community governor was not to tear us apart by having us petition and fight, but to bring us together," Feldman said.

That was when Feldman started taking to the shared UNC Class of 2027 Snapchat story.

Snapchat allows users to join their university's or high school's community after verification through an institution-issued email. Then, users can add temporary posts to the shared story that corresponds to their year.

A Jan. 23 story from Feldman reads, "Things don't get easier; they get harder. You just get better at dealing with difficult things. So, make sure to find enough space to treat yourself with the kindness you deserve."

"Their posts will get me at the right times," UNC sophomore Elliot Worth said.

"I look forward to seeing the smiles of people as I pass them by," they said. "I look forward to seeing people respond on the posts, 'Yes king, slay.'"

Last fall, Feldman made an uplifting post on the UNC Snapchat story while waiting on their Kenan-Flagler Business School decision letter. When rejection came, Feldman said they cried harder than they had in years.

After realizing they weren't alone in feeling disappointed, Feldman said they took to the UNC Snapchat story to share a message of encouragement with other rejected applicants.

"I knew that people just like me were experiencing the same heartache and anguish and maybe didn't have that moment of someone reaching out to them saying, 'I'm here for you,'" they said.

Feldman is also an undergraduate learning assistant for Professor Robert McDonough's Economics 101: Introduction to Economics class.

McDonough said Feldman is as kind and thoughtful as they appear online.

"When I heard that one of my ULAs was having these kind of Snapchat stories, it didn't surprise me to find out that it was Nathan," McDonough said.

In addition to the pre-business track, Feldman majors in music and is a member of the music fraternity Phi Mu Alpha. Their mentor in the fraternity, is UNC senior W. H. Hayes.

Though he isn't a frequent Snapchat user, Hayes said his fraternity brothers have shown him Feldman's posts.

"I'd say they capture them pretty well," he said. "That carefree attitude, that willingness to live their life that vibrantly and outwardly, no matter what other people may look at that as."

Feldman said they took a Snapchat hiatus for about a month to prioritize their mental health, returning to posting Feb. 24.

"It's a silly little thing," Worth said. "But when you're having a rough day and then open your phone and see something from Nathan that's like, 'Just keep going,' it's like, 'OK, Nathan, maybe I will.'"

X: @reganxbutler

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Senate removes Liam Cuppett as a certified senator, 25-0

Board disagreements surround format of signatures

By Claire Harutunian

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Following a successful write-in campaign during the spring student government elections, the Undergraduate Senate voted to strike junior Liam Cuppett from the certified list of elected senators on Feb. 25 due to alleged perjury.

"I think many people I have spoken to about this share thoughts with me, that I think a lot of people are going to have, which is, how in the world is it possible that the Senate is allowed to decide who is elected to its own seats?" Cuppett said.

The UNC Board of Elections initially disqualified Cuppett as a certified candidate on the ballot because he did not meet the required 50 total Onyen-protected online signatures or physical signatures to get him on the ballot.

At first, five candidates, including Cuppett, formed an informal coalition and gathered some signatures to get on the ballot through a shared Google Sheet. The BOE determined that the Google

Sheet did not meet their standards for signature collection.

Cuppett said the BOE confirmed he could still run as a write-in candidate, needing at least 15 write-in votes to be elected to District 2.

At the Undergraduate Senate meeting, Christopher McClanahan, chairman of the standing committee on rules and the judiciary, brought a motion against Cuppett.

"Intentionally or knowingly providing false information — also known as perjury — is supposed to disqualify you from the entire election cycle," McClanahan said. "And claiming to the Board of Elections that entries in a Google Sheet are physical signatures very clearly is false information being provided to the Board of Elections."

The motion was followed by a brief debate, questions and a 25-0 vote to disqualify Cuppett from the certification. 21 senators were absent.

"It seems like basically the Senate is pretty much just stepping into ground where it's not allowed and overruling the BOE on a judgement that it is more qualified to make," Cuppett said.

The Speaker of the 106th Undergraduate Senate Matthew Tweden said he was the only present senator that didn't vote because he typically only votes as a tiebreaker. McClanahan said Cuppett submitted

the Google Sheet signatures to the BOE as physical signatures.

Cuppett said he is willing to admit the signatures were invalid due to their form, but said he never told the BOE that he collected physical signatures. Cuppett said he sent the signatures an electronic spreadsheet.

Section 416 A7 of the Undergraduate Student Body General Statutes explains perjury as an act "worthy of immediate disqualification by the Board of Elections following the appropriate adjudication process."

A year prior, Samuel Hendrix was disqualified from Senate certification because of issues with his financial disclosure form.

The form deadline was first extended for all elected senators because Sophie van Duin, the acting chair of the BOE at the time, published the form late. Van Duin said she then granted Hendrix an extra extension because he was left off of the reminder email that was sent to elected senators who had not yet submitted the form.

In an email provided to The DTH that was sent in February 2024, then-speaker of the Undergraduate Senate Andrew Gary wrote to the BOE, "I would advise that in the future the Board exercise greater prudence in granting extensions where they lack such authority."

"Once the BOE sends us their certified list, it is entirely at the discretion of the Senate to go through the certification process," Tweden said. "So by a two-thirds majority vote, a name can be struck or added."

Hendrix, who was a District 1 senator for two years, could not attend the certification meeting because he had COVID-19. He said friends argued on his behalf, and the senators voted 10-5, with 2 abstaining, striking him from certification.

Hendrix said despite some people telling him to sue, he decided not to file a lawsuit to the UNC Student Supreme Court.

"Now that I'm allowed to speak freely, Sam Hendrix should have sued, and I hope Liam does," van Duin, who is friends with Cuppett, said.

Hendrix said he has not met Cuppett and thinks what the Senate did to him is extremely unfair. After the certification of the recent election, the meeting agenda included a resolution to recognize Elias Larson North, the acting chair of the BOE, for his service.

"I think it's very disrespectful that, you know, [Cuppett] had all these issues with the Board of Elections, and it was the Board of Elections' fault because they let a lot of the ball drop this year, and then the same night they removed him as a certified candidate,



DTH FILE/MARCO QUIROZ-GUTIERREZ

The 101st Undergraduate Senate meets in 2019.

they gave an award to the chair of the Board of Elections," Hendrix said.

Cuppett also sued the BOE in the Student Supreme Court during the election due to early voting issues that resulted in a 48-hour election extension.

van Duin said the Hendrix and Cuppett situations feel parallel.

"It feels targeted, it feels political, and it also feels like just a grave overreach of the Senate," van Duin said.

X: @dailytarheel

COMMUNITY

'A light within ourselves': Carolina Latinx Center holds fourth La Conferencia

Event brought Latino professionals and students together

By Mariah Temple

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The Carolina Latinx Center recently held its fourth annual La Conferencia — an event where Latino students and professionals across the state convene to share their experiences, explore their interests and network with mentors.

Senior Gisselle Castro, presenter chair of La Conferencia, attended the event for the first time this year. She said she sees La Conferencia as a space for Latino students to share their ideas and learn all about what the Carolina Latinx Center has to offer.

"It's that safe space that will bring forward a diverse community in the sense of, we have literally people from different backgrounds coming in and talking to everyone," Castro said. "But also, just overall, I think it will help, like I mentioned, bring this safe community space and it will introduce to people what the Carolina Latinx Center is."

Since its inception in 2019, the CLC continues to be a space where Latino



DTH/ABBIEY MCKEE

Sophomore Karen Chavez is a student ambassador for La Conferencia, a program in the Carolina Latinx Center. She poses for a portrait on Friday, Feb. 28.

students and staff gather, address community needs and connect with Latino partners in their fields.

Before the CLC was founded and granted its own office space in Abernethy Hall, UNC Latino organizations were grouped under the Carolina Latina/o Collaborative.

Nestor Rodriguez-Garcia, program assistant at the CLC, said that when the Collaborative

formed in 2009, around 2 percent of UNC's population identified as Latino. Latino students made up 10.1 percent of UNC's admitted student population in fall of 2024.

To sophomore Evelyn Gamez-Gomez, marketing chair of La Conferencia, a stand-alone center means having a space where students can gather and feel safe. She said La Sala, the center's study room, provides

space in the CLC for students to work and hang out.

"If we didn't have the place when it first started, then it would have probably not been as comforting or, like, homey-vibes," Gamez-Gomez said.

Sophomore Karen Chavez-Chavez, the student ambassador for La Conferencia, said she hopes more students get involved in the CLC as the center grows.

This year's La Conferencia theme was "Encendiendo Nuestra Llama" which translates to "igniting our flame." The conference was held from Feb. 28 to March 1.

"It kind of is just creating a light within ourselves," Castro said. "So, sparking our own, like their community illuminating and being able to empower each other and kind of uplift one another while also showing our spark and who we are, and embracing what we bring to our community and the bonds that we create."

In addition to La Conferencia, the CLC hosts a range of events and programs. One of these opportunities includes a partnership with Frank Porter Graham Elementary School in Chapel Hill where a cohort of volunteers helps fifth graders

transition into middle school. Rodriguez-Garcia said the purpose of the partnership is to provide mentorship at a time when students often feel unsure of themselves.

"We also have a virtual tutoring program to help them read to first graders," Rodriguez-Garcia said.

When looking ahead to the next five years, Rodriguez-Garcia said the CLC hopes to increase involvement and continue to promote even more student-led initiatives.

In its time as a stand-alone center, the CLC has been the central hub for Latino student organizations and events. It offers students academic support as well as social and cultural connection and the facility to meet with students of similar life experiences.

Castro said the center's programs also helped her find support as a first-generation college student.

"If we didn't have that community, or the Center, then I feel like it would kind of be hard to be able to feel motivated here, especially because it's such a small group of Latinos and stuff, and not just here but in the world," Gamez-Gomez said. "But it's motivating, seeing what other people have achieved."

X: @dailytarheel

RESEARCH

University sends survey to assess student well-being

Two juniors founded Human Flourishing Initiative on campus

By Claire Harutunian

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Throughout January and February, undergraduate students received five emails from the Office of the Provost encouraging them to participate in the Harvard Flourishing Survey.

The survey, based on items developed by The Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University, had an estimated over 10 percent response rate by Feb. 26. The Human Flourishing Initiative at UNC wrote in an email to The Daily Tar Heel saying the survey is now closed.

Ben Yates and William Cook, juniors at UNC, founded the Human Flourishing Initiative on campus after taking Larry Goldberg's Honors 390: Elements of Politics course during the spring of their first year. The class revolved around seminar discussions of Aristotle, Shakespeare and Machiavelli texts.

"I think it was the first time that we had been in a context, like a formal context, to discuss those kind of deeper questions about life and purpose and humanity and all those kinds of things," Yates said.

Once the semester ended, the pair decided to create a space to continue the conversations that began in Goldberg's class.

In December 2023, an adviser to the Human Flourishing Initiative, Madison Perry, connected them with Brendan Case, the associate director for research at The Human Flourishing Program at Harvard.

Case said the students shared their idea of doing a survey at UNC to assess how well students are doing at the University. His team at Harvard was working on a related project called the virtues for academic flourishing initiative.

He said that most student assessment measures at universities are deficit-oriented, or focused on identifying which students are struggling. To supplement important mental health questionnaires, he said a survey that distinguishes which

students are "just doing OK" and which are flourishing can be useful.

"We developed this new survey which was designed to assess the extent to which students were flourishing as students and the academic institutions to which they belong were flourishing as academic institutions," Case said.

Cook said it was helpful to have Case walk them through conversations with administration. After meeting with Provost Christopher Clemens and then-interim Chancellor Lee Roberts, the University agreed to administer a campus-wide survey.

The first part of the survey is the 12-item human flourishing index, which asks students to respond to items like "Overall, how satisfied are you with life as a whole these days?" on a 0 to 10 scale.

The second component, Yates said, is the community well-being index, with 20 items. For example, "Those in leadership truly care about the well-being of everyone in UNC at Chapel Hill" being ranked from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The final section consists of 24 questions specifically developed for this initiative. Case said that this is the first large-scale administration of this section, which consists of questions such as, "To what extent has university life helped you to treat everyone respectfully?"

Following the survey closure, Yates said there will be in-depth interviews conducted with some students to understand their responses.

Case said the project plans to provide analytical insights and conduct academic research with survey data.

"We're just hopeful that the data from this will — because [administrators] say it will — influence policies and be for the better of all students, freshman through senior year," Cook said.

"I mean, you spend four years here, right? That's turning you into a particular kind of person, and that's probably going to vary depending on what community groups you are [in], what major you are, all that kind of stuff," Yates said. "But you're being formed."

X: @dailytarheel

CONNECTION

Historically Black at UNC crafts media projects



PHOTO COURTESY OF HBUNC

HBUNC serves as a hub for Black students at UNC to meet each other and share cultural experiences.

Organization aims to foster community through entertainment

By Bella Pires

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"Where connections are made, people are informed, and the masses are entertained," is the phrase that has remained the motto of Historically Black at UNC since the organization's first Instagram post.

The student media group with a diverse catalogue of content was established three years ago by alumna Krystal Lacayo. HBUNC started out by producing weekly news segments to inform Black students and any students interested in learning about campus opportunities for people of color. It has since expanded to larger media projects such as the Black UNC yearbook and their rendition of Love Island, a popular dating reality TV show.

"We started doing HBUNC Replay, which is where we go to different events, and we do social media promotion for them at the events and post and talk about it afterward," Addison Truzy, the organization's current president, said.

Truzy also said that other student groups, including the Union of Black Men, the Black Student Movement and Black Ink Magazine, have been instrumental

in working together with the organization.

When Truzy first joined, she said HBUNC had the "bare minimum" of a team: a president, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer and three news anchors. She said that today, the organization consists of about 50 members.

Two of those members include outreach coordinators Melanie Cabrero and Savannah Ransom. They network for community projects; act as a line of communication between other members and participating groups and present information about HBUNC at events.

Compared to her last semester when she first became involved, Ransom said she has seen an increase in her responsibilities. Truzy said the organization has definitely shown intention to do more this academic year, partly because of their growth.

"Especially now, we have tried to make this Black History Month as memorable as possible," she said.

Those interested in joining HBUNC can apply on the organization's social media. Students can work as anchors, editors, graphic designers, videographers, photographers or script writers.

Truzy said HBUNC aims to bridge the gap to help incoming Black students find a space at UNC, regardless of administrative actions or changes.

"We want to foster a community where people are able to have access to

resources that are typically not shared with them," Truzy said.

Christian Lopez, a UNC sophomore, said HBUNC does a good job at cultivating community.

"I always see a lot of their promotions and their banners and fliers outside through campus and mainly in the Pit," he said.

In mentioning HBUNC's Love Island — posted on the account's YouTube — Lopez laughed, saying he likes the show but doesn't know the participants' names very well.

After a quick Instagram search of the contestants on HBUNC's Instagram, he announced:

"I want Chris to win."

HBUNC's Executive Producer NaTasja Jeter, said that last semester, the organization also conducted projects including interviewing Black faculty and conducting tours of the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History.

"I'm hoping we can get back to that stuff as well, because that's just as important as everything else that we're doing," she said.

Jeter said that even the club's less serious content is a form of activism, saying she loves her work at HBUNC because of her ability to push young girls, especially young Black women, to explore who they are.

"I think something that's so powerful is still being able to find joy and laughter in times of chaos," she said.

X: @dailytarheel

City & State

The Daily Tar Heel

LEGISLATION

Proposed bill requires N.C. to obey federal immigration law

State Republicans cite crime, strain on public funds as motivation

By Jessica Hudnut
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Republicans in the N.C. General Assembly filed a bill on Monday that would require state agencies, local governments and UNC System schools to cooperate with federal immigration officials.

Senate Bill 153, titled the North Carolina Border Protection Act, aims to address concerns about the presence of undocumented immigrants in the state. Bill sponsor and N.C. Sen. Phil Berger (R-Guilford, Rockingham) cited violent crime and strain on state-funded benefits as motivation for introducing the bill in a press release.

“Now that we have a federal government that is taking border control seriously, we need to do our part at the state level and ensure that our citizens are protected from criminal, illegal immigrants,” N.C. Sen. Warren Daniel (R-Buncombe, Burke, McDowell) said in the press release.

The bill’s primary sponsors did not respond to The Daily Tar Heel’s request for comment.

Louay Shakra is a small business owner who immigrated to the United States from Lebanon in 2015. He said he is opposed to illegal immigration and believes the law should be obeyed.

“You don’t know how much I feel upset because I came here a legal way, and I saw others coming illegally,” Shakra said.

Shakra also said he believes that, if passed into law, this bill will not negatively impact legal immigrants.

N.C. Sen. Graig Meyer (D-Caswell, Orange, Person) opposes the bill, saying that it would generate unnecessary expenses for state agencies. Meyer said undocumented immigrants are already not eligible to receive state services, and that



PHOTO COURTESY OF JULI LEONARD/THE NEWS & OBSERVER
N.C. Sen. Phil Berger (R-Guilford, Rockingham) speaks at a press conference in 2021.

sanctuary city policies are prohibited under current state law.

“We shouldn’t be wasting our money trying to prevent something from happening that’s not happening,” Meyer said. “We have real problems to solve.”

The NCGA passed a bill in November requiring all sheriffs to cooperate with Immigrations and Customs Enforcement.

UNC Law professor Rick Su said that the federal government cannot force state officials to enforce federal law, but laws such as this one can stop local governments and state agencies from prohibiting cooperation with ICE. He said law enforcement officers cannot be prevented from working with ICE, but they also cannot be compelled to do so.

One provision of the bill requires state agencies to determine the immigration status of anyone in their custody. Meyer said the provision is impractical and potentially unconstitutional, opening the door for racial profiling.

“I always sort of joke in [my] class that the most undocumented population is actually U.S. citizens,”

Su said. He said that most Americans’ citizenship is only documented in their birth certificate, which most do not carry with them in public.

“My impression is, frankly, that this is probably a bill to stir up uncertainty and to use this kind of robust immigration enforcement rhetoric as a political tool in alignment with what we’re seeing from the Trump administration,” UNC Law student and Immigration Law Association President Avery Fletcher said.

Su also said the bill represents a departure from traditional conservative thinking.

“Conservatism used to be about decentralizing power,” Su said. “It used to be about less power in Washington, more power in local communities.”

Fletcher said that North Carolina’s agriculture industry depends heavily on undocumented workers.

“If [the bill] doesn’t necessarily sweep up every undocumented farm worker, it has the potential to chill people’s desire to go to work, and that can also hurt people’s wallets,” Fletcher said.

X: @dthcitystate

Two Smith Center plans involve off-campus sites

Continued from Page 1

from the Carolina Athletics Department, the University is still evaluating options for the future arena. The process is ongoing and no final decisions have been made about the site.

If selected, the plan would require that structured parking at the sites be built and that all uses currently at the properties must be relocated. Plans also include the potential development of mixed-use programs like lodging, retail, entertainment and dining.

“The university of never-ending construction,” Bouldin said. “We’d say that back when I was in school, and you know that’s just part of life around the University.”

Bouldin and his wife chose to live close to the University so they could walk to campus, he said. Currently, their walk to the Smith Center is around 30 minutes from their home.

In January, Chancellor Lee Roberts announced plans to increase enrollment by 5,000 students over the next decade. Bouldin said UNC will need a lot of space on campus to accommodate the growing population, making an off-campus site more favorable for expansion.

He said he prefers the proposed Friday Center location as the convention space could benefit from the mixed-use and retail spaces proposed by the project. Christine Khoury, a realtor and Chapel Hill resident of over 30 years, said the Friday Center already has available parking and a solid transportation system in place.

Chapel Hill Transit currently offers three bus routes that take people to and from the Friday Center — the N, S and FCX. The report states the University would provide additional bus transit for on-campus students at the off-campus sites with a 3,000 person max per game.

While the Friday Center is located near N.C. 54 which already

sees heavy traffic on game days, Khoury said the Carolina North location is a more residential area with less infrastructure to handle such an influx of people.

“I think it would have a detrimental impact on the historic district, for sure,” she said. “Not only the trees but [also] the traffic, and it would just change the feel of that whole area.”

Lee Tobin, a Chapel Hill resident of 32 years, said his biggest concern with the Smith Center moving off-campus is traffic for the surrounding area. The crossroads between Estes Drive and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, he said, is not built to handle the game-day level traffic.

Tobin said the loss of green space at the Carolina North site is also concerning to some community members. The old airport site is currently home to a system of trails as well as a farmhouse and community garden.

“It’s not clear what the footprint of the development will be, but it sounds like it’s going to be larger than the footprint of the airport,” Tobin said.

The physical site of the existing airport is already cleared of trees, he said, and would be easiest to develop. The rest of the forested area, however, has more hills and trails, which Tobin said could be removed to make room for the new arena.

While the future development of the Smith Center remains uncertain for now, Bouldin said the current location just does not fit the needs of the future.

“The new building — it’s a big decision that’s going to span many generations of students and fans and the university, so it’s important to get it right,” he said.

X: @mkpolicastro

REGULATION

N.C. General Assembly files bill to modify food label requirements

Packaging must clarify if products are meat or alternative protein

By Eva Edwards
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On Feb. 18, the North Carolina General Assembly proposed House Bill 134, an act to regulate labels on meat and other protein products.

The bill, named an Act to Prohibit the Misbranding of Certain Food Products, was proposed by N.C. Rep. Jimmy Dixon (R-Duplin, Wayne) and co-sponsored by 16 other representatives.

Under H.B. 134, suppliers will have to market alternative protein products differently from meat, even if they contain meat.

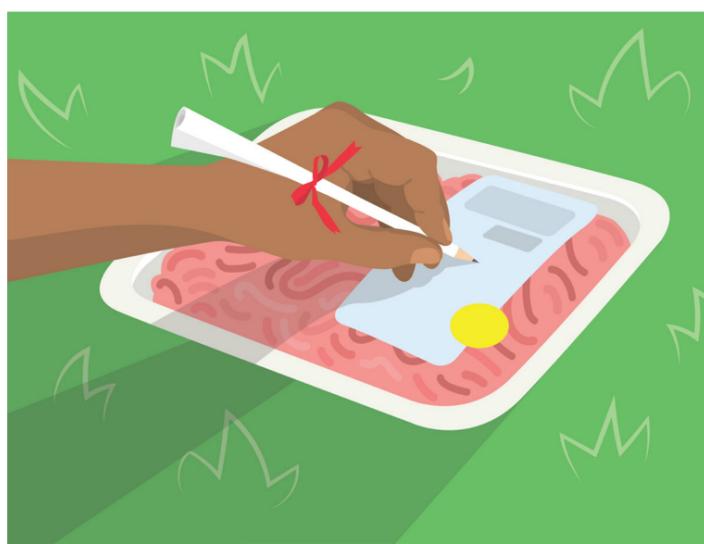
The bill differentiates meat products from other protein food products and defines meat products as foods made entirely or partially from meat, excluding products that contain only small amounts of meat or have not historically been considered meat from this definition.

“So real meat has a negative, and these products were designed to try to partly fight the climate side of real meat,” UNC nutrition professor Barry Popkin said.

If passed, H.B. 134 will require protein food products to be labeled in 20-point font with a qualifying term physically near the word “meat” on the label to indicate to consumers that a product is not fully meat. Qualifying terms include plant, fake or vegetarian, and products that do not meet this standard will be deemed misbranded and can be recalled or pulled off of shelves.

“Farmers want to make sure other products aren’t sold under the label of what they’re raising the traditional way,” N.C. Rep. Eric Ager (D-Buncombe), a sponsor of the bill, said.

Ager, who grew up on a dairy farm, said he does not see an immediate threat of consumer confusion when it comes to mislabeled meat products, but that the bill is a preventative measure to provide consumers with more information than they would normally have.



DTH DESIGN/CARRIE-ANNE ROGERS

“Whether [it’s] chicken that was raised on a farm, or chicken that was cultured in a lab, I think having consumers understand the difference is important,” he said. “Advertising and companies can often try to sort of blur those differences in ways that can confuse the consumer.”

Popkin said one of his concerns with the bill is the impact it will have on the general public’s attitude toward meat alternatives and, in turn, the effects on the climate.

He said the bill’s changes to the labels on meat alternatives will just be a method of scaring people away from consuming vegetarian or

vegan products because it conveys a sense of unreal or unhuman food.

If consumers start to choose real meat products over the alternatives at a higher rate, the supply of meat may rise to meet the demand. An increase in beef production means more cows, which may lead to an increase in methane, a greenhouse gas that contributes to the formation of ground-level ozone.

Dilip Barman, the president of the Triangle Vegetarian Society, said if a label states that a product is vegan, consumers have no expectations about it containing animal products. He said an issue should not be created if there is no confusion.

“The meat industry does not need more help,” Barman said.

The bill has been referred to five committees and currently awaits approval.

“If it does move, it will likely change, and we’ll be able to dig into it deeper and understand what all the implications are,” Ager said.

X: @dthcitystate

PUBLIC HEALTH

Second N.C. county votes to prohibit public water fluoridation

Practice of adding fluoride began in 1945 to reduce tooth decay

By Sarah Clements
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Last month, a second North Carolina county voted to stop adding fluoride, a naturally occurring mineral used to strengthen dental health, from its water supplies.

Lincoln County's decision comes the same week as Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a longtime community water fluoridation skeptic, was confirmed as secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

During his confirmation hearing, Kennedy reiterated his view against community water fluoridation after questioning from U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis (NC-13). Kennedy cited a January Journal of American Medical Association Pediatrics review of 74 studies performed outside of the United States that found a positive correlation between decreased IQ levels in children and increased fluoride exposure.

Dental Public Health Specialist Rhonda Stephens said the discovery that adding small amounts of fluoride to public water supplies reduces tooth decay came in the 1940s.

Following its success in Grand Rapids, Mich. — the first community to add fluoride to its water supply in 1945 — water fluoridation spread across the country and is now common practice. Since its addition, Stephens said there has been an average of a 25 percent reduction in tooth decay rates in populations that have access to fluoridated water.

According to United Health Foundation data from 2022, 88 percent of North Carolina's population is served by fluoridated community water systems, compared to 72.3 percent of the U.S. population on community water systems as reported by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC named community water fluoridation one of the Ten Great Public Health Achievements of the 20th century.

Stephens said the studies that found a link between IQ and fluoride exposure were performed in countries that provide fluoride at rates four to five times higher than what is provided in the United States.

"There is a limit to even sodium," Stephens said. "You need sodium in your diet, but if you have an excessive amount of sodium, you have a health issue. Fluoride is the same way."

Steve Cline, vice president of the North Carolina Oral Health Collaborative, said having small amounts of fluoride in water is particularly important for underserved communities who already have difficulty accessing dental care.

Much of the population who believes in the positive benefits of fluoride can ask their dentist or pediatrician to provide the fluoride for them or they can supplement it on their own, Cline said.

"It's not as easy and not as convenient as having it in the water system, but they can," he said. "They have a way of getting that many of the underserved populations, particularly in rural areas, don't have the same access to."



DTH DESIGN/MEG JENKINS

Union County became the first North Carolina county to prohibit the addition of fluoride to its public water in Feb. 2024.

Union County Board of County Commissioners Vice Chair Brian Helms said the issue was brought forward by Union County residents concerned about adverse effects of water fluoridation.

He said the decision came after a year-long process involving multiple public hearings and expert testimonies, where the board ultimately decided to listen to their constituents. Helms said his decision was motivated by wanting to give the decision over receiving fluoride treatment to citizens instead of the county government.

"The fluoride in your drinking water is the one and only chemical that we actually put into the drinking water that is meant to treat the person and not the water," Helms said. "For me, at least in my vote, there was certainly an issue with consent. I personally struggle with the fact that I don't believe that a board of county commissioners has the authority to medically treat the individual."

The debate over community water fluoridation has continued to expand across the state, with Stanly County currently reconsidering it.

Cline said oral disease rates have gone up in communities in different areas of the country where fluoride was taken out of water after having been present previously.

"I am concerned that what we worked to remedy 80 years ago in terms of tooth decay, we will see a resurgence of in those high rates of something that is largely preventable, just like we're seeing now with measles," Stephens said.

Stephens said this topic has always been contentious, but the spotlight raises the likelihood that resistance to water fluoridation will grow.

"It still ultimately is the decision of a local community whether they want to keep or implement it," Stephens said. "But the concern is making sure they have the correct information, because what's coming down largely is misinformation."

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COMMUNITY

Friendly Barber Shop in Carrboro to close in April

Local family business operated for 64 years on East Main Street

By Freya McNeill
Staff Writer
city@dailytarheel.com

On a quiet Friday morning in February, Bobby Powell sat in a barber chair while Russ Sturdivant, who has owned Friendly Barber Shop for 30 years, cut his hair.

Powell has been getting his haircut at the shop for 41 years. When he was 15, his mother dropped him off. Since then, he has taken his three boys there, too.

"It's just a friendly barber," he said.

But, after 64 years of business on East Main Street in Carrboro, the shop is planning to close at the end of April. Until then, it will be operating at reduced hours, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursday through Saturday. Even with reduced hours, the shop is still nearly full with regulars at 9 a.m.

"Thirty years is long enough to do anything," Sturdivant said. "I decided to close it down. I was going to sell it but all that fell through."

Sturdivant's father, Grady Sturdivant, opened the shop in 1961. He had been working in TV repair when one winter, he went to get a haircut at a barbershop.

"The man who owns it said, 'Go to barber school and then come work for me,'" Russ Sturdivant said. "And so he did — to get out of the elements. He worked across the street for one year and then opened this place."

After his father struggled to find extra barbers, Sturdivant started to work at the shop as well.

Instead of mirrors and televisions, the shop's back wall hosts Tar Heel paraphernalia, yellowed newspaper clippings and framed photos of family and friends. A folded American flag, flown in Afghanistan by a friend of Sturdivant, hangs on the wall. His friend gifted the flag and a wooden,



DTH/EMMA GREEN

A customer walks into Friendly Barber Shop in Carrboro on Friday, Feb. 28. The shop will close its doors in April.

hand-made saddle box to the shop after his year-long tour.

Phillip Knox, a former barber at the shop, said every time he looked over at the wall, he noticed something unique that he hadn't seen before.

"I've always kind of referred to that wall as almost like a museum of Carrboro," Knox said.

Former UNC men's basketball player Eric Montross, who was the starting center when UNC won the 1993 NCAA championship, is also featured among the countless photographs. Knox said that Montross was a longtime customer and helped popularize the shop when he would get his haircut there.

Knox's father was also a barber, who had worked with Russ Sturdivant.

"I would not be anywhere I'm at without my father and his experience and connections, kind

of the stuff he's built of himself," Knox said.

The shop's existence as a long-standing local business adds to Carrboro's culture and identity, Knox said. He said the shop has historically been an old-school business that's a pulse of the town and a place for people to chat and share opinions. As far as Knox knows, it's the only traditional barber shop in the area.

Sturdivant said he plans to take about six months off once the store closes. But regulars will still have a place to go.

"I am building a shop at my house for my regulars," he said. "I would never turn my back on them because they kept me in business all these years."

X: @dthcitystate

EDUCATION

North Carolina sees increase in dual enrollment

More high school students are taking college-level classes

By Isaac Carter
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On Feb. 21, the Career and College Promise program reported an increase in North Carolina high school students taking dual enrollment courses compared to the previous school year.

The report stated that in the 2023-24 school year, 85,982 high school students enrolled in at least one college level program, ranging from general education credits to career certifications. There were 78,811 public school students enrolled in at least one CCP course, which marks a 9 percent increase from the 2022-23 school year.

86 percent of students taking CCP classes completed their credit-level courses with a C or better, according to the report.

"What the CCP program does, is it can allow those choices to be expanded, so students are now getting under the different options," Pinecrest High School CCP counselor Josh Newton said. "It also gives students hopefully a chance to see what college is like while they still have a little bit of guardrails here when they're working at home."

CCP was established in 2011 in North Carolina and offers three pathways for students to achieve college level credit. The first is the College Transfer Pathway, which helps students get a head start on college-level general education requirements. Another pathway is through Career and Technical Education programs for job training in high-demand careers. The last pathway is through Cooperative Innovative High Schools which allow students to earn an associate degree while completing their General Educational Development test.

Tyjerion Daniels, a first-year at UNC-Chapel Hill, said he opted to

earn his associate degree from Pitt Community College during his high school career.

"I would say the dual enrollment program provided me with a great sense of rigorous courses before I actually touched a college campus," he said. "It gave me a sense of what I wanted to study and what direction I wanted to go in when going to college."

Daniels said the College Transfer Pathway allowed him to enter his first year with 65 college credits.

Daniels is among the 3,498 CCP students who graduated with an associate degree in 2024 and the 12,694 CCP students who were accepted into UNC System schools, according to the report. In the 2023-24 school year, CCP students earned 4,124 credentials, marking a 24 percent increase from the previous school year.

"Hopefully it gives them not only the confidence, but the pathway to get that degree. [It] might be a two-year, four-year school or even a job certification," Newton said.

Oluwunmi Ariyo, Durham Technical Community College's director of high school partnerships, said the educational landscape of North Carolina is changing due to artificial intelligence and an increased desire from students to enter the workforce out of high school. CCP gives them the option to figure out what their career is before taking on debt, she said.

CCP students do not pay tuition for dual enrollment classes but must pay for course materials and equipment. Ariyo said program directors are observing disparities between students and are working to address them as soon as possible.

"Definitely take the opportunity if you want to go further into your education journey," Daniels said. "I would say it will help you out a tremendous amount, and it would give you a great starting point when going to college."

X: @dthcitystate

TOURISM

State hospitality industry recieves post-pandemic boost

Restaurants and hotels lead in revenue increase

By Ani Hunanyan
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North Carolina's hospitality industry is experiencing a post-pandemic resurgence, with an increase of roughly 200,000 employees since 2020, according to the North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association.

Restaurants are the leading source of revenue for the industry, comprising over \$2 billion in contributions, with hotels contributing over \$500,000 and taverns over \$100,000.

In the association's December 2024 report, restaurant sales increased by 6.92 percent while hotel revenues declined by 1.97 percent — these trends suggest that the industry is navigating a complex landscape of rising costs and evolving customer behaviors.

Heidi Werner Dawson, director of sales and marketing at the Carolina Inn, said there has been growth in the hotel industry in the Triangle area. She said the area has a lot of transient business and much of the tourism is tied to the university, with sports events and weddings being some of the major contributors.

"The last couple of years, we've seen the re-emergence of companies and corporations wanting to meet again to have conferences," Dawson said.

Laurie Paolicelli, executive director of Visit Chapel Hill, said there was a 13 percent increase in total revenue for the hotel industry at the start of 2025. However, she said there has been a shift in the conference sector due to the rise of virtual meetings.

Short-term bookings have also emerged as a new norm, she said, complicating budgeting for hotels.

"We used to have a long-term booking window, and we don't anymore," Paolicelli said. "It makes it very hard to budget for maybe nothing too much going on in July, and then all of a sudden, I'll get a call saying we need to take over two hotels and we're bringing 15,000 people in."

Dawson said many hotels are relocating to smaller spaces, including urban areas, which are competing for business. Because of the competition, she said hotels are more limited in what they are able to incorporate into their business to differentiate themselves from other hotels.

Additionally, Dawson said the oversaturation of the market has made it harder to maintain competitive wages for hospitality workers.

Gaëlle Laforest, the general manager at Ajja, a Mediterranean restaurant in Raleigh, said Ajja has taken steps to professionalize roles

by offering a shared tip pool and wages above the minimum wage.

The Carolina Inn has made diversity and inclusion a central part of its workforce strategy, aiming to create an environment where everyone feels welcome, Dawson said. She said the hotel's efforts to prioritize its employees are reflected in the average length of employment, which ranges from five to eight years — much higher than the hospitality industry's average of about 18 months.

"I always say it's about the people," Dawson said. "Without the people, you can't make the business run."

Laforest said there are issues with making hospitality careers as attractive as other industries, so they attempt to offset the challenges by providing benefits and prioritizing mental health support for employees.

There has also been a significant impact from increasing prices on everything ranging from seafood to disposable takeout boxes, she said.

"Food costs are rising, and we've only touched the surface on the new tariffs that are coming into play [which], no doubt, will have more of an effect on us, and we're kind of going to have to wait and see," Laforest said.

Dawson said the surge in competition has made it difficult



DTH/ELYSSA MOTHERSHED

The Carolina Inn is pictured on Sunday, March 2.

for hotels to pass on these increased costs to consumers without risking a drop in business.

To navigate these challenges, businesses are investing in technology and sustainable practices. Laforest said Ajja has adopted portable handheld devices for its point-of-sale system, which improves service efficiency by allowing staff to place orders tableside.

Similarly, Dawson said the Carolina Inn has embraced green

initiatives to adapt to shifting consumer expectations.

"Our overwhelming goal right now is we want to make sure that we are representing the culture around us," she said.

X: @dthcitystate

EXERCISE

Chapel Hill trails provide off-campus running spots

Students share running rituals and preferences

By Rebecca Savidge
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It's almost inevitable to see someone on a run when walking to class or grabbing a coffee on Franklin Street, but campus isn't the only place to log miles — Chapel Hill has a plethora of trails to offer.

Perhaps a reason why running is so popular in Chapel Hill, especially in the spring semester, is the looming date of the Tar Heel 10 Miler and Fleet Feet 4 Mile run. This year, the annual races take place on April 19, and training is in full force throughout campus.

Paige Brennan, a sophomore at UNC, ran the Tar Heel 10 last year and is doing the 4-mile race this year. She is also a member of the UNC Marathon Team, who she ran the Historic Hillsborough Half Marathon with last semester as well.

Brennan said she appreciates the endurance aspect of being able to run long distances and enjoys listening to music on her long runs.

"It's one of my favorite types of exercise because I like being outside," she said. "So sometimes I don't really love running on the treadmill or working out at the gym, so running is a good outdoor activity."

In her training, Brennan tends to stick to the trails off of campus, like Bolin Creek Trail or one that runs along the train tracks heading into Carrboro. She said going on the trails allows for more distance because of the constant stoppage that comes from running on campus due to stop lights littering Franklin Street or constant crowds of people during the day.

Avoiding campus for runs is also a common activity for Stanley Wilson, a junior at UNC who is training for the Double Down Challenge — where participants run both the Tar Heel 10 and 4-mile race — this year and has ran a number of long races, including the Tobacco Road Half Marathon and the Rock 'n' Roll Nashville marathon.

Wilson tends to stay off campus when running for similar reasons as Brennan: constant obstacles and people everywhere.

"The amount of times I would run through campus and one of my friends would text me like, 'Oh, I just saw you, you look like you're dying on your run.' I was like 'Okay, great,'" he said. "So I would usually just run on the outskirts of campus."

Wilson said the energy and motivation he feels from completing a run is what has kept him doing it since fourth grade. He said it's nice to not think about anything for a while when he's on a run, escaping the stress of day-to-day life.

Wilson also appreciates how running can help him to learn more about the place where he's living.

"Moving to Chapel Hill for college and then discovering different trails here or routes, that's always super fun for me," he said.

Maggie Mead, a sophomore at UNC who's also on the UNC Marathon Team, loves finding something new to see when she's running through the Chapel Hill-Carrboro area, too.

Growing up in Wilmington, Mead said she finds Chapel Hill much more walkable than her hometown, and being able to just go for a run anywhere in the area is something she really enjoys.

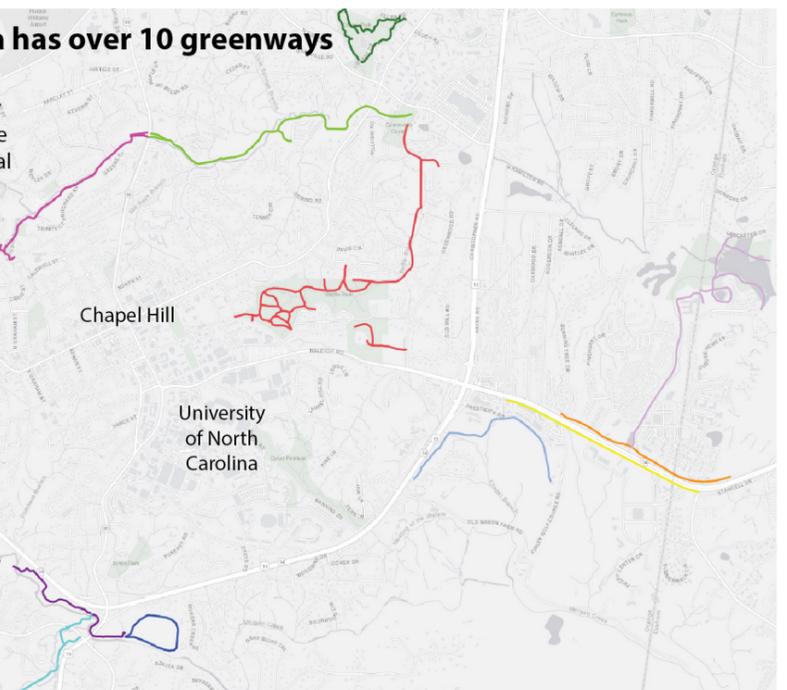
Like Brennan, Mead said she likes the Bolin Creek Trail and a greenway

The Chapel Hill area has over 10 greenways

Chapel Hill offers a number of paved and unpaved greenway options. Bolin Creek Trail is one of the longest and spans a total of about 2.5 miles when connecting to Tanyard Branch Trail.

- Trail Names**
- Library Trail
 - Battle Park Trail
 - Bolin Creek Trail
 - Bolin Creek Ext./Tanyard Branch Trail
 - Merritt's Pasture Trail
 - Fan Branch Trail
 - Morgan Creek Greenway
 - UNC Cross Country
 - Meadowmont Walking Trails
 - NC 54 East
 - NC 54 West

Source: Town of Chapel Hill



DTH DATA/ISABELLA COOPER

from the Old Well into Carrboro. "I think it's really nice that the town has trails like that for people to run on," she said.

Mead joined the marathon team her first semester at UNC and has found that running is a great way to meet people at school, keeping her outside and on the trails.

Whether it's to train for a race, find new scenery or just spend time outside, Chapel Hill has no shortage of trails for people to spend their time on.

Editor's Note: Maggie Mead is a writer on the Opinion desk.

X: @dthlifestyle



DTH DESIGN/SARAH FENWICK

Student theater company performs comedy 'At the Wedding'

Continued from Page 1

denial and, finally, saddened acceptance of the situation.

Director Allison Acuff said the show is funny and profoundly human. The cast members, described by Acuff as playful, driven and open-minded, all brought life to the story and interacted with each other in a way that flowed naturally. The plot also came with many twists and turns that kept audiences on the edge of their seats.

"There were a lot of shocking surprises, like who was in a relationship with who, there was a lot of history between different characters that was interesting, and you were just always surprised," Carmel Hatami, a UNC sophomore who attended Sunday's afternoon show, said.

For Addison Duncan, who played Eva's character and is a first-year double majoring in

dramatic arts and psychology, "At the Wedding" was her first major theater production at UNC. Before attending UNC, she studied acting at Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan and did classic productions like "Hamlet."

She said getting to know the cast and crew for this show highlighted the unique nature of UNC's dramatic arts community, where students from diverse majors ranging from computer science to public relations come together through a shared passion for theater.

Grace Wilkinson, who played the lead role of Carlo, grew up acting in her hometown of Cleveland, Ohio. She was witty and energetic on stage, making audiences both empathize with Carlo's heartbreak and sympathize with her overly ambitious mission of trying to win back the bride.

"There's the whole trope of the one that got away," Wilkinson said.

"And I think, or I would hope, that deep down, everyone feels like they have an abundance of love to give. And maybe you can tell yourself, 'My love well has dried up for this person.' But I think the show does a good job of holding a mirror up to someone and saying, 'You can still feel love for someone, but you don't have to act on it, it just exists.'"

The script is bursting with valuable lessons around life and love. Toward the end of the dialogue, the character of Eli, played by Aryan Kale, who befriends Carlo at the wedding tells Carlo that sometimes people cannot discern miracles from monsters, even when they're right in front of them.

Acuff said she hopes audience members reflect on this idea and question when their destructive behaviors and mistakes have led to lost opportunities and, conversely, when they have been a miracle to others.

The sentiment of monsters and miracles ties well into the closing scene, where Eva invites Carlo to dance with her as friends. When Eva eventually has to leave, Carlo is left to both mourn what could have been, as well as reflect on what's to come. The play, taking on a bittersweet conclusion, encourages audiences to engage in self-forgiveness and make conscious efforts to change for the future, regardless of what happened in the past.

"I hope that anyone who sees this show will see themselves in the characters, whether they feel more like Carlo or they feel more like an Eva or any of them," Acuff said.

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DTH/MASON MILLER

Grace Wilkinson and Aryan Kale perform in "At the Wedding" at Kenan Theatre on Saturday, March 1.

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LOCAL MUSIC

PBS show highlights Chapel Hill band Superchunk

‘Shaped by Sound’ features artists from all over N.C.

By Lizzie Stoner
Staff Writer
lifestyle@dailytarheel.com

Whether it’s with a record label, at an independent studio or in someone’s backyard, North Carolina’s music scene is evergreen. The North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and PBS North Carolina have partnered to support this music scene. Their show, “Shaped by Sound,” recently showcased the Chapel Hill band and independent label owners, Superchunk.

NC DNCR is a state agency that manages the arts, history, libraries and nature of North Carolina. The department has always supported the state’s music scene, but made it official with the launch of its Come Hear NC initiative in 2019. The initiative was created as a way to celebrate and uplift N.C. music.

“[N.C. music] deserves its place at the national and even global table,” NC DNCR Director of Marketing Catherine Swain wrote to The Daily Tar Heel in an email. “The Come Hear NC program was, and continues to be, a labor of love and has grown organically through increased interest and support from talented staff and partners from across the state.”

The NC DNCR and PBS North Carolina have been long-time partners. PBS NC has previously worked with music programs like “Music at the Museum,” “On the Road with Chatham Rabbits,” “Austin City Limits” and more. They noticed a lack of programs specific to N.C. music, so they worked together to create “Shaped by Sound.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF JEN HUGHEY

Superchunk performs during a taping of “Shaped by Sound” at PBS North Carolina on Aug. 27, 2024, in Durham, N.C.

“Shaped by Sound” brings North Carolina musicians to the PBS studios in Research Triangle Park to perform and discuss their creative processes. They highlight musicians across varying genres and locations that represent the state’s diversity. There’s bluegrass in the mountains, hip hop in Charlotte, Durham and Raleigh and jazz on the coast, James Mieczkowski, “Shaped by Sound” host, said.

Last Friday, “Shaped by Sound’s” third episode featured Chapel Hill

punk band Superchunk. Superchunk was originally called “Chunk” when Mac McCaughan, Laura Ballance, Chuck Garrison and Jack McCook

formed the band in 1989. They later changed their name to Superchunk, and when McCook and Garrison left the band, Jim Wilbur and Laura King joined.

McCaughan is the lead singer and guitarist for Superchunk, and he grew up in Durham. The music scene in Durham has blossomed since he lived there, McCaughan said, but when he was growing up, he sought out music in Chapel Hill and Raleigh.

Even when he was too young to get into shows at Cat’s Cradle, he would get his parents to chaperone or go to all-ages shows. By the ‘90s, Superchunk was performing at Cat’s Cradle.

“[Cat’s Cradle] is such an institution for music and for us to

have access to a resource like that is just incredible,” Mieczkowski said. “I looked up to people that performed there. Not just that, the fact that they came here and played for us in that kind of space. And that continues throughout time, even my time outside of school and now.”

In an effort to promote artistic independence for themselves and other musicians, McCaughan and Ballance co-founded Merge Records in 1989. They represent themselves and more than 60 other artists, including bands like Neutral Milk Hotel and Waxahatchee.

McCaughan and Superchunk find inspiration from the punk bands that they grew up listening to and the artists they work with at Merge Records. As a record label owner and musician, his best advice for young people trying to make it in music is to watch as much live music as possible. Whether it is a band that you’ve loved forever, one that your friends are in or a band you’ve never heard of, indulge in the music, he said.

Superchunk was featured on “Shaped by Sound” on Feb. 20. McCaughan’s favorite part about Come Hear NC and “Shaped by Sound” is how they focus on musical acts local to North Carolina.

“[Aspiring artists] can look at a series like this and say, ‘My art is valuable even though I’m not living in New York City or Los Angeles,’” McCaughan said. “It’s really cool that they did this and it shows how far things have come in North Carolina in terms of valuing music that’s made here.”

“[Aspiring artists] can look at a series like this and say, ‘My art is valuable even though I’m not living in New York City or Los Angeles.’”

Mac McCaughan
Superchunk member

X: @dthlifestyle

MARCH

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5-23

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Repertory Company Preview
Playmakers | 7:30 p.m.

5

Weave & Spin March
Open-mic
Eno Arts Mill
7 - 9 p.m.

9 & 16

Jean Michel Dissake FRANK
gallery exhibit
FRANK Gallery | 12 - 4 p.m.

14

‘Material Connection’
Opening Reception
Peel Gallery
6 - 9 p.m.

15

Manifest Makers Market
N Graham St
12 - 5 p.m.

15

Loops + Bloops: Hand
Embroidery Workshop
Peel Gallery
3 - 5 p.m.

18 & 19

Alvin Ailey American
Dance Theater
Memorial Hall
7:30 p.m.

21 & 22

Ex Machina
Swain Hall
7:30 p.m.

21-23

Carrboro Django Reinhardt
Festival
Cat’s Cradle
8 p.m.

22

60th ABC Sale
Chapel of the Cross
8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

22

Spring Festival at Southern
Sates Carrboro
300 N Greensboro St, Carrboro
11 a.m.

23

38th annual CROP
Hunger Walk
Carrboro Town Hall
2 - 4 p.m.

23

Faculty Chamber Music
Moeser Auditorium
3 p.m.

26

The Turnaway Play
Michael Hooker Building
Auditorium
4:30 p.m.

28-30

Pauper Players Bonnie
and Clyde
Center Theatre Company

Check organizer websites for more information before attending.

CREATIVITY

UNC designers featured in Sustainable Strut

Student fashion show highlights unique designs

By Maggie Lowder

Staff Writer
lifestyle@dailytarheel.com

On Feb. 14, student fashion designers of varying experience levels showcased new, unique designs at the annual Sustainable Strut, a fashion show at the Ackland Art Museum.

For first-year Jasmine Harris, Sustainable Strut also gave her a chance to flex her fashion designing muscles. Harris runs her own sustainable fashion small business, Uneek Designs. She upcycles and makes pieces that are, well, unique.

"It's within the name," Harris said. "Creating unique garments out of unique materials, or making garments in unique ways that aren't traditional."

The Sustainable Strut was organized by UNC Student Government's Department of Environmental Affairs. It aimed to highlight the importance of sustainable fashion while also giving student designers complete creative freedom. Designers made pieces ranging from element-themed collections to Valentine's-inspired designs.

Harris said she hopes to find a way to give back to the community with her designs one day, but for now, she'll continue making and promoting her unique items. One item she is most proud of is a hoodie repurposed from a crocheted quilt, she said.

"[My designs] are a way for people to express themselves," Harris said. "And it's one of one. For the most



DTH/KHUE NGUYEN

Nea Strawn poses for a portrait with her design in BeAM Maker Space at Murray Hall on Monday, March 3.

part, with everything I make, there's not going to be a second person walking around with that."

Ella Larson, a rising junior studying environmental health

"I just started making things out of fabric my grandma had laying around or things I would find at the thrift store," Larson said.

"Like 'oh, this could be something, but it's really not right now.' I guess gradually that kind of morphed into making bigger projects."

For some other designers, Sustainable Strut gave them the chance to design their own clothing for the first time.

Nea Strawn, a recent UNC graduate with a degree in environmental studies,

has long had a passion for sustainable fashion and sewing, but had never designed her own clothes before this year's event. For her design, she collected pieces from a scrap exchange and made clothing out of them.

"I really liked the concept of the Sustainable Strut," Strawn said. "This idea of using what's already there. One person's trash is another person's treasure."

Abby Coursey, a junior at UNC studying environmental studies, has been a stage manager for Sustainable Strut for the past two years, but this was her first year as a designer. She themed her collection around

Valentine's Day, featuring lots of crocheted pink and frills.

"I was immediately really intrigued by the fashion aspects like thrifting," Coursey said. "And creating your own clothes is always something that's been really interesting to me. And so I knew I wanted to be a part of it. Not only because it focused on sustainability, but also because there was a creative aspect and a really big community aspect."

At the core of all of these designers' work lies a passion for sustainability.

Coursey said she thinks the word 'sustainability' has become a buzzword as of late, but to her, caring for future generations is its main premise. She said it's just about having awareness of how you affect the planet and those around you.

Strawn said she thinks people find themselves intimidated by the concept of a sustainable lifestyle because it's often marketed as very all-or-nothing. She disagrees with that sentiment.

"I think sustainability can be accessible and it doesn't need to be this grand notion of a life-changing occurrence," Strawn said. "It can just be a small thing during your day, like walking instead of driving."

For students looking to try their hand at designing fashion, Larson said they recommend visiting the BeAM Makerspace on campus. The space provides students interested in creating their own clothing with sewing machines and sample materials, especially for those not interested in the presentational aspect of the strut.

"Have fun with it," Harris said. "It doesn't have to be this long drawn-out thing. You can continue to increase your wardrobe or your style or change things."

X: @dthlifestyle

"One person's trash is another person's treasure."

Nea Strawn
Recent UNC graduate

sciences, runs @green.child, clothing on Instagram, a page that documents the sustainable clothing items they design. They said they've been making clothes since their early teens.

PAINTING

Attic 506 artist explores Asian femininity and objectification

Erin Fei uses mixed mediums and motifs of meat, distorted figures

By Olivia Jarman

Staff Writer
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Nestled into her small studio space inside Attic 506, Erin Fei layers paint onto her canvases much like she layers meaning into her work. Fei's work can be shocking upon first glance, but it strikes up a conversation that Fei is ready to have.

Fei's paintings and sculptures are rooted in the discovery of her experience as an Asian American woman. Through art, Fei expresses this exploration of Asian femininity, objectification and consumption.

Fei was originally born in Hamilton, New Zealand, and later moved to Virginia when she was four years old. Growing up, Fei did not plan on becoming an artist, but was instead interested in medicine.

"I started out as sort of a biology [and] chemistry person, took a lot of anatomy classes, volunteered at hospitals and things," Fei said. "And then I just sort of switched over. I took a couple art classes in college. And I was like, 'Oh, wow. I really enjoy this.' And so it's just kind of stuck with me, this interest with the body."

After deciding to take art seriously, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in studio art in 2020 from the University of Mary Washington and then pursued her Master of Fine Arts in interdisciplinary art from



DTH/KATE MCCULLOUGH

Erin Fei stands in front of her artwork in Carrboro on Feb. 26.

UNC Greensboro, where Fei now teaches painting and drawing.

Fei's paintings often blur the lines between human and object, using meat, fragmented bodies and distorted figures to critique the way Asian women have historically been consumed and commodified.

"I think about food a lot too," Fei said. "Food is really big to me and cultural. Because, growing up I always had Chinese food and from my mom, what she would make, and so I put a lot of food as cultural significance and consumption in my artwork."

Meat, specifically, is something that is very prevalent in Fei's work.

"Meat comes up a lot because I think about the Asian woman as also having been once seen as this ornate object or very much objectified," Fei said. "Meat is both object and animal and human being is also animal."

Fei also finds a similar fleshy quality in the paint that she works with. The way it moves and accumulates on the canvas, thick and smeared, reminds her of flesh,

carrying a visceral presence, she said.

Her studio space at Attic 506, where she works alongside other artists, is filled with bold paintings

"I put a lot of food as cultural significance and consumption in my artwork."

Erin Fei

Artist and professor at UNC Greensboro

and wax-coated sculptures that transform imagery into thought-provoking pieces.

One of her paintings, described by her partner Chris Musina, takes

that metaphor to the canvas. The painting includes a classic meat counter mixed with a strip club.

"I think that one really is a piece where you sort of stop and think about, 'Okay, I can see this sort of, oh, we're comparing this type of meat market with another type of meat market and what does that mean,'" Musina said.

For Fig Hendrick, another Attic 506 artist and UNC-Chapel Hill student, Fei's work resonates deeply. They said that the way Fei depicts the disconnection from and horror of the body is important.

"I found it to be very inspiring and she finds the beauty in the macabre and visceral, which is something that I really appreciate in art, and I love what she's doing to capture that," Hendrick said.

Beyond her studio walls, Fei's work continues to push boundaries and provoke conversation. Fei hopes that through her art, people stop to think about what they are seeing on the canvas and how that relates to real world issues. With the gore and openness in her work, Fei said she creates a shock moment for the viewer where there is an initial repulsion which can lead to curiosity.

As Fei continues to paint, sculpt and experiment, her work remains

a bold reflection of herself and the world around her — one that demands to be seen, felt and questioned.

Fei's work can be found on her website and Instagram page.

X: @dthlifestyle

Opinion

COLUMN

Older adults can help Chapel Hill housing issues

By Anna Gage

Columnist

opinion@dailytarheel.com

UNC placed 900 students on a waitlist for on-campus housing for fall 2024. In that same year, more than one in three older adults reported feeling a lack of companionship. What do these two situations have in common? They can be resolved simultaneously through intergenerational housing.

Despite ongoing renovations to Avery Residence Hall and UNC's plans to admit 500 additional first-years during this admissions cycle, demand for on-campus housing continues to outpace supply. For students who venture off campus to find housing, they'll discover that the average monthly rent for a Chapel Hill apartment is \$1,500, far greater than the cost to live on campus.

Housing has been a problem at UNC for years and will continue to be under current proposals. UNC has plans to renovate six more residence halls in the next five years. Until 2030, we will continue to see fewer beds and more housing lottery panic for UNC students.

To manage a similar crisis, universities in Canada have begun

adopting a Tinder-like housing system. SpacesShared is a company pairing elderly people who have additional rooms in their homes with university students looking for housing. They perform background checks on all individuals before move-in day, and they allow prospective matches to converse virtually to decide if they're compatible. The company even officially partners with universities to increase student confidence in the program. The best part of this arrangement? The average rent is between \$345 to \$590 a month.

UNC should consider adopting a similar program as a temporary solution to the housing crisis. While this solution isn't an end-state fix, it would allow instantaneous improvement to a problem which requires massive amounts of investment and construction to solve. A temporary, imperfect solution is better than being stuck in the status quo for another five years.

Elderly people are facing the opposite problem to undergraduate students. Their homes are too empty. My mom works as a geriatric psychiatrist and mentions that while her patients face a whole host of

conditions, they all have one thing in common: they're extremely lonely.

After their children move out of their households, elderly people often find fewer reasons to immerse themselves in their communities and slowly retreat indoors. In 2023, 33 percent of older adults reported interacting with people outside of their homes once or less per week.

Intergenerational housing would enable socializing to become an everyday activity for elderly people. Homeshare programs like SpacesShared do not mandate that the elderly host and the student spend any time together, but by allowing the prospective pair to interview one another before move-in day, they aim to find individuals who are as compatible as possible and are more likely to socialize.

Of Chapel Hill's population, 12.5 percent are 65 years or older. Out of 60,000 Chapel Hill residents, this leaves a potential 7,500 residents willing to share their homes. Even if the real number is a fraction of that, it's still a significant solution.

These intergenerational housing spaces might not be private apartments in Shortbread Lofts, but it would



DTH DESIGN/CARLY EVANS

provide students with a comfortable, affordable place to live. I'd argue that living with an older person has its pros too. They are definitely giving better dating advice than your friend who just got out of a six-month situationship, and they have likely lived in their house long enough to know how to make it feel like a home.

Intergenerational housing could also help bridge the divide between UNC students and the Chapel Hill

community. Alongside providing life advice, older adults can provide a gateway for students to involve themselves in Orange County life beyond the bounds of campus.

By participating in a program like this, we're killing two birds with one stone: improving the ongoing loneliness epidemic while also managing the student housing crisis.

X: @dthopinion

SATIRE

Woke UNC transcends race, Black students last to find out

By Hailie Davidson

Columnist

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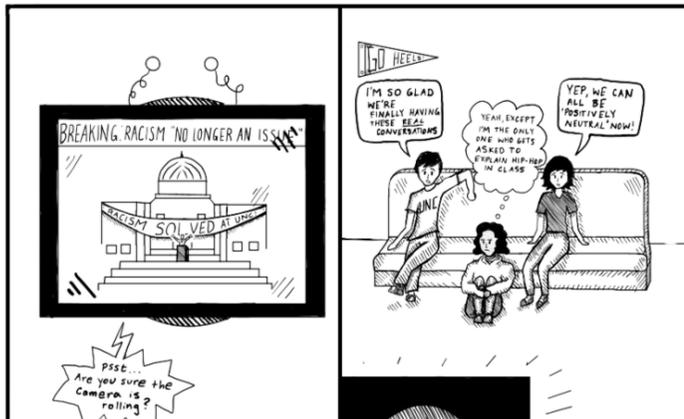
This Black History Month, I came to a startling realization: UNC has realized a post-race America. Our liberal University has accomplished the grand ideal of color blindness, and I didn't even notice!

So caught up with the uninteresting, unimportant events taking place on the national stage, I — an African American student — failed to appreciate the ways our super politically correct, woke campus has totally overcome racism. However, after a long day of careful observation, I realized that getting rid of diversity requirements from the general education curriculum doesn't really matter; those courses were simply no longer necessary! Our students and staff have evolved far past anything a useless class could teach because they've already mastered anti-racism.

It first started to dawn on me after I went to the Quad, enjoying the warm weather (my favorite thing about climate change: jumping from 30 degrees to 72 in just a few days). While I was basking in the sun with hundreds of other students squeezed into our few inches of precious grass, I received a wonderful compliment from someone passing by: I look just like Amandla Stenberg, the one Black girl from the Hunger Games.

Why, just a few days ago I was told I look like Storm Reid. I look like her and Stenberg, as well as a random girl someone saw on TikTok and the illustrious Black girl on our University's Canvas page — all four! At once! This white person was so kind to add to this list of totally unrelated women I'm similar to based solely on my unique traits and not at all on the matter of my complexion.

Bolstered by this lovely observation, I headed to my first class feeling an extra pep in my



DTH CARTOON/AVA RAYLE

step. In this lecture (where I was one of four Black people), it filled me with an indescribable warmth to listen to my white classmates talk about the Black experience. Their monologues on the trauma of growing up witnessing racism and their passionate input on the tragedy of oppression enlightened me; anything I thought I knew about being Black was enhanced through these discussions as they spoke over me and all three of the others. It was clear that they understood these things more deeply than we could ever hope to.

In my next class, my professor mentioned several activists as they prepared that day's presentation on progressive organizing. While they spoke, they barely made eye contact with me every time a Black person was mentioned! As expected, Gandhi and Harvey Milk gathered no glances in my direction. Rosa Parks — a quick peek, not even noticeable. In fact, the look when she said Martin Luther King Jr. was hardly a millisecond.

After such diverse, interesting learning experiences, I walked through our beautiful campus full of residence halls and buildings bearing the names of slave owners, Confederates and

white supremacists. I reached my destination, a picnic blanket on the Quad — again, how could I avoid it? There, my friends greeted me happily.

After chatting aimlessly, a friend of a friend reached out and touched my hair, which was out in its natural afro state. At first, I wanted to say something, but then I remembered that race no longer mattered here! She wanted to know what it felt like, and I didn't even care that this girl I'd met twice before touched me without my permission. At least she thought it felt nice!

What a wonderful day! I scarcely remembered my Blackness the entire time, so swept up in the equal, color blind way I was treated by my peers. Looking back on it, I have to applaud our University for the many ways it has overcome the, in hindsight, tiny obstacle of race.

It's almost like a utopia. As Black students, we need to wise up and appreciate the many ways UNC has been woke-ified. On a day like today, we have all kinds of interactions that remind us of all the ways color doesn't matter on campus, whether you're black, purple or normal.

X: @dthopinion

COLUMN

Gen Z is flocking to Christianity — why?

By Elisa Troncoso

Columnist

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For the first time in decades, Christianity is rising again.

Since the 1970s, the percentage of Americans who identify themselves as Christian has steadily fallen, mirroring a trend seen all over the Western world. Since 2019, however, the Christian population of the United States has leveled off. In many ways, this demographic shift appears driven by a rise in Christianity among Generation Z, who appear to be no less religious than Americans born in the decade prior.

These findings align with what we have always known about what drives people to religion, — as far back as the initial explosion of Christianity in the Roman Empire. A world in turmoil is one in which people yearn for the comfort of faith. And yet the strain of Christianity rising in America feels worlds away from the one that comforted masses in the face of societal collapse in the 3rd century — one of equality, salvation and redemption.

The increasing religiosity of Gen Z surprises my parents' generation, but it makes perfect sense to me. Americans born in the early 2000s grew up in the aftermath of 9/11, when war felt eternal; they watched the election of Donald Trump in 2016 usher in a new kind of brash, macho Christianity; they were teenagers and young adults when a deadly pandemic upended our lives and triggered a massive global recession.

I have often remarked to my friends that it feels more than ever to me that death is all around. I open my phone and see bodies blown apart under a curtain of bombs, an unvaccinated child in Texas dead from measles which was once declared eradicated in the U.S., planes diving into the Potomac River. In the face of so much death, what could be more comforting than eternal life?

By the end of the fourth century AD, the Christian population of the Roman Empire had risen tenfold to over 30 million despite waves of persecution that had killed thousands. Ancient texts give us some clues as to why. In the mid-to-late third century, the Cyprian Plague tore through the empire, killing some hundreds of thousands in a slow and excruciating manner.

St. Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, described the hope given by Christ in the face of such suffering: "What room is there here for anxiety and solicitude? Who, in the midst of these things, is trembling and sad, except he who is without hope and faith?" He addresses specifically parents who have watched their children die suffering, and he comforts them with the knowledge that they are assured of "future blessings" of an eternal life.

In all of "On the Mortality," Cyprian's text on the plague, hell is never mentioned. This stands out to me so much because though Christianity may be rising for the same reasons, it is expressing itself with an ideology that constantly references hell and lacks empathy for many of our siblings in Christ. Our Catholic vice president J.D. Vance has specifically cited Catholic doctrine to justify the Trump administration's crackdown on immigration, earning him a rare rebuke from Pope Francis.

I understand the draw to Christianity — I'm feeling it too. What I ask of my generation is to see their newfound religion, however, as a way we can be more loving, more empathetic, more redemptive — not a way to justify our domination or cruelty. In this, the words of Pope Francis have helped me. "What I am going to say is not a dogma of faith but my own personal view: I like to think of hell as empty; I hope it is."

X: @elisatcabello

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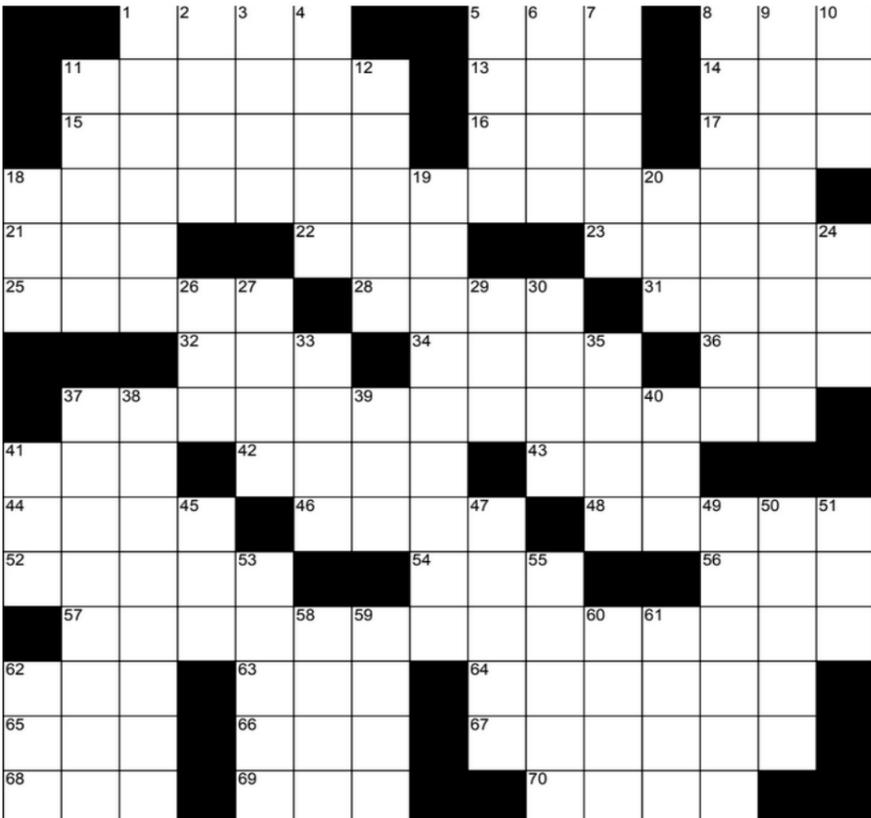
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Horoscopes

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 19)
 Today is a 9 — Creative ideas abound. Take notes.

TAURUS (APRIL 20 - MAY 20)
 Today is an 8 — Update plans. Finish old business.

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUNE 20)
 Today is an 8 — Your friends are a constant source of inspiration.

CANCER (JUNE 21 - JULY 21)
 Today is an 8 — Prepare to jump when the moment is right.

LEO (JULY 23 - AUG. 22)
 Today is an 8 — Make long-distance connections.

VIRGO (AUG. 23 - SEPT. 22)
 Today is a 9 — Resolve a financial choice or determination.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23 - OCT. 22)
 Today is an 8 — Delegate, compromise and negotiate terms.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23 - NOV. 21)
 Today is an 8 — Discover efficiencies and best practices.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22 - DEC. 21)
 Today is a 9 — Put your love into words. Express your deepest feelings.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22 - JAN. 19)
 Today is a 7 — Discuss domestic dreams and possibilities.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20 - FEB. 18)
 Today is a 9 — Words flow with ease. Learn voraciously.

PISCES (FEB. 19 - MARCH 20)
 Today is a 9 — Develop new sources of income. Track your finances for growth.

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“Animal Relations”

This week’s crossword was created by Brigit Pierce, a sophomore studying economics and comparative literature. She is also the Lifestyle Editor.

Across

- 1 Black Friday verb
- 5 “Say Yes to the Dress” channel
- 8 Dr.’s degree
- 11 Shades between brown and gray
- 13 Put the moves on
- 14 Eggs on top of sushi
- 15 In a new way
- 16 Debtor’s letters
- 17 Four quarters
- 18 Group of lions from a village?
- 21 Shakespearian preposition
- 22 Valuable deposit
- 23 Have faith in
- 25 Boxer alternative
- 28 Sister who needed to “Let it Go”
- 31 Fifth book in the New Testament
- 32 “You scared me!”
- 34 Backstory
- 36 Antlered animal also known as wapiti
- 37 Puzzle for a group of ravens?
- 41 Thing to mind on the underground
- 42 Great Lake that sounds uncanny

Down

- 2 Throw with force
- 3 German subsidiary of Stellantis
- 4 Herbaceous green condiment
- 5 Mary Kate or Ashley
- 6 Rollercoaster feature
- 7 Place to take shots
- 8 Like DJ Khaled or Quincy Jones
- 9 Without lying
- 10 Leading lady in “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia”
- 11 Less wild
- 12 Where Sally sells sea shells
- 18 Cry profusely
- 19 Like a compliment, for example
- 20 Irish nationalist group
- 24 When repeated, an expression of disapproval
- 26 One of two for Gauguin and one for Van Gogh
- 27 Popular men’s haircut
- 29 Vegan protein source
- 30 British bum
- 33 One of eleven in KFC’s secret recipe
- 35 Sicilian volcano
- 37 Those charged with organizing a group of people
- 38 Like lips in a smile
- 39 City with Christ the Redeemer, for short
- 40 Unit of time equivalent to 1,000,000,000 years
- 41 Neon’s state of matter at room temperature
- 45 Journalist Tarbell
- 47 Those between 13 and 19
- 49 Open-fronted shops
- 50 Weaving structures
- 51 Course for American immigrants, perhaps
- 53 Lightbulbs, in cartoons
- 55 Second largest metropolitan area in Japan
- 58 Desire
- 59 Length x width
- 60 Bygone Russian ruler
- 61 What these words are to 61-down
- 62 Friend

Answers to “Turns of Fate”



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Sports

The Daily Tar Heel

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Ven-Allen Lubin displays consistency in win over Miami

Junior forward led offense with 19 points on 9-of-10 shooting

By Caroline Wills

Sports Editor
sports@dailytarheel.com

Ven-Allen Lubin listens to Gospel music before every game.

After eating with the team, taking his scheduled 45-minute nap and receiving his treatment regimen in the training room, the junior forward slips on his headphones and queues his playlist. He rotates through his songs from gospel artists like Kirk Franklin and Elevation Worship. The music eases his mind.

On Saturday, the song of the day was "Firm Foundation" by Maverick City Music. Lyrics about trusting his faith through difficult times filled his ears. It soothed him.

"This season and just for the future, it's been really [about] installing peace in me," Lubin said. "And being comfortable to go out there and play."

Then, he got to work. All of which led to his fourth-straight double-digit scoring performance. North Carolina crushed Miami, 92-73, on

Saturday afternoon in the Dean E. Smith Center. Lubin led the offense for the first time with a season-high 19 points on 9-of-10 shooting en route to UNC's fifth consecutive win.

But Lubin's consistency has been a work in progress.

In North Carolina's first 23 games, Lubin averaged just over six points and 17 minutes. After appearing in the starting lineup for four games in December, he rotated off the bench for almost a month.

Junior guard Seth Trimble said there was a stretch in the middle of the season where Lubin struggled to catch the ball when the guards would pass it inside. He struggled to execute around the rim.

"I was trying to find myself, my identity and my role here," Lubin said. "It was pretty challenging."

Throughout one-on-one meetings with Lubin this year, head coach Hubert Davis reiterated his belief in the junior forward and worked to instill confidence in him. He told Lubin to be proud. As long as he gives max effort, Lubin gets the "green light" to do whatever he can do.

Finding open areas for Lubin has been an emphasis in recent film sessions. The Tar Heels work to read



DTH/CASSIDY TOY REYNOLDS

UNC junior forward Ven-Allen Lubin (22) shoots a free throw against Miami at the Dean E. Smith Center on Saturday, March 1. UNC won 92-73.

the defense to figure out how Lubin can attack the basket.

In practice, UNC has hammered on continuing to expose mismatches the Tar Heels often face in games. Whenever a smaller guard switches to Lubin, the junior forward will roll and get open for an easy layup or dunk.

When asked to describe Lubin in practice over the last month, graduate forward Jae'Lyn Withers chuckled. "Dominance."

It's a rhythm that has translated to game day. Over the last seven games — starting with February's win against Pitt where he recorded a then season-high 17 points — Lubin has averaged over 12.5 points and 22 minutes an outing.

He has limited his turnovers. He's shooting an efficient 69 percent.

In the opening minutes of the second half against Miami, UNC led 46-31. Lubin rolled off a screen on

the wing. Sophomore guard Elliot Cadeau threw it over the top. In one fluid motion, Lubin jumped, caught the ball and laid it in over the head of a Miami guard.

He repeated the route on the next trip, slamming in a two-handed dunk. Two plays later, he found an open spot for another layup. On the next one, he made Miami pay on a post-up.

One spin-move around his defender later, and UNC jumped out to a 58-37 lead. In only the first five minutes of the second half, Lubin had already scored 10 points on perfect 5-for-5 shooting.

"It's never too much," Trimble said. "We're not expecting him to take four dribbles in the post and make a crazy play. He's super quick and efficient. It's exactly what we need."

Ten games ago, Lubin re-entered the starting lineup.

He hasn't looked back.

"Rain came, wind blew," echoed through Lubin's headphones on Saturday morning.

"I'm gonna make it through."

X: @carolinewills03

SENIOR DAY

Late-game fatigue results in No. 8 North Carolina's loss to Virginia

Tar Heels led by as many as 18 points, crumbling in last stretch

By Megan Smith

Senior Writer
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Graduate guard Lexi Donarski heaved a 3-pointer with two Virginia defenders closing out her shot. The ball missed, hitting high off the glass.

The Cavaliers ran to the other end of the court. They jumped up and down, screaming as a team, while the defeated Tar Heels dispiritedly high-fived one another.

Junior guard Indya Nivar put her hands on her head and made her way through the handshake line.

"We ran out of gas," head coach Courtney Banghart said. "I thought we just really couldn't get out of playing tired in that second half."

On what was supposed to be a celebratory Senior Day for North Carolina, the No. 8 Tar Heels fell to Virginia, 78-75, in their last game of the regular season. Undermanned UNC led by as many as 18 points in Carmichael Arena on Sunday afternoon, but failed to string together

productive possessions down the final stretch. As a result, North Carolina was outscored by seven in the fourth quarter and 48-34 in the second half.

UNC clung to an eight-point advantage with five minutes to go.

Then things started to fall apart. In those final few minutes, the Tar Heels committed four turnovers and converted on only 2-of-5 shots from the field. These careless plays opened the door for the Cavaliers, who stepped to the free-throw line with 27 seconds left and took their first lead of the game since it was 4-3.

Nivar then ripped her way through defenders to the basket on the other end, pushing UNC ahead, 75-74. But another foul against North Carolina sent Virginia back to the charity stripe. The Cavaliers took back the lead.

Virginia blocked Nivar as she tried for another layup on the next possession and there were the Cavaliers, back at the line, where they connected on the last two points of the afternoon.

"We were fatigued today," Banghart said. "And that's on us."

Fatigue has plagued the Tar Heels over the past few games in the absence of graduate forward Alyssa Ustby and sophomore guard Reniya Kelly.

UNC has gone 3-2 without Ustby and 0-2 without both Ustby and Kelly in the last few games to close out the season. The pair of starters are two of North Carolina's four leading scorers, but they also fill other roles.

"That's not only experience," Banghart said. "It's offense, it's toughness, it's minutes. It's a lot of things."

Banghart confirmed that Ustby and Kelly are practicing with the team now. She did not speak on their statuses heading into the ACC tournament next week.

Without these two impact players, UNC shot less than 21 percent from three. North Carolina looked to senior center Maria Gakdeng on the inside, after struggling from deep.

Gakdeng finished the game with a career-high 25 points, going 9-10 from the field and 7-8 from the free-throw line. She also added nine rebounds, five assists and two steals. Five of those rebounds came off the offensive glass, a category North Carolina dominated, 13-3.

However, Gakdeng's last shot came with 6:48 remaining in the game. Virginia started to double and triple-team Gakdeng to take away baskets in the paint.

"They were really physical with her and pushing her way off the block and really helping and daring us to make threes from the perimeter," Banghart said. "We took them and didn't make them."

Gakdeng's efforts alone were not enough for the Tar Heels to overcome the 16-14 Cavaliers.

UNC ran out of gas, spoiling the Senior Day festivities and marking the first home loss to Virginia since the 2000-01 season. It's a loss that hands UNC the fifth overall seed in the ACC tournament.

Without a double bye in next week's tournament, UNC will have less time to get healthy, less time to recover from the last stretch of games, before battling for a championship trophy.

X: @meganosmithh

Women's basketball's ACC tournament path

Continued from Page 1

reduced the team's preparation time, head coach Courtney Banghart said every day is about preparing for the tournament and becoming healthy again. Graduate forward Alyssa Ustby and sophomore guard Reniya Kelly's statuses are currently unknown.

Ustby has missed four games since exiting in the opening minutes of the N.C. State win in February. Kelly has been absent from two games.

"We think we'll be healthier by then, and that will help because then you get more minutes that you can spread across and more options," Banghart said after the loss to Virginia. "When a guy goes 1-8, we can't absorb that as well as we could have with our depth in the past."

The Tar Heels will have to win four games in four days to become ACC tournament champions for the first time since 2008. Here is a look at some of their potential opponents.

Boston College

The Eagles ended their season on a sour note after losing 82-57 to Syracuse. Boston College has a 15-16 overall record, but the team lost two-thirds of its games in conference and went 0-2 at neutral sites.

North Carolina beat Boston College, 80-67, in January. The Tar Heels struggled on the boards against a tall BC team, but bench points and 3-point shooting in the second half gave UNC the edge.

The Eagles have struggled with turnovers and defending in the paint. This could give UNC an advantage with senior center Maria Gakdeng coming off a career-high 25 points against Virginia.

Syracuse

Syracuse has a 6-12 record, but the Orange are on a two-game win streak heading into the tournament.

North Carolina beat Syracuse in February, 68-58. The Orange are tied for third in the league in

rebounding offense, averaging more than 39 a game. But in their regular season meeting, the Tar Heels held them to 26.

Guard Georgia Woolley leads the team with 16 points per game, nearly five more than Gakdeng, UNC's leading per-game scorer. North Carolina must lock down Woolley to defeat the Orange.

Quarterfinals: Florida State

UNC would face No. 4 seed Florida State in the semifinals. The Seminoles beat UNC on a buzzer beater in January and have won seven out of 10 games since, including against No. 2 seed Notre Dame.

But in its 71-57 loss to Duke on Sunday, Florida State relied on forward Makayla Timpson — she was the only player in double digits with 25 points. Star guard Ta'Niya Latson, who averages 25 points per game, recorded 9 points and shot 1-for-8 from three. The Tar Heels must contain Latson to advance.

UNC might struggle with late-game fatigue against Florida State if Ustby and Kelly cannot play, but the Tar Heels have the stronger bench. FSU ranks 140th in the nation in bench points per game, while North Carolina ranks 54th.

Semifinal and championship rounds

In the final two rounds, UNC could run into top-seeded N.C. State in the semifinals, then Notre Dame or No. 3 seed Duke in the finals, granted there is not an upset.

UNC proved it can disrupt the Wolfpack offense, but will need all hands on deck to pull out another win.

Previous losses to both the Fighting Irish and Blue Devils show UNC would need to find success from downtown and its bench to take home the ACC Championship title.

No matter what, there's a long road ahead.

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DTH FILE/CONNOR RUESCH

UNC senior forward/center Maria Gakdeng (5) reacts to a foul being called during the game against Notre Dame on Jan. 5 at Carmichael Arena.

SOFTBALL

Kiannah Pierce hits first career home run

Designated hitter returns to field after multiple setbacks

By Shannen Horan

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With two outs, a runner on first and North Carolina ahead 6-2, Kiannah "Kiwi" Pierce stepped up to the plate.

On the second pitch, she smashed the ball. It flew out toward center field.

Gone. "I was never focused on hitting a home run," Pierce said. "It was more just do a job, pass it back to my teammates, and so it happened to go over and it feels really good that it went over."

In North Carolina's 12-5 win over Kent State on Saturday afternoon in the Mizuno Showdown at Anderson Stadium, the graduate designated hitter blasted her first career home run in four years at UNC. It was a cathartic moment. Two years ago, Pierce's softball career flashed before her eyes. Her journey back onto the field was never certain.

Pierce began her career as a Tar Heel in 2021, starting in 21 games and having the second-highest batting average on the team with .328. Her growth continued into her sophomore season, where she made 40 starts and recorded 33 hits.

But Pierce's progress came to a halt her junior year.

Trying to come back from concussions, Pierce's mental health started to decline. She decided it was best to take a step back from the sport and redshirted her junior season.

Finally back on the field for her senior year, disaster struck.

On Sept. 21, 2023, Pierce was driving her moped home when she was hit by a car. She was rushed to the emergency room.

She was admitted to the hospital for two days. Pierce had blown her knee out — completely shattering her kneecap — and had reconstructive surgery which included a full patellar tendon repair.

Following the accident, Pierce thought about her future.

"When I came back in January [2024], I had a conversation with Coach Smith about never suiting up ever again," Pierce said. "So being able to work back and have her support and the team's support, that's been the only reason I keep going."

Sophomore outfielder Sanaa Thompson remembers Pierce going through the recovering process and working hard in the training room for rehab. It makes Thompson, and the team, feel like if Pierce can come back from something like that, then they can do anything.

"For her to have that moment, it's like I want to cry," Thompson said. "I was like, wow, you just feel so proud, so happy for her."

Despite her tumultuous career, Pierce continues to show up for her teammates. She gives it her all when she's in the box because she's giving it her all to even play again.

Home runs are normal for Pierce in a practice setting, so much so that head coach Megan Smith Lyon didn't even realize this was her first in a game.

"That's Kiwi," Lyon said. "I know she's gonna do great things when she's up in the box, so I'm super excited."

The head coach said Pierce's level-headedness, consistency in the box and attitude has made her reliable and trustworthy both on and off the field.

This moment didn't just exemplify the hard work Pierce has put in this offseason, but also signified the incredible journey of her comeback.

Pierce makes sure to tell her teammates and coaches that she wouldn't be as motivated or excited to play without their support every day. She's never had so much love poured into her.

It makes it easier to go up and hit the ball, sometimes even out of the park.

"I've been excited for her for every moment this season," Lyon said. "Because when you think those moments aren't going to come again, they're all so special."

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ON THE COURT



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNC ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

UNC junior Constantinos Djakouris returns the ball during the match against Virginia Tech on Friday, Feb. 28.

Djakouris clinches deciding match for UNC men's tennis

Tar Heels secure close victory over Hokies in ACC opener

By Brian D'Aguanno

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Associate head coach Tripp Phillips walked over to junior Constantinos Djakouris to deliver a harsh but necessary message.

Lock in. Get your head in the game. UNC and Virginia Tech were tied at three a piece and Djakouris was the last hope. He was down two points with the third set tied 5-5.

"All the other matches finished and the guys came over and they were cheering so loud," Djakouris said. "And I was like 'I have to pull it through for them, I can't give up now.' And I kept it going."

And that's exactly what Djakouris did.

In the UNC men's tennis team's 4-3 win over Virginia Tech on Friday night at the Chewing Tennis Center, Djakouris clinched the match for the Tar Heels in a tight singles match. The come-from-behind victory in the ACC opener marked North Carolina's 11th straight win against the Hokies dating back to the 2015-16 season.

"Just proud of our team for how hard they fought," head coach Sam Paul said.

But the UC Davis transfer's win almost never happened.

Following two errant hits in the breakpoint game of the third set by Virginia Tech's Ilyas Fahim, Djakouris fought back to knot the game up at deuce.

After receiving the serve, he crushed the ball down the line and just out of the reach of Fahim.

He pumped his fist in excitement.

His celebration was short-lived.

The chair umpire called it out-of-bounds. Djakouris threw his hat down in protest while UNC players stormed off the bench area in outrage. The chair umpire appealed to the baseline judge.

After a few heated moments the call was overturned, giving Djakouris the game and a 6-5 lead third set lead.

"Hearing the call of it being out, it was a tough moment," Djakouris said. "But thankfully it got overruled."

North Carolina got off to a slow start, losing their first two doubles games to give Virginia Tech the doubles point.

In the first set of singles, UNC's troubles continued. Little was going North Carolina's way.

At one point the Tar Heels were down in four of six matches but crawled back to win three first sets. They still had a mountain to climb to come back, though.

Djakouris was one of the Tar Heels that lost the first set, falling 6-2.

"I tried to basically get rid of the first set in my mind and just start new," Djakouris said. "New set, I still have to win two sets from here. It doesn't matter that he already won the first one. Just keep going. Play as like the match just got started."

He won the second set, 6-3, to force the tie-breaking third.

Securing the 6-5 breakpoint, Djakouris didn't leave the final game to chance.

Three hours of play. All eyes on court No. 2.

Djakouris met the moment. After he secured the final point to hand North Carolina the match, Djakouris' teammates mobbed him. They hugged. They yelled. Djakouris cracked a grin.

"It just exceeded all expectations today, was so fun clinching for the boys," Djakouris said. "The celebration after was amazing. Moments to remember for sure."

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BASEBALL

Tyson Bass propels Diamond Heels to Stony Brook sweep

N.C. Wesleyan transfer led North Carolina to 12th-straight win

By Emma Moon

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While Tyson Bass stood on deck, hitting coach Jesse Wierzbicki gestured for the graduate right fielder to "come here."

It was before Bass' last at-bat in UNC's second game against Stony Brook. The graduate was 0-3 on the day. Bass approached Wierzbicki in the bottom of the seventh.

"Okay, what's up?" Bass said.

The hitting coach noticed Bass' feet were too far apart in his setup, a product of the player trying to "be in the ground more." Wierzbicki told Bass to put his feet closer together. The simple issue caused a chain reaction that Bass described as "start bad, then bad, bad, bad."

Bass flew out to left field in his last at-bat on Saturday. But when he stepped to the plate on Sunday, he singled to center field. The small change was all it took.

"Long story short, they just had to be closer together," Bass said.

The right fielder's performance on Sunday propelled the No. 5 Diamond Heels past Stony Brook,



DTH/SIONA NAIK

UNC graduate outfielder Tyson Bass (11) swings during the game against Stony Brook on Sunday, March 2 at Boshamer Stadium. UNC won 9-5.

9-5, to secure their third-straight series sweep. Bass went 4-5, recording four RBIs, two runs and one home run. Behind his outing, UNC is now 12-0 for the first time since 2013.

Bass hasn't been performing well to start the season. He had a .227 batting average before Sunday. Last week, the graduate struck out seven times in a weekend series against ECU.

"I've struggled," Bass said.

But simplicity is sometimes all it takes for a guy like Bass. He's a man of few words. He doesn't put too much weight on any situation, even if coming to UNC marked a change from his previous collegiate career.

The graduate transferred after four seasons from N.C. Wesleyan, a school located about 40 minutes from his hometown of Lucama,

N.C.. It's such a small town that the University's 1,300 students outnumber Lucama's population.

He has a thick, drawn-out country accent that shows his roots. He wears a permanent smirk.

"[He] doesn't worry about much of anything," graduate first baseman Hunter Stokely said. "[That's] just how he is. I grew up playing baseball with him. That's how he was when we were little."

So, Bass was never too concerned about the lack of hits or the strikeouts. It probably helped that he had full confidence from head coach Scott Forbes on his side, especially on the defensive end.

"I told him, 'Hey, man, I'm not taking you out because you've been saving a ton of runs,'" Forbes said. "So just stay loose in there and be yourself."

After hitting a single to center field, Bass did it again in the bottom of the fifth. Then, he did it one more time in the sixth only this time to left field on the first pitch.

Bass was settled by the time the eighth inning rolled around. On a 2-0 count, Stony Brook pitcher Ryan Dieguez hung a breaking ball over the center of the plate. With his feet closer together, Bass sent it 411 feet over the center field wall at 104 miles per hour to send two runners home.

Stokely greeted him at home plate. "It felt amazing," Bass said. "Like indescribably good to hit the ball again. Yeah, it was nice for sure."

Bass didn't have any wild celebration plans. He ate with his parents. Bass just took Wierzbicki's suggestion and followed it. Then, like everything else, he let it roll off his shoulders.

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