

# The Daily Tar Heel

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131 YEARS OF SERVING UNC STUDENTS AND THE UNIVERSITY

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## BOARD GAMES

### Do BOT members meet their ethics requirements?

UNC trustees have 'potential conflicts of interest'

By Aisha Baiocchi  
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and Aidan Lockhart  
Special Projects Writer

When Malcolm Turner was nominated to serve on the UNC Board of Trustees, his role at DraftKings, the sports gambling company, caught the attention of some UNC System Board of Governors members. "The fact of the matter is that

DraftKings is promoting sports betting on college sports, and I just do not think that's appropriate," BOG member Art Pope said in an April 2021 meeting.

Under the 2006 State Government Ethics Act, trustees — and other state employees — are required to file a statement of economic interest annually for evaluation. Turner, like every current member of the BOT except for Perrin Jones and newly appointed Ritch Allison, whose evaluation hasn't been made public yet, was identified by the State Ethics Commission as having the "potential for a conflict of interest."

According to the BOT website, Turner serves as the head of strategy and corporate development for DraftKings. He was formally appointed to serve on the BOT by a 17-6 vote, with the promise

that he would recuse himself from athletics-related matters.

According to Stephen Arbogast, professor of the practice of finance at Kenan-Flagler, conflict of interest policy is standard in corporate America, and is meant to prevent instances of preferential treatment.

"It's typically a disclosure and approval process which is intended to safeguard people," he said.

#### What do our trustees have in common?

Five of the trustees were flagged for their financial interests in real estate. Trustee Vinay Patel was cited as having "numerous" properties and for being principal of SREE Hotels LLC, which manages 25 hotels across three states.

The majority of potential conflicts are business-related; four trustees own

stock in publicly-owned companies, and six were flagged for their relation to specific companies. Jennifer Llyod's SEC evaluation named her role as proprietor of Hark the Sound LLC and Beat Duke LLC, which are both described as "real estate ownership, design, and development companies."

In an email to The Daily Tar Heel, Lloyd said the LLCs are not operating businesses.

"They are simple LLCs that hold title to personal real estate and personal vehicles," Lloyd wrote. "I love Carolina so I could choose any name for the LLCs (that wasn't already in use), and I chose these!"

Four trustees own or work for consulting firms, while two are partners at a law firm. One of Trustee Jim Blaine's firms, Martin and

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Read the Special Project Desk's coverage of the UNC Board of Trustees on pages 14-16

#### JUSTICE

### Orange County unveils historic plaque

Remembrance Coalition honors victims of lynching

By Taylor Motley  
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On Feb. 15, the Orange County Community Remembrance Coalition unveiled a historical marker at the Orange County Historical Courthouse honoring Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Daniel Morrow — three men who were lynched in Hillsborough in 1869 after being accused of barn-burning.

Thomas Jefferson and Lucinda Morrow married while enslaved by Jesse Morrow in Orange County in 1848. By the late 1860s, as emancipation became realized in Orange County, the Morrows had six children.

In late July 1869, three barns were burned in Orange County — those of Jesse Morrow, who had previously enslaved the Morrow family, William Jones, whose lands the Morrows had resided on and been evicted from, and Franklin Minor. The barns, which were about three miles apart from each other, were reported as being ablaze simultaneously.

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### Adolfo Alvarez elected as 2025-26 UNC student body president

READ THE STORY ON PAGE 3

DTH/ABBIE MCKEE

#### STYLE

### UNC students attend New York Fashion Week

Tar Heels networked, gained social media marketing experience

By Erin Mun  
Staff Writer  
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UNC students traveled to New York City to attend New York Fashion Week on Feb. 8, gaining firsthand experience in the fashion industry. By networking with industry insiders and gaining special access to shows, their week was more than just a unique opportunity — it was a look at the future they hope to shape.

Every February and September,

designers from all over the world head to New York City to showcase their style. Fashion week primarily serves as a platform for leading designers to present their latest collections, but also allows up-and-coming designers to present their work and gives fashion-lovers an opportunity to connect within the community.

Sofia Nyiri, a sophomore majoring in communications and media and journalism, and Savannah Matthews, a sophomore majoring in media and journalism, are staff members at Coulture Magazine, a student-led fashion magazine at UNC. They both completed their fashion communications and marketing certificate at the Hussman

School of Journalism and Media. Through the Hussman School, Nyiri and Matthews participated in the program Workroom FashionMash, which works closely with Coulture.

Representing Coulture, they were given press passes to attend NYFW shows. The Hussman School provided funding to reimburse their travel costs.

Nyiri and Matthews primarily worked with social media coverage during the week and have upcoming video content that will be edited and posted on Coulture's Instagram and TikTok pages.

It was both Nyiri and Matthews' first time visiting NYFW.

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#### WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

### No. 12 North Carolina upsets No. 10 N.C. State

Lineup of Thomas, Gakdeng lead team to 66-65 win

By Megan Smith  
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Graduate forward Alyssa Ustby asked for a substitute after only 2.5 minutes into No. 12 UNC's game against No. 10 N.C. State.

Graduate guard Grace Townsend entered in place of Ustby, who, after leaving the court on her own accord, jogged to the back of the

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DTH/HEATHER DIEHL

UNC senior forward/center Maria Gakdeng (5) takes a shot during the game against N.C. State on Sunday.

“ In the game of life, play like a pawn, think like a king. ”

A.D. POSEY



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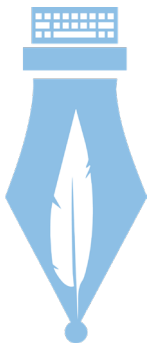
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- The Daily Tar Heel reports any inaccurate information published as soon as the error is discovered.
- Contact Print Managing Editor Sarah Monoson at print.editor@dailytarheel.com with issues about this policy.
- Last week’s “Diamond Heels turn to familiar faces to fill gaps in the infield” misspelled first baseman Hunter Stokely’s surname in the story text and deck. The Daily Tar Heel apologizes for this error.



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PROFESSIONAL PATHS

BOT members bring varied backgrounds

Trustees shift to  
public education from  
politics, business, law

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On Jan. 30, Domino’s Pizza Inc. CEO Ritch Allison joined UNC’s Board of Trustees, filling a seat left vacant by former trustee David Boliek after winning his bid for N.C. State Auditor.

With newly elected N.C. State Treasurer Bradford Briner also leaving the BOT for state politics, one seat remains open. Although there are limitations for trustee membership outlined in the BOT’s bylaws, there are no explicitly outlined requirements.

So, what did they do before becoming trustees?

Every current trustee attended UNC-Chapel Hill, except for Vimal Kolappa, who was sworn into the Board in 2023. However, at his first board meeting, he said that his “heart beats UNC,” noting that he had undergone a heart valve surgery at UNC Hospitals.

All trustees hold bachelor’s degrees in various disciplines. Four trustees also hold graduate degrees in business. Vinay Patel and newly-appointed Allison hold MBAs from UNC.

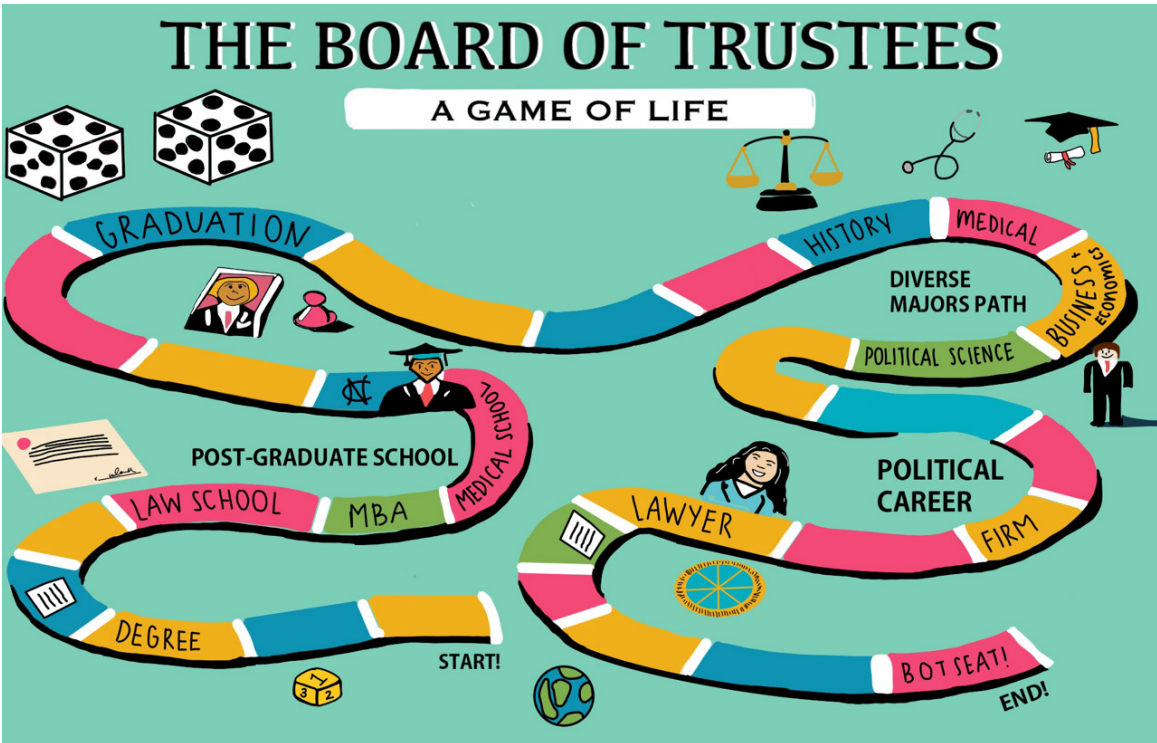
Dr. Perrin Jones is the only trustee with a medical degree, which he earned from Wake Forest University. Former trustee Briner, Malcolm Turner and Jennifer Lloyd all graduated as Morehead-Cain Scholars. Ramsey White worked in the development departments at the Morehead-Cain Foundation.

Ballantine is one of four trustees who hold law degrees. All four earned their J.D.s from private universities.

Following their graduation, seven trustees maintained an active connection to UNC by serving on the UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Visitors.

Trustee Ralph Meekins Sr. said that when he expressed interest in being on the BOT to Tim Moore, the N.C. Speaker of the House at the time, Moore said it was a difficult position to obtain.

“He said a good place to start would be to be on the Board of



DTH DESIGN/DIYA PATEL

Visitors, which he appointed me to,” said Meekins. “I served for four years on the Board of Visitors and was fortunate enough for him to have appointed me.”

Linda Douglas, the Board of Visitors’ senior director of volunteer engagement, said in an email that the trustees have nominated about 15 people for the 40 available spots this year.

After their educational experiences, many of the trustees pursued backgrounds in politics and business.

Ballantine founded and now runs a government relations and consulting firm that offers “unparalleled access to the key decision makers,” according to its website. Blaine is also a partner at a strategic and public affairs firm, Martin and Blaine the Differentiators LLC.

Meekins has been a practicing attorney for over 30 years, primarily in personal injury and workers’ compensation. Malcolm Turner is the head of strategy and corporate development for DraftKings, an online sports gambling platform. Previously, he served as vice chancellor and athletics director at Vanderbilt University.

Jones is a practicing anesthesiologist and partner at the East Carolina Anesthesia Associates, and Lloyd began her

career in health care investment banking at Goldman Sachs. Lloyd later co-founded and led an advisory firm focused on medical technology mergers.

Samuel Scarborough, a sophomore at UNC and a student activist with the Southern Student Action Coalition, said understanding the trustees’ business interests is important.

“It’s not just the fact that these are like partisan actors that are in these places, but these are also very wealthy people who have specific business interests,” he said.

Six of the 15 trustees are appointed directly by state elected officials. A few of the trustees have political connections and experience themselves.

In 2004, Ballantine campaigned for governor of North Carolina against Democrat Mike Easley and lost with a 42.88 percent vote against Easley’s 55.62 percent. He worked with current N.C. Senate President Pro Tempore Phil Berger before Berger appointed him to the BOT in 2023.

Preyer, first appointed to the Board in 2019 and taking over as chair in 2023, previously worked with Sen. Lauch Faircloth as a legislative director for environmental issues from 1992-1996. Rob Bryan III served in the

state house from 2013-2016 and the state senate from 2019-2020.

Meekins didn’t serve in state office, but raised concerns of the political makeup of the board as it is.

“Not to be hyper-critical of our particular board at this particular time, but we’re not as diverse as we once were,” he said. “I mean, most of us are politically aligned, most of us are socially similar, and sometimes I’m concerned that we’re too alike.”

The student body president serves as an ex-officio member of the board while they are in office.

Student Body President-Elect Adolfo Alvarez says that being the only student on the board takes not only the support of the student body but a lot of boldness.

“The main goal is that people feel like someone’s actually going into that room and representing them,” Alvarez said. “I may not be able to change their mind, but I can show them what we think with 32,000 student voices behind me.”

X: @dailytarheel

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ELECTION

Student sues BOE in University Supreme Court

Bench ultimately ruled for a 48-hour voting extension

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During the student government elections voting period, plagued with technical and administrative issues, junior Liam Cuppett filed a lawsuit against the UNC Board of Elections to the UNC Student Supreme Court. His 11-page complaint, submitted via email on Feb. 11 at 7:47 p.m., resulted in a 48-hour election extension. Cuppett, who was running as a write-in candidate for the Undergraduate Senate in District 2, said he was frustrated with the “severe issues” surrounding early voting. “The difference in 24 hours and 72 hours to get votes in is a lot, especially between certain candidates and those high-priority races,” Cuppett said. The initial early voting period was set for Feb. 8 at 5 p.m. through Feb. 10 at 5 p.m., with an in-person priority mail cardboard box to collect votes and stacks of ballots in front of the Student Government suite in the Student Union. There was no option for online voting. Cuppett said he saw the box and thought people could easily

reach into it, vote multiple times or manipulate ballots. “In addition to that, there were several members that are already incumbent in Student Government or affiliated with other people’s campaigns who were basically standing at the box telling people not to vote,” Cuppett said. Cuppett said he was running as a member of a five-person informal coalition, all hoping to win spots as write-in candidates in the Undergraduate Senate. Write-in candidates require at least 15 votes in order to be certified as elected. Cuppett was the only member of the group to win, despite at least one seat in each district remaining unfilled. Christina Huang, a coalition member who wasn’t elected to District 2, said she traveled home to New Jersey for the long weekend that coincided with early voting, making it impossible to vote in person. “I think a lot of people were very frustrated with this year’s election,” she said. All three student body presidential candidates filed a complaint to the BOE, resulting in the nullification of the ballots cast in person and the first delay in early voting. Due to technical difficulties with Heel Life, the entire early voting period did not occur. Cuppett said it’s clear in statute that the BOE has the discretion to change election timing but does not

have the discretion to skip entire parts of the election. Andrew Gary, a UNC graduate student and associate justice who wrote the opinion for the case, said the justices immediately knew the lawsuit needed to be resolved quickly. Cuppett’s complaint had four requests. The first two asked that the current election be nullified and rescheduled, and that the BOE post a timeline on Instagram and Heel Life for the new election, including early voting. “If neither of the above are considered feasible by the Court, [Cuppett] requests that two ‘later voting’ days be added onto the election to make up for the disaster that was early voting this year,” Cuppett’s complaint states. If this wasn’t possible, Cuppett asked for the Court to set a precedent if the early voting timeline is not honored in the future. Adolfo Alvarez, the student body president-elect, submitted a paperless memo the night the suit was filed, stating his campaign would be harmed by throwing out the Election Day votes, but welcoming the voting extension. UNC senior and Chief Justice of the Court Nathaniel Shue said he sent the acting chair of the BOE, Elias Larson North, an email alerting him of the lawsuit and giving 24 hours to respond.

Shue said that North answered the following morning on Feb. 12, allowing the Court to work on their opinion. On Feb. 12 at 4:59 p.m., in the final minute before voting was scheduled to close, Shue said he posted the decision that required a 48-hour election extension through Feb. 14 at 5 p.m. “So this, in our view, was a very obvious and equitable outcome,” he said. Shue said the BOE was unable to do its job, partially because of staffing issues. The Cuppett v. BOE decision ordered leaders in Student Government to request that their staff volunteer to help the BOE for the rest of the election cycle. Huang said students were frustrated with the Qualtrics ballot because some people had trouble accessing the form, and the rank-choice voting was automatically set to rank candidates in alphabetical order. North did not respond to The Daily Tar Heel’s request for a comment. “I know that most students don’t know that the Court exists, and I know that a lot of people think this is a fairly inaccessible process,” Gary said. “But the Supreme Court is always available to resolve or to hear cases where people think that their rights as a student have been infringed and that there are resources available to help them access this forum.”

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GOVERNMENT

Alvarez elected SBP on Friday

Thirteen percent of student body voted in election

By Ananya Cox  
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Continued from Page 1

Adolfo Alvarez was elected as UNC’s 2025-26 student body president, after the UNC Board of Elections released certified results Friday evening. After receiving the results, Alvarez said that he was extremely grateful to the student body for trusting his mission to bring positive change into the executive branch. “I’m really happy that people saw that what it takes to be student body president is, yes, to have strong leadership skills, but also to really care about the people who are in this University,” he said. Studying media and journalism and global studies, Alvarez currently serves as vice president of UNC’s Carolina International Relations Association. Alvarez labeled himself an outside voice, announcing his campaign on Instagram on Jan. 21. He defined his run with the idea that change comes from action, rather than experience. “For too long, our student government has been stuck in a cycle of making campaign promises it doesn’t keep,” a Feb. 4 post on the Alvarez campaign Instagram account stated. Alvarez shared similar sentiments in candidate debates before voting began. His policy goals include 24-hour library access for students, a reworked on-campus housing process and working with graduate students on stipend increases. He received endorsements from The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Board, The Graduate Workers of the UNC Workers Union, the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies and Sunrise UNC. Describing himself as hopeful and excited, Alvarez said that he would give people the results he promised to bring, thanking the student body. “I came into this country by myself when I was 16-years-old, and I didn’t know if I was gonna end up going to college,” he said. “So today, I just really feel grateful to that 16-year-old, because, I don’t know, he would never believe that I am student body president elect of the nation’s oldest public University.” Alvarez will start his term as student body president in April, saying he will work toward fixing the gap between Student Government and the student body before he steps into the role. From a pool of 32,234 eligible voters, 4,193 students voted, reflecting around 13 percent of the student body. Last year around seven percent of the student body voted in the general elections.

X: @a\_nanyabusines

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

‘Expert in everything he does’: Hussman professor Tom Linden retires after 27 years

Instructor leaves behind storied legacy and impact on students

By Lily Kane  
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When Dr. Tom Linden started medical school at the University of California, San Francisco in 1973, he never imagined he would one day return to journalism, the career he had pursued as an undergraduate student at Yale University. “I had a vision that I was going to be a country doctor,” Linden said. But Linden’s career would eventually take him across the country to UNC’s Hussman School of Journalism and Media, where he began working in 1997 as the Glaxo Wellcome Distinguished Professor of Medical Journalism. Linden retired from Hussman at the end of 2024, after 27 years of teaching. When he graduated from Yale in 1970, Linden was working as the New Haven correspondent for The Los Angeles Times and had a contract to write a book about American draft resisters. He never finished the book. “I got very disappointed and discouraged in my journalism path,” Linden said. “You know, I thought I didn’t have what it took.” Linden decided to enter medical school instead, but he soon discovered that he missed the excitement of being a journalist. After completing his residency and opening a private psychiatry practice, he found his way back to journalism, beginning with a part-time job hosting a health segment for The Today Show. UNC sophomore Aaliyah Mitchell, who took Linden’s Media and



DTH/ALEX YANG

Dr. Tom Linden was the director of the UNC Science and Medical Journalism Program. Linden poses for a portrait on Monday, Jan 15. at Hyde Hall.

Journalism 252: Audio Journalism course in the fall of 2024, said he was open with his students about challenges he faced as a journalist. Mitchell said that in addition to teaching about the mechanics of audio journalism, Linden talked to the students about strategies to manage their mental health and deal with stressful work environments. “[He’s] equally kind, just as much as he is an expert in everything he does,” Mitchell said. Though he came to UNC to teach medical journalism, Linden eventually expanded to environmental and science journalism. Undergraduate students often lacked the medical knowledge to produce accurate reporting, he said, and it was difficult for them to gain access to medical spaces. After making the switch, Linden got to go out in the field again. He and his students traveled across the state, producing reports about nearly

all of the North Carolina state parks. He said one of his favorite memories was a visit to Jockey’s Ridge State Park in the Outer Banks, where people hang glide off the sand dunes. “One thing is to learn journalism,” he said. “Another thing is to have fun and feel satisfaction, not in just the product that you produce, but in the process of getting the product.” Students in Linden’s Media and Journalism 562: Environmental and Science Documentary Television class worked closely with Frank Graff, a producer at PBS North Carolina, to create documentaries that aired on Sci NC. Graff said the collaboration was a great match. “I look forward to it every fall,” he said. “I’m going to miss it.” The documentaries they produced covered a vast array of topics, from green burials to Indigenous farming practices to the process of making beer. Along the way, Graff said,

students learned to problem solve and persevere. Scott Geier, an assistant professor at the Hussman School who took one of Linden’s classes while getting his master’s degree, said Linden was a demanding but fair professor who gave assignments like shadowing an ER physician for an entire shift or reading a 300-page book over the course of a weekend. The work was tough, but Geier said it was the kind of challenge he had hoped for when he started graduate school. Geier said he sees many professors adopting a consumer-based mindset and becoming reluctant to do things that students don’t like. Linden wasn’t like that. “He’s old school,” Geier said. “And so we needed him.” Linden said in his last few years of teaching, he’s become worried about the impacts of artificial intelligence and social media on students’ learning and well-being. He’s also concerned about what he sees as an anti-democracy shift in North Carolina and across the country, and he said he hopes to get involved with political advocacy in his retirement. Linden will continue teaching a monthly communication course to medical students at UNC. He also said he hopes to learn to play the piano, get back into painting and visit his daughter in California. Though Linden will no longer teach at the Hussman School, Mitchell said the guidance he gave her will continue to impact her. “He said that I should never limit myself, that I can be exactly what a newsroom needs,” Mitchell said. Linden’s words, she said, changed her life.

X: @dailytarheel



ACTIVISM

# Sunrise UNC hosts climate gathering

Event welcomed students from 13 states and 23 universities

By Dayna Wilkerson  
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The Sunrise Hub at UNC held the first Southern Campus Climate Gathering from Feb. 7 to Feb. 9. The gathering welcomed over 100 student climate activists from 23 universities across the South, educating them on how to better their campuses and the country.

Sunrise UNC is part of the larger Sunrise Movement, a political action organization that advocates for the end of fossil fuels and invests in underrepresented communities. UNC is one of over 100 Sunrise hubs across the U.S.

“[Sunrise] is about building a movement across race and class, with labor and all sorts of different groups, to fight back against power, to stop climate change, but also to do that in a way that is equitable for everyone,” Victoria Plant, a sophomore at UNC and the research team lead for Sunrise UNC said.

Sawyer Pappas, a first-year at UNC who worked on the event’s programming, said the CCG South is the third iteration of the gatherings. Previous versions were held at Brown University for CCG North and the University of California, Berkeley, for CCG West.

Plant said she and the other Sunrise officers wanted to host the gathering to build relationships and connections with student activists in the South, helping them achieve their goals on campus and across the region.

Pappas said the event’s main goals were to give tools to attendees that can help them with their work on their campuses and to create a network to lean on in the future.

In fostering this network, Sunrise UNC members housed students from 13 states, and the organization funded their flights if needed to ensure they could make the weekend.

“I feel like it’s not too big of an ask to be able to get people here because

otherwise, it would be so expensive,” Plant, who has two students from Maryland staying in her room for the weekend, said.

Ava Trachtenberg, a first-year at Emory University, came to attend CCG South to build connections as she starts a hub at her campus.

“We really wanted to take the opportunity to get trainings from leaders across the country,” Trachtenberg said.

She said she is excited to meet other participants, especially others who attend school in Georgia, to collaborate in the future.

Amy Okonkwo, a first-year and the outreach team lead, said organizing events like these in the South is a unique but essential project.

She also said the weekend included panels, trainings and networking opportunities to educate attendees on climate activism.

Through activities, Okonkwo said she had panelists who could give perspectives on how to deal with uncooperative Southern lawmakers and institutions and evoke change, one structure at a time.

“UNC had an event [on Feb. 6] with Dr. Dana Fisher from American University, and she was talking about the Civil Rights Movement, the way things spread little by little,” Okonkwo said. “That is what this network is for, so that we can effectively have the tools in that network to be able to spread as fast as possible.”

As a Nigeran woman, Okonkwo said she wants to make the environmental justice movement more inclusive, saying that she intended to do just that during the weekend through event outreach.

Okonkwo said she believes that CCG South and more protest-centric events are necessary for the future, especially during and after the Trump administration.

“This is just one example of the work that needs to be done and the kind of initiative we all need to be taking,” she said. “Now, because of the position we’re in, we’re all suddenly activists, and being in that role is something we should not take for granted.”

X: @dailytarheel

NONPROFIT

# ‘Invest in each other’: She’s Not Here plans relaunch with app

Organization aims to provide safe transit for women at night

By Tulsia Asokan  
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She’s Not Here, an organization giving rides to female students after dark, is officially relaunching this semester.

When walking at night, Founder Macy Brown said that she usually called a friend on the phone or held her keys between her knuckles to protect herself. Scared to take an Uber home alone, she said she found herself wishing for a safer option.

“I knew that was a problem, and that it wasn’t just an isolated feeling that I had,” Brown said.

Originally a way for Brown to raise money to study abroad, she said the organization’s name became a play on words of the local bar He’s Not Here. The small business, She’s Not Here, was a service giving rides on the weekends.

“So when I first started, it was quite literally me and my little green Prius,” Brown said.

Now, She’s Not Here is a nonprofit organization where women can apply to drive fellow students. After a hiatus in service, President Bhaumi Shah said the program will be returning with some new features.

“Our mission is to really just make it a safe and comfortable environment, and to build a community of women who are supporting each other and helping each other get around safely,” Shah said.

As part of the relaunch, Shah said a new app will be available for download as soon as it is approved by the App Store. She said the design is similar to the Uber app in that students can find rides and get the contact information of their drivers. Drivers can be booked in advance or found at the time needed.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MACY BROWN

UNC alumna Macy Brown founded She’s Not Here, an all-female rideshare for University students.

According to the She’s Not Here website, the service will operate from Thursday to Saturday, from 5 p.m. to 2 a.m. Rides will have a fixed rate of \$12 for every pick-up or drop-off.

Shah said that \$10 goes toward paying the driver, while the other \$2 goes toward paying any app fees. However, she said they hope to secure a grant to pay for the fees and reduce the cost of rides.

To become a driver, students must provide their driver’s license and confirmation of auto insurance to prove that they are eligible. They then answer an application question about why they want to be a driver and how they fit into the organization’s mission.

Rides are usually restricted to the Chapel Hill-Carrboro area, but distance is up to driver discretion.

To make this relaunch possible, She’s Not Here officially became a nonprofit in October 2024 with the help of the UNC School of Law.

Thomas Kelley, the director of the Community Development Law Clinic, said that he found out about She’s Not Here through Carolina Student Legal Services and decided to represent them as clients. His clinic, providing

free legal services, guided the organization to becoming a 501(c)(3) certified nonprofit.

“It was pretty clear that they really had a good idea, they really had a mission and they were determined to kind of launch it and have an impact,” Kelley said.

According to their website, She’s Not Here will be providing incentives, like gift cards and merchandise, for their drivers. They will also hold social events to build the She’s Not Here community, with the organization planning to start services this spring, after approval from the App Store.

Shivalee Patel, vice president of the organization, said that the app should make ride-sharing more streamlined when compared to the original framework run through Instagram direct messages.

“I want people to use it and take advantage of it,” Patel said. “I know people take Uber home all the time, but this is an actual safe UNC female-operated organization, so I really hope that people kind of invest in each other.”

X: @tulsiasokan

SERVICE

# Carolina Adapts Toys for Children fosters partnerships

Student-led group creates specialized designs for kids

By Mariah Temple  
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Carolina Adapts Toys for Children is a student-led organization founded in 2018 that strives to bring the “joy of play” to children excluded from the typical toy market.

Members modify the circuitry design and buttons of popular toys to make them easier to use for kids with mobility or cognitive challenges. Through the club’s various partnerships with hospitals and schools, they create custom adaptations based on specific client needs.

With the grant from Atrium Health in Charlotte, CATCH initiated Special Projects Assistive Technology, a program for advanced club members to work on specialized toys and tools, emphasizing user-centric design instead of mass-adaptations. SPAT uses 3D printers to engineer custom products requested by physical therapists and their clients.



DTH/LILLAH HAYES

A member of Carolina Adapts Toys for Children works on modifying a toy in Phillips Hall on Feb. 11.

Co-President of CATCH junior Katie Chai said she is grateful for the partnerships and the ability to more adequately meet the needs of toy recipients. This semester, a primary focus of CATCH is to expand their specialized projects to serve a wider age range; Chai said that the adapted toys have largely catered to young children.

Chai said the organization also hopes to produce more cultural and

gender inclusive toys.

“It’s been cool to see the projects that our members have really pioneered and driven home. Our technical officer, and now CTO, Gavin, he created this awesome Nerf gun, which was born out of a request to create toys for older children,” Chai said.

Other specialized designs include toothbrush and mascara holders, tweezers, braille-learning devices and lava lamps.

Each Tuesday in the Phillips Hall basement, students meet to modify toys with step-by-step guides written by members. Newcomers are directed through a training process in which they learn how to use a solder, and according to Communications Lead sophomore Aditi Gajavelly, these members are generally able to work on their own toys by the next meeting.

“We’re definitely trying to make CATCH more than just a club for engineers,” Gajavelly said.

CATCH frequently meets with physical and occupational therapists to determine real-world user needs. Above everything, the goal of both CATCH and its partners is to introduce play into the lives of children who do not get to experience it in the average, commercially-available way.

“The impact is pretty tangible,” Chai said. “An adapted toy, or like an assistive device, can mean greater independence and greater engagement in physical therapy, through like cause and effect therapy. And most importantly, something that’s a little overlooked — I think just the joy of play.”

CATCH includes students of all majors connected by a common passion to increase accessibility

and apply innovation and creativity to something impactful. The club works to bridge the gap between engineering and community service, creating a space for UNC students to gain hands-on, real-world experience. No prior skills are needed to join.

Prior to CATCH’s partnerships, the toys largely came out of funding from the UNC Senate. Now, with SPAT’s use of 3D-printing, CATCH can also engineer client-based items at a lower cost to the club.

CATCH Chief Technical Officer Gavin Bauer is currently working to streamline the process of toy orders from start to finish, using a spreadsheet database where members can sign up for special projects based on their particular interests.

“We hope through this program that we will be able to extend our reach towards more complex accessibility designs and help meet more needs to the fullest extent,” Bauer said in an email statement to the The Daily Tar Heel.

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## CREATIVE WRITING

# SILS alumna Meredith Adamo authors successful debut novel

**‘Not Like Other Girls’ garners significant critical acclaim**

**By Megan Michaels**

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While browsing grocery store aisles, a UNC School of Information and Library Science alumna received an email from her agent requesting a full manuscript of her latest piece: “Not Like Other Girls.” Meredith Adamo wasn’t just studying books while she at UNC — she was writing one.

Adamo’s debut young adult mystery tells the story of a girl searching for her ex-best friend. The novel has garnered significant acclaim and it recently won the prestigious 2025 William C. Morris Debut Award. The book was also named a Chicago Public Library Best of the Best book, a BookPage Best Young Adult Book of 2024, a Southern Book Prize Young Readers Finalist and a May/June Kids’ Indie Next List pick. In May 2024, it was featured in Target’s YA Book Club.

But before the accolades, Adamo was just a kid who loved mysteries. She grew up reading the “Nancy Drew Mystery Stories” series and “The Adventures of Mary-Kate and Ashley.”

“I was always that kid in the classroom who, during recess, was not doing anything active and just reading on the side,” she said.

Adamo attended Wordsmith Workshops, a program designed to help aspiring writers get their stories published, in 2019. She said it changed her life.

“I remember reading through her first few sample pages and just thinking, ‘Damn. She can write,’” Beth Revis, published author and co-founder of Wordsmith Workshops, wrote in an email to The Daily Tar Heel.

Although she majored in English literature at Syracuse University, Alamo said she was scared to commit to creative writing, fearing the unpredictability of a writing career. Still, storytelling never left her mind. She emailed herself the

first idea for “Not Like Other Girls” in 2014. It would take nearly a decade before publication.

At UNC, Adamo said studying library science reshaped how she thought about young readers.

She said Sandra Hughes-Hassell, her advisor at UNC, taught a section in one of her children’s literature classes that really stuck with her. The course, she said, focused on counter-narratives and the importance for teens and children to see stories that contrast more dominant narratives to give voice to their own stories.

Adamo said Hughes-Hassell’s class and her time at SILS impacted the way she viewed her audience.

“I was thinking about teen readers in a totally different way,” Adamo said. “I was thinking about what it meant to have teens have access to books in their different communities. So it was informing the way that I was envisioning the reader on the other side of the book.”

One of the novel’s core themes — the “not like other girls” trope — was something Adamo said she wanted to subvert. This trope refers to female characters who portray themselves as different from their feminine peers based on their hobbies or interests, implying superiority or increased desirability for the character.

“I thought it would be a little funny to start a book where the main character thinks that, and then her arc is actually realizing that she’s just like other girls,” Adamo said.

When crafting the mystery, Adamo said she had sticky notes covering her walls in a design similar to a police suspect board. Despite the years of work, the reality of publication still took her by surprise.

She first spotted “Not Like Other Girls” on shelves at a Barnes & Noble after a powerlifting class in Durham.

“I just stood there frozen,” she said. “The people were so nice there, so I ended up talking to some of the employees, and they took a picture of me really sweaty and gross with it, and I got to sign them.”

Since her novel’s release, Adamo has visited local high schools, participated in book clubs and spoke to a creative writing class. She said it’s the messages from teen readers that mean the most to her.

“I’ve had some students come up to me and be like, ‘this felt like my life,’ and that is just such a surreal experience to hear especially from my target readership,” Adamo said. “It makes everything worth it.”

X: @dailytarheel



PHOTO COURTESY OF MEREDITH ADAMO

Meredith Adamo is the author of “Not Like Other Girls,” a young adult mystery novel about a girl searching for her ex-best friend.

## MEET-CUTES

# This Valentine’s Day, UNC couples reflect on love stories

**Partners celebrate the school that brought them together**

**By Sarayu Thondapu**

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Christian Avy and Jamie Krantz-Avy, alumni of the Hussman School of Journalism and Media, met on an unlikely place: Zoom.

Both were taking Media and Journalism 390: Special Skills in Mass Communication with professor Ryan Thornburg, during their final year at UNC. The class was then remote due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The class was assigned a data project where students split into pairs and chose a topic to analyze.

Avy and Krantz-Avy did not pair up, initially. However, they chose similar ideas. Since there was overlap, Thornburg suggested that their groups work together.

“That’s kind of how Jamie and I got to really connect,” Avy said.

Their first date was a long one, in which the two spent time talking and figuring out their future, what the other likes, how many kids they would want and whether they were a cat or dog person.

“I think we felt a really strong connection, so we were having these very deep conversations on that first date,” Krantz-Avy said.

On Oct. 6, 2024, Avy and Krantz-Avy got married, and Thornburg became a registered officiant for their wedding.

Due to Hurricane Helene, their wedding had to be rescheduled to this September 2025, but their respective families, friends and guests came together to help them organize a smaller ceremony in Charlotte so that the couple could still get married and enjoy their special day.

“I think in between all of the sorrow, you know, for the loss of life in the area and everything going on in western North Carolina,” Krantz-Avy said. “It ended up being a really beautiful day.”

Having Thornburg be a part of their wedding as an officiant was special for them.

X: @sarayuuu\_t

## EXPLAINER

# Order of The Golden Fleece: Behind the secrecy, unity and nomination process

**One of UNC’s oldest honor societies is accepting applications**

**By Regan Butler**

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The 2025 nomination window for the Order of The Golden Fleece, UNC’s oldest honor society, is open until Feb. 24. The group’s private operations create an air of mystique, but some members say it is to maintain campus unity, the Order’s founding purpose.

This year’s nominations are accepted through a Google Form and will be reviewed by the active Order in a confidential process.

The active Order is currently comprised of seven to eight undergraduate seniors, President Morgan Jordan said.

Those tapped by the Order are also among the namesakes of most campus buildings. UNC’s first chancellor, Robert B. House, and former UNC President Frank Porter Graham are notable past members.

## History of the Order

Founded in 1904, the Order is said to consist of campus leaders and changemakers, with the purpose

of fostering connections among different University groups.

Administration and graduate school leaders felt the need for a “unifying force which could cut across sectional boundaries and honor excellence in men wherever such a quality might show itself,” “History of the Golden Fleece,” 1903-1950, a book in the Wilson Special Collections Library stated.

Former UNC Dean Eben Alexander was a member of Skull and Bones, a similar society at Yale University, and wanted to implement such a group at UNC. After consulting Professor Horace Williams and Edward Kidder Graham, the organization took form.

Alexander was a professor of Greek language and literature at UNC and named the Order after the myth of Jason and the Golden Fleece.

The Greek myth describes the hero, Jason, retrieving the fleece from a faraway land in order to reclaim his throne. On this quest, Jason sailed a ship called the Argo while leading a band of warriors, the Argonauts.

Members of the Order are deemed “Argonauts,” and their president is called the “Jason.”

## Secrecy in the name of unity

Nick Herman, author of “The Order of the Golden Fleece at Chapel



DTH DESIGN/CARRIE-ANNE ROGERS

Photos courtesy of DTH Archives, Adobe Stock and “Order of the Golden Fleece at Chapel Hill 1904-2004: America’s First Honor Society for University Leaders.”

Hill,” 1904-2004, was tapped in 1977.

Herman said examples of frequent members include the chancellor, student body president, editor-in-chief of The DTH and distinguished scholars and athletes.

As the current Jason, Jordan said she leads weekly meetings where the active Order discusses campus matters.

Herman said that after discussions, Order members quietly influence their respective campus spheres with their agreed-upon goals in mind.

it was a complete orchestrated mastermind of a process.”

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## Unity by diversity and inclusion

The Order’s current Heel Life page says, “Individuals are eligible for induction regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, ability, religion, or any other identity.”

In 1962, Julius Levonne Chambers was the first Black Argonaut welcomed to the Order. The first four female Argonauts, Deborah Ann Potter, Mary Norris Preyer, Katherine Carlton McAdams and Ann E. Queen, joined 10 years later in 1972.

Faison said that while the Order was not as diverse in 1904, the group’s value of inclusivity has been there since the beginning.

The Order’s founding members wanted to connect students representing branches of campus life including: writing, debating, scholarship, publications, athletics, religious life, social life and professional and graduate student life. This was diverse for the time, Faison said.

Noble said that as a Hispanic woman, representation means a lot to her. She said it feels good that the Order recognizes women and minorities for their leadership.

X: @reganxbutler



# City & State

## The Daily Tar Heel

ATHLETICS

### OHS student named outstanding swimmer at statewide championship

Luke Roman is first male from the school to win award

By Isabella Pala  
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Luke Roman, an Orange High School senior, made history at the 3A North Carolina High School Athletic Association Swimming & Diving State Championships for being named the first male outstanding swimmer from OHS. Roman won the 200 and 500 yard freestyle events and brought the men's relay team home for their first championship win. Roman said there was no better feeling than hitting that wall and realizing he won. "All I wanted to do was win and bring it home for the team, for those guys on that relay, and for everyone that supported me my entire career, as I knew this was my last high school race ever, and it truly was an emotional moment," Roman said. For Chris and Lisa Roman, his parents, Roman being named the MVP was no surprise.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ISABELLE PALA

Luke Roman swims at the State Championship meet in Cary, N.C., at the Triangle Aquatic Center on Feb. 7.

Roman has been swimming for about as long as he's been walking. From the age of 18 months, he took private lessons until he was old enough to join a swim team, which he did at 7-years-old. Since then, he has been involved in the Hillsborough Aquatic Club Swim

Team, and his high school's team. "I can't think of anybody on our team that's more deserving," Ron Geib, head coach of the OHS swim team, said. Despite swimming six days a week year-round — sometimes multiple times a day — Roman has maintained a four-plus GPA and is adamant about keeping his grades strong, Chris Roman said. Brian Parker, Roman's AP Calculus teacher, said that Roman is not only gifted in the classroom, but is also gracious. "The thing that I will remember about him is just he was always so grateful for the extra little things that I tried to do for them," Parker said. While Roman has been swimming his whole life, Geib said last year's state championship marked a turning point for Roman. Roman won the 500 meter freestyle event last year, something that Geib said requires an incredible amount of mental toughness as well as athleticism. As Roman's coach, Geib said Roman has always had potential and been thoughtful about his craft. "I've seen him grow [to] a maturity level, being able to

visualize the race that he wants to have and actually be able to do the work and practice," Geib said. Roman became the captain of OHS's swim team his junior year. Geib said he became a role model for many of his teammates, encouraging the kids that were new to swimming and celebrating their successes as much as he would his own. Roman's teammate Ayden Twiddy said that Roman is good at pumping people up and making sure everyone on the team is ready to go. "He knows how to make people laugh, and I think he's [the] best teammate anybody could probably ask for," Twiddy said. Both Chris and Lisa Roman said they are incredibly proud of Roman's success as a swimmer, but they are most proud of the kind of person and teammate he is. "He's a good kid. He cares about everybody, girls, guys, the whole team," Lisa Roman said. "It doesn't matter. He just cares so much about everyone and never lets anybody feel left out. Ever."

X: @dthcitystate

### Hillsborough lynching victims memorialized by County

Continued from Page 1

Just a few days after the barn burnings, 19-year-old Washington Morrow and 20-year-old Nelson Morrow, the eldest sons of the Morrow family, were charged and jailed on charges of arson related to the barn burnings. On Aug. 7, 1869, Washington and Nelson Morrow were pulled out of their cells in the Orange County Jail by a mob of about 100 Ku Klux Klan members. The mob questioned them but, no longer believing they were responsible for the barn burnings, eventually let the men go. However, as the two ran away from the klan, the klansmen shot a barrage of bullets at the men, striking Washington Morrow in his thigh. Nelson Morrow escaped unhurt, but Washington Morrow passed away shortly after from his injuries. Two months after the lynching of Washington Morrow, in October 1869, the klan attacked Thomas Jefferson and Lucinda Morrow's home, as well as that of Daniel and Sally Morrow, Lucinda Morrow's brother and sister-in-law, respectively. Thomas Jefferson Morrow and Daniel Morrow were

dragged to nearby woods and hung from trees. Lucinda Morrow reported that a note was pinned to Thomas Jefferson Morrow's chest reading, "All barn-burners, all women offenders, we Kuklux hang by the neck till they are dead, dead, dead." After spending six months in jail, Nelson Morrow was acquitted of the arson charge for burning the barns. Now, the OCCRC is commemorating the lives of the Morrow men and enlightening the community on Orange County's history through the historical marker, Rep. Renée Price (D-Caswell, Orange), the organization's co-chair, said. She said the historical marker was developed in collaboration with the Equal Justice Initiative, a national organization working to memorialize victims of racial violence with historical markers throughout the United States with its Community Remembrance Project. The unveiling ceremony featured musical performances from Brown Sugar Strings and the Jones Grove Missionary Baptist Church. Speakers included Brandon McRae, the senior digital analyst at EJI, Natalie Rodriguez, the associate director of

the NC African American Heritage Commission and Glenn Hinson, a professor at UNC leading the Descendants Project. Sonny Kelly, the ceremony's keynote presenter and the CEO of Legacy Heirs Productions, took on the role of Nelson Morrow during part of his speech. "By the grace of God, I was acquitted six months later," Kelly said, embodying Nelson Morrow. "Took me six months to get justice. Took them twenty-four hours to get they injustice from my brother's body." At the end of the ceremony, Price revealed the historical marker. The marker is situated behind the Orange County Historical Courthouse at the corner of East Margaret Lane and Court Street. "Because of the county's failure to act [in 1869], it's very appropriate that the marker be on the site of the county courthouse — particularly the old courthouse, which was the courthouse that existed in 1869 — to demonstrate that the county now accepts responsibility," Sally Greene, a member of the Orange County Board of County Commissioners, said. On one side of the marker, facing the Orange County Historical



DTH/CONNOR RUESCH

A plaque memorializing three men who were lynched in 1869 is unveiled at the Orange County Historic Court House on Saturday, Feb. 15

Courthouse, is text describing the lynching of Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Daniel Morrow. The other side of the marker, written by EJI, features information about the history of lynching in the United States. "I hope that through information [and] understanding, that we all can

acknowledge the past as we work in the present, and to try to understand our shared history so that we have a good foundation for a brighter future where people are able to work together in unity and in community," Price said.

X: @dthcitystate

GOVERNMENT

### Chapel Hill Transit hosts discussion on its civil rights past

Event held in honor of Black History Month, CHT's 50th anniversary

By Vinh Le  
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Community members gathered at the Chapel Hill Public Library on Monday night for a fireside chat discussing the history of Chapel Hill Transit and its connections to the Town's civil rights history. The event was held in honor of Black History Month and Chapel Hill Transit's 50th anniversary. The event, hosted by Chapel Hill Transit, featured former Mayor

Howard Lee, former Carrboro Town Council member Braxton Foushee, former Chapel Hill Town Council member Gerry Cohen and current Chapel Hill Transit Director Brian Litchfield. Lee, Chapel Hill's first Black mayor, described how his campaign for mayor was fueled by discrimination when buying a home in a white neighborhood at the time. He said he ran for mayor not thinking he would win. "I couldn't get the [Town Council] to pass an open housing ordinance, so I decided the best way to do it was to at least run and force whoever challenged me in that race to commit to passing an open housing ordinance so there would be no further discrimination," he said.

After winning the mayoral election, Lee said he kept his campaign promise and built upon the bus service that the University of North Carolina had already provided for students that were not allowed to have their vehicles. Litchfield said that the University is one of Chapel Hill Transit's biggest partners. Despite the support for the bus system from the University, Lee experienced pushback from the community and the state government. "We decided it would be a good idea to show the people what it would be like to have buses running on the street from Chapel Hill," Lee said. After making a deal with the mayor of Atlanta, Lee was able to acquire five used buses to demonstrate the potential of this system. However,

Lee said the buses broke down consistently, leading the community to vote against a funding referendum that would have continued the service. Cohen said that during the vote for the transit system funding referendum, the Northside precinct, a predominantly Black neighborhood in Orange County, had the highest support for the referendum. Lee mentioned that the Black population in West Chapel Hill had trouble traveling to Eastgate, the only shopping center in town at the time. Anissa McLendon, a Chapel Hill community member who attended the fireside chat, founded a free summer program for Black middle school students that exposes them to the arts and STEM fields.

"A lot of times when we're doing tours or having field trips to the campus, we use it," McLendon said, referring to Chapel Hill Transit. For students in her program, the bus system provides a way to visit educational spaces that may not have been easily accessible otherwise. As the discussion concluded, panelists and community members reflected on the significance of Chapel Hill Transit's history and its connection to civil rights. "No matter how much people criticize or put pressure on you, stand your ground and keep pushing forward," Lee said.

X: @dthcitystate



MILITARY

# Fort Liberty changed back to Fort Bragg

Name now honors  
medaled World  
War II veteran

By Jessica Hudnut  
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Last week, United States Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth renamed North Carolina's Fort Liberty back to Fort Bragg, but honoring a different veteran than the fort's original namesake.

Private First Class Roland Bragg, the fort's new namesake, was a toxic gas handler during World War II. He received several medals, including the Silver Star and Purple Heart for his service, Major Travis Shaw said in an email statement.

In the memorandum, Hegseth wrote that Roland Bragg commandeered an enemy ambulance and drove 20 miles to transport a fellow soldier to an allied hospital.

"That's right," Hegseth said after signing the memorandum. "Bragg is back."

Fort Bragg was originally named for slaveowner and Confederate General Braxton Bragg. In 2022, the Congressional Naming Commission renamed the base to Fort Liberty. The Commission was formed in 2021 in an effort to remove names that commemorate the Confederate States of America. The recent change follows a campaign promise by President Donald Trump to restore the name Fort Bragg.

Fort Bragg was originally established to train soldiers during World War I. The fort houses approximately 57,000 military personnel, 11,000 civilian employees and 23,000 family members and is known as "The Home of the Airborne and Special Operations."



PHOTO COURTESY OF TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Fort Liberty was changed back to Fort Bragg, sparking conversation on name recognition and commemoration.

UNC College Republicans President Matthew Trott said he is pleased with the decision to restore the name "Bragg" to the fort. He said he believes the name has become disassociated with Braxton Bragg himself and is instead representative of the community on base.

"I'm happy that the name has been restored so that those people can have a better sense of home again," Trott said.

Trott also said he supports the decision to name the base after a more modern military figure because he believes more people have connections to World War II than to the Civil War.

Naming Commission Vice Chair and retired US Army Brigadier General Ty Seidule said Hegseth's decision is still in keeping with the commission's goal not to commemorate Confederates.

"We're not changing the history. We're changing who we commemorate because commemoration reflects our values."

Ty Seidule  
naming commission vice chair and retired U.S. Army brigadier general

"I think that Secretary Hegseth, while he's following the letter of the law, I don't think that this was the spirit of the law that Congress created," Seidule said.

He said that when the the fort's name was changed from Bragg to Liberty in 2022, there were suggestions to rename the fort to honor other people named Bragg, but the Commission chose not to pursue that option.

"We thought that it should be fully changed, and so we did not entertain any of the potential of keeping the name and just changing the person because we didn't think that was within the spirit of what Congress told us to do," Seidule said. Seidule said he grew up revering Robert E. Lee and believing in the idea of the "lost cause," which was

the belief that the Confederates were wrong but ultimately fought for an honorable cause. Now, he said, he sees things differently.

"They fought for slavery, and they tried to destroy this country that we love, that I fought for, to create a slave Republic," Seidule said.

Stephenson Distinguished Professor Joseph Glatthaar said that, although some claim this is not the case, the Civil War was ultimately fought over slavery.

"Personally, I find it offensive that we name things after individuals who led soldiers who killed United States soldiers," Glatthaar said. "I have a real problem with that."

Seidule said that many people feel like renaming efforts erase Confederate history, but he said that isn't the case.

"We're not changing the history," Seidule said. "We're changing who we commemorate because commemoration reflects our values."

Seidule said that, at the time Braxton Bragg was chosen as the fort's namesake, the South was a "racial police state" in which African Americans were politically oppressed by the segregationist Democratic Party.

Retired Colonel David Moore, son of Fort Moore namesakes Hal and Julie Moore, said he was not very supportive of the renaming when he first heard about it. He lived at Fort Moore (then Fort Benning) as a child and said he has a strong emotional connection to the base. However, he said he became more supportive of the idea the more he discussed it with his family.

"If future generations can draw a better lesson, can create better value through the naming of a base that reflects what we want our army to be and what we want the values of soldiers to be, then that's where my attitude changes," Moore said.

X: @dthcitystate

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

# Republicans introduce bills to remove concealed carry permit

N.C. would be 30th  
state to recognize  
constituional carry

By Quinn Groves  
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North Carolina Republicans in the General Assembly introduced bills in the House and Senate to remove permit requirements to conceal carry weapons.

Under current state law, people in North Carolina can purchase a handgun at 21-years-old and apply for a concealed carry permit at their local sheriff's office. To receive a permit, applicants must also pass a safety and training course.

If passed, these bills would allow U.S. citizens with no felonies and no mental illness-related charges, over the age of 18, to conceal carry a weapon.

When traveling across state lines, N.C. gun owners would still need a permit to conceal carry or abide by other state's laws. Currently, 27 states recognize N.C. concealed carry permits.

N. C. Sen. Graig Meyer (D-Caswell, Orange, Person) said there are significant concerns with the bill in the senate. For example, he said it's helpful for

law enforcement to know if they are approaching a registered gun owner or not — something a permit would help with.

Meyer said he opposes the bill and thinks it will make the state less safe overall.

"We have a responsibility to make sure that people's right to bear arms is done in a way that creates an environment that is least likely to lead to unnecessary death, and this goes in the wrong direction," Meyer said. "[I am] not in support of the bill, I plan to vote against it, and I want to live in a society where people are less likely to shoot each other than they are today."

In a written statement, the Wake County Sheriff's Office said they

will continue to work with law enforcement partners to enforce the current laws.

"We support the Second Amendment and the right for individuals to lawfully purchase, bear, and possess firearms. We encourage all to practice responsible and safe firearm storage," the office said.

House Bill 5 — named the "NC Constitutional Carry Act" — would also allow individuals over 18 to carry a concealed weapon without a permit. The difference between the two bills is that H.B. 5 would allow elected officials



DTH FILE/CRISHAUN HARDY

The North Carolina State Legislative Building sits in Raleigh, N.C., photographed in 2019.

to conceal carry weapons in legislative buildings and offices in Raleigh.

Paul Valone, president of Grass Roots North Carolina, said he supports both of the proposed bills, which if passed would make North Carolina the 30th state to recognize constitutional carry.

"Twenty-nine states have now adopted some version of constitutional carry or permit list carry in exactly none of those states have the dire predictions of the gun control people come true," Valone said.

Senate Bill 50 passed an initial reading last week and was

advanced to a rules committee. One of S.B. 50's sponsors is N.C. Sen. Phil Berger (R-Guilford, Rockingham), who opposed a similar bill in the 2023-24 legislative session. H.B. 5 was also advanced to a rules committee.

X: @dthcitystate



# Lifestyle

CHOREOGRAPHY

## ‘The March’ dance experiments with time and unity

Carolina Performing Arts hosted collaborative two-night show

By **Temiloluwa Alagbe**  
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On Saturday, Carolina Performing Arts hosted “The March,” a two-night dance performance by Big Dance Theater at the CURRENT ArtSpace.

Founded in 1991, the New York City-based dance company gave a multi-sensory experience to the Chapel Hill community, with three pieces choreographed by choreographers Tendayi Kuumba, Donna Uchizono and Annie-B Parson, the artistic director and co-founder for the company.

The 75-minute show encompassed three performance pieces: “Big small feat,” “NYSea” and “The Oath,” each one experimenting with unison movement and the passage of time. All eleven dancers were women.

Each of the choreographers has their own dance collective, but the show served as a collaborative project. The idea for “The March” has been in the works for over 20 years, and Parson invited Uchizono and Kuumba to help bring the show to life.

Uchizono’s “Big small feat” was the first piece performed. Donning teal metallic mini dresses, the routine encompassed intricate, sharp movements of dancer’s arms, legs and feet in a unified circle.

“I was going to make something, not for unison’s sake, but something that was really hard to do in unison,” Uchizono said. “It was like an intergenerational village of women who were coming together doing this very difficult task as a village.”

“NYSea,” the second piece performed and choreographed by Kuumba, was a way to visually embody one’s journey through the unison of bodies and the ripples of life, she said. It started with a solo dancer in the middle of the stage,

pretending to scribble something on the floor. The other dancers joined, interacting with rigorous, spacious execution of their upper bodies.

“It’s around the idea of just taking your time,” Kuumba said. “It’s important to take a moment, take your time to figure out where you fit in this world, where you fit in this life, where you fit in your journey beyond instead of forcing it, and how we can learn from others.”

The Atlanta native also sang the soundtrack “U.F.O.” live to accompany parts of the piece; Kuumba and her partner Greg Parnell are on the album under the name UFlyMothership.

Shay Stanley, a UNC alumna and working actor, said she greatly enjoyed the performance and that her favorite piece was “Big small feat.”

“I liked that it was a little offbeat,” she said. “Not in musicality, but in this sort of energy. It was a little strange, and [there were] little fun parts of it. There’s one part where they’re holding their hand up, and then they cock it to the side. The movement was very disjointed in a way that was really interesting.”

The last dance, “The Oath,” left room for the viewer’s imagination, with a telling of what Parson described as the history of time. The dancers performed wearing white backpacks and cowboy hats in various sequences.

“It starts at the beginning of time, and it ends in heaven — I would say in the future/heaven, ambiguously,” Parson said. “So, it starts in the primeval forest and it moves through duality. All the different ideas I have around how we create autonomy, individuality, ego, hierarchies, into groups, unison, intimidating techniques.”

Stanley said that after watching “The March,” she was inspired to create more art.

“I think it was a great way to spend a Saturday night,” Stanley said. “And I think it’s just fun to get out and see the art that people are making.”

X: [@dthlifestyle](#)

SELF-EXPRESSION

## Depop ambassadors on campus uplift sustainable fashion



DTH DESIGN/SUSANNA MANN

### Organizers combine marketing and love for creativity

By **Jaya Nadella**  
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The e-commerce company known as Depop connects fashionable buyers and sellers daily, housing secondhand pieces, that can fit into anyone’s personal style. For UNC students Savannah Matthews and Ava West, Depop is not just a site to find cute clothes, but a space to combine their marketing expertise and love for fashion to bring creative visions to life.

Matthews and West are both college ambassadors for Depop, meaning they are in charge of programming events for the community that promote the platform. Matthews, who is a media and journalism major, applied and got chosen for the role after hearing about the ambassador program through a notification on the app. Additionally, last semester she was selected to be an intern with the company this upcoming summer.

Matthews was extremely excited to get the chance to work with the company, having been a longtime user of Depop since 2019. She still

frequently finds new items on the platform to expand her personal style.

“I just love that about fashion,” she said. “It’s so personalized. With the hyper individualization that’s happening so much, especially online, thrifting is a great way to convey that through your fashion, because it’s the best way to find something representative of yourself that nobody else will have.”

Depop’s environmentally conscious focus is something that she said resonated with her, as a student interested in working with fashion companies with sustainable practices.

Each semester, ambassadors are required to organize eight events, also called activations. Activations include fun thrift swaps and seminars educating community members about sustainable wardrobes.

Much of the planning is left to the artistic freedom of the ambassadors, and as such, Matthews has organized collaborations with a variety of other clubs on campus. One past event collaborated with UNC’s environmental service fraternity, Epsilon Eta. In upcycling workshops, participants repurposed materials through sewing and patchwork.

Balancing ambassador duties with academic responsibilities can sometimes prove to be a challenge. However, for West, who is a double

major in advertising and public relations and communications, it has helped reinforce important skills like time management and adaptability.

“It’s just nice to be working with a brand that I’ve loved for so long, and they recognize me and my work and also my work ethic,” she said. “The perks: I get to work with clubs on campus and meet people that I’ve never met before, obviously, especially like-minded people that are into fashion.”

Matthews said that Depop can be a great platform for beginners to first get involved in thrifting, making the experience slightly less intimidating and the task of finding good items less daunting.

“Oftentimes the best item is going to be literally, like, hidden in the back corner, you’ve really got to look for it,” Matthews said. “And I think that Depop kind of eliminates the ‘looking around the corners’ aspect of it.”

Veronica Cheaz, who is an environmental science major at UNC, also enjoys buying from Depop sellers due to the convenience it provides and the fact that it’s secondhand.

“If you’re like me, you’re a college student who doesn’t have much access to transportation off campus,” Cheaz said. “It’s online, and if you prioritize buying things secondhand it’s really useful because I don’t like buying things from fast fashion sites or from these larger brands.”

Both Matthews and West encourage UNC students to try out Depop and look out for more events to come on campus.

“I’d love to connect with more people, create more events and celebrate sustainability and fashion,” Matthews said.

*Editor’s Note: Ava West is currently a member of the Audience Engagement Desk. Veronica Cheaz is a former member of the Design Desk.*

X: [@dthlifestyle](#)

GALLERY

## Fiber art exhibit journeys through women’s history

Over 600 different fabrics used throughout project

By **Caroline King**  
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On Friday, attendees at the opening of the “Eve’s Journey — Stepping on the Snake” exhibition traveled the world without ever leaving The ArtsCenter in Carrboro.

Naida Koraly picked up fiber art as a retirement hobby, but it grew into a 10 year project resulting in this exhibition, which consists of 38 handmade textile artworks. They depict fictional scenes based on women’s history spanning continents and centuries.

Koraly designed it as an immersive storyline following two sisters, starting with the biblical story of Eve and Lilith, and wrote an accompanying book titled “Stories, Stitches & Sisters.”

The book is a collection of letters between fictional sisters in the art pieces from “Eve’s Journey.” While the stories are fiction, they are based



DTH/JULIAN MICHAEL SWART

Naida Koraly’s collection “Eve Journey Stepping on The Snake” is displayed on Sunday, Feb. 16 at The ArtsCenter in Carrboro.

on Koraly’s research into the various represented countries’ cultures.

The works are placed along the gallery wall inside The ArtsCenter in chronological order. So as viewers walk down the hallway, they can see the tale of the sisters’ stories play out, starting before 4000 BCE and ending

in an imagined future after 2040 CE.

Koraly said that all too often, women’s history is erased and is presented in an unbalanced and one-dimensional way showing only women’s suffering.

Both the artwork and her accompanying book share stories of

tragedy and triumph. The duality of life’s ups and downs are encapsulated in Koraly’s mantra “ah, life.” She said sometimes people say “ah, life” in a negative tone when bad things happen, but it can also be a positive sigh of relief when things are going well.

Koraly hides her mantra and signature somewhere in the stitches of each work. Sometimes she said even she cannot locate the hidden words between the multitude of layers and colors. She used over 600 different fabrics throughout the whole project.

Sauda Zahra, a quilter who directed “The Portraits of Resistance and Resilience Exhibition,” which is right next to “Eve’s Journey” at The ArtsCenter, attended the opening reception on Friday evening. As a fiber artist herself, she said she recognized how tedious the process must have been and described the pieces as magical.

“At first, I thought it was a painting,” Zahra said. “But then as I got closer, I realized that this is fabric. They are just magnificent.”

Caroline Haller, the gallery manager at The ArtsCenter, said she intentionally selected two fiber art

exhibitions with Women’s History Month in mind.

“I think that fabric is this kind of medium that is really historically tied to women and domestic pursuits,” Haller said. “And so therefore, in my opinion, fabric art has kind of been overlooked or not seen as art in that sense.”

Koraly highlighted the ancient connection between women and fabric art forms in “Eve’s Journey” as one of the framed pieces features a gákti, traditional formal wear of Sámi, an Indigenous group in Sweden.

Laci Mitchiner, a neuroscience and English student at UNC, is a volunteer at The ArtsCenter. She said while walking through the artwork, she learned about several different cultures.

“It’s important to make sure that when you’re celebrating Women’s History Month, you’re celebrating people from all over the world,” Mitchiner said.

“Eve’s Journey” will be on display at The ArtsCenter in Carrboro until April 7.

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DTH/HAYDON BODE

Niharika Ghoshal poses for a portrait outside Carroll Hall on Monday, Feb. 17. Ghoshal was invited by the Rivere Agency to watch the FILIPINXT show.

# Students see the industry in action at New York Fashion Week

Matthews said she bolstered her skills in journalism throughout the experience, and it was rewarding to pave her own way with no personal connection to the event or its members.

“With us both being from the Chapel Hill area, it’s not a hub for fashion because we’re not in a big city,” Nyiri said. “So just simply being in New York City in itself was a networking opportunity for us.”

They also had a chance to meet with Renata D’Agrella Kenen, a UNC alum and a fashion influencer.

Both students said that their most memorable experience of the week was spotting Orion Carloto, their favorite influencer.

On the last day of their time in New York, Nyiri and Matthews saw a crowd of influencers and celebrities entering the Sandy Liang show.

“I think that it’s a huge influence, especially with style inspiration,” Matthews said when asked about NYFW’s impact. “The whole off-duty model aesthetic has come from fashion weeks and it’s such a hub of creativity as well.”

Niharika Ghoshal, a senior majoring in sociology and global studies, was another student that attended NYFW. She has volunteered at Paris Fashion Week before, but it was her first time attending NYFW.

Ghoshal’s interest and passion for fashion encouraged her to visit the city. She said

that she thought NYFW was a great way to network with people in the industry.

Ghoshal specifically focuses on fashion as a cultural force, uplifting minorities and minority voices. On the Saturday of her stay, she was invited as a guest to a runway show from FILIPINXT, a design company for travelwear based in the Philippines.

Ghoshal said she had a special moment interviewing designer Jasmine Baac, founder of Bagoyan.

“She said that the clothes were made by Indigenous women from the province she’s from, called Coalinga,” Ghoshal said. “I thought that was special because as an Indian woman, I try to stay rooted as well, so I think

it was nice speaking to her and seeing meaningful stories being reflected in their work.”

While Nyiri said it’s a

little cliché, fashion is her primary outlet of expression. It’s an outlet for expression for anyone if they choose to utilize it, she said.

“I feel like a lot of people know that fashion is always there for you but are intimidated or scared about what people think and then once you stop caring about that, you can customize your own person, a little character, and that’s what I do every day,” Nyiri said.

“Just simply being in New York City in itself was a networking opportunity for us.”

Sofia Nyiri

UNC sophomore and New York Fashion Week attendee

X: @dthlifestyle



DTH/HAYDON BODE

Sofia Nyiri and Savannah Matthews pose for a creative portrait highlighting their style on Monday, Feb. 17.



# NORTH CAROLINA'S BIGGEST SLICE

30-INCH PIES  
HUGE SLICES  
CHZ / PEP / VEG

OPEN LATE

WEDNESDAY  
THURSDAY  
FRIDAY  
SATURDAY  
6 P.M. - 3 A.M.

CLIP THIS  
COUPON FOR \$5  
OFF A WHOLE PIE



# Opinion

COLUMN

## Communities embrace a changing Americana aesthetic

By Salma Mourad  
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In the past weeks, Americana has flooded our screens. Kendrick Lamar’s Super Bowl performance featured an all-Black cast of backup dancers adorned in the colors of the American flag, while Samuel L. Jackson dressed like Uncle Sam. A week before that, Beyoncé’s “COWBOY CARTER” dominated the Grammys by winning Best Country Album and Album of the Year, cementing 2024 as the year of Americana: from cowboy chaps to the American flag.

In her song “YA YA,” Beyoncé sings “Whole lotta red in that white and blue,” framing her engagement with Americana as a reclamation — one that highlights the integral contributions Black Americans have made to the nation. In this way, reclaiming the genre of Americana becomes a microcosm of reclaiming the identity and history of the nation itself.

From the literal construction of the country to its cultural legacy, what better way to assert this history than by singing in genres and dressing in styles that are undeniably American? This reclamation has also extended queer artists like Chappell Roan and Ethel Cain embracing proudly rural and Midwestern aesthetics.

When Black and queer artists wrap themselves in the American flag as a statement of belonging, they engage in a nuanced act of resistance. Yet this same flag has historically been wielded to erase their contributions. Can this reinvention truly challenge the exclusionary history it seeks to overturn, or does it risk reinforcing the very structures it aims to disrupt?

While country and folk music are regarded as quintessentially American, hip-hop and jazz — genres



DTH DESIGN/SARAH FENWICK

undeniably born and bred in America — do not receive the same nationalistic reverence. The difference lies in perception: country music has been marketed as a “white” genre, while jazz and hip-hop remain deeply tied to their Black origins.

America’s current political climate is rife with efforts to erase the country’s history, particularly its harms against marginalized communities. At the same time, acts of division have become increasingly prominent.

The targeting of DEI programs has explicitly resulted in stripping acknowledgement of this history on the federal level, the Department of Defense discontinued Black History Month observances and slashed programs aimed at recruiting Black professionals and the National Institutes of Health removed exhibits celebrating women and scientists of color. These actions make reclaiming Americana not just an aesthetic choice but a cultural and political statement.

While Americana’s resurgence carries political importance, if they are

not paired with active engagement — reading, learning and reckoning with the history behind these symbols — at what point does the political meaning dissolve, leaving only a camo hat?

Artistic expression can spark important political conversations, but it can also dilute the message. Listening to country music is not inherently revolutionary — engaging in the political sphere, resisting historical erasure and learning about those who shaped this aesthetic and history — these actions hold salience. Despite its problems, reclamation remains useful. Reclaimers can say “I am just as American as anyone else, and I can listen to this music and wear these clothes, and I am not rendered less American for it.”

Americana increasingly reflects the people who created it. There’s a lot of red in our red, white and blue; we must remember those whose blood is in the foundations of America and remember them each time we see the flag.

X: @dthopinion

COLUMN

## UNC needs to look beyond combustion for its fueling future

By Gray Hamby  
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The Chapel Hill community has wrestled in recent weeks with the University’s decision to introduce fuel pellets to the local cogeneration plant as a substitute for coal. These pellets, made of plastic and paper waste, are a low-carbon and renewable alternative to traditional fossil fuels. But this source holds new potential risks for the emissions and poses health concerns to the community, highlighting the need to move past combustion options toward clean renewables in the University’s sustainability efforts.

The fuel pellets are classified by the Environmental Protection Agency as non-hazardous, however the extent of their health risks is largely unknown. The pellets are up to 40 percent plastic waste, meaning that burning them would emit unregulated and pervasive Per-polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), a type of chemical with potential health risks, into our local air.

Though the fuel offers a reduction in carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide and sulfuric acid emissions, they pose new threats to the public health of the Chapel Hill community through other gasses, like carbon monoxide and volatile organic compounds. While

the alternative fuel offers a chance for the University to reduce its carbon footprint, this singular metric is not a substantial assessment of its impact.

A renewable fuel source is not guaranteed to be environmentally friendly or a sustainable option for the future. If UNC wants to build a long term solution for their energy use — the University targets net-zero carbon emissions by 2040 — they need to be looking for options that aren’t based on combustion.

Solar energy could be the answer UNC needs. North Carolina has significant solar power already, and in the last 10 years there’s been a 43 percent reduction in the price of solar energy statewide, making it a much more affordable option for individual ratepayers and a solid potential source for UNC’s demand.

In the past, the University has introduced solar projects through the Renewable Energy Special Projects Committee. Through the allocation of four dollars from each student’s tuition, the student-run committee implements clean energy solutions on campus.

Both Curtis Media Center and Morrison Residence Hall have commercial solar panels installed on their roofs. Morrison’s 172 panels provide the energy to heat the

building’s water and Curtis’s panels provide 40 percent of the building’s energy. They represent the potential solar power has for our campus and its ability to account for a large portion of the University’s energy demands.

The percentage of the University’s electricity which comes from the cogeneration facility’s coal or fuel pellet combustion is about 13 percent. Other major universities across the United States have shifted a significant portion of their energy use from fossil fuels to clean renewables like wind and solar. . Given the success of other comparable projects, like that at Johns Hopkins, there is high potential for UNC to invest in solar energy as a solution to their emission reduction goals.

For the University to achieve net-zero carbon in the coming years, renewables must play a part in their energy plans. However, fuel options like the pellets have complex impacts. In its efforts to build a cleaner energy future, UNC needs to move away from combustion energy sources in favor of reliable, clean and sustainable energy. Solar is just one of the answers to this problem and has the potential to supplement reliance on coal and fuel pellets.

X: @dthopinion

OP-ED

## It’s been time for Southern unions

Here in the South, unions are a distant concept. Only 5 percent of Southern workers belong to a union. We’ve long branded our region as a union-free zone and courted big corporations, promising that we’ll keep unions out of our factories, mines and plants.

That’s why it’s big news that Amazon workers in Garner are voting on their union this week.

All Southern states are “right-to-work” states — meaning workers have the right to choose whether or not they are a part of a union. At first blush, this sounds good to me. I generally want more, not less, freedom and choice in my life. But the impact is that workers in RTW states are paid 3.2 percent less than workers with similar characteristics. “Right-to-work” has always been a cruel euphemism, providing no rights and doing nothing to guarantee work.

A union, however, does both of these things. Unionized workers have support and help when their bosses misuse their power. Since non-union workers are hired “at will,” they can be fired for any reason. A union worker can only be terminated for “just cause.” Unions secure your right to work far better than any RTW state does.

Corporate profits reached an all-time high last year in the U.S., reaching \$3.1 trillion in the second quarter of 2024. Surely that’s enough to pass more to their workers? But instead of raises, working people’s real wages, in terms of purchasing power, have remained stagnant since 1978.

North Carolina ranks 52nd, because Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. are included, as the worst place in the U.S. to work. That’s where the “right-to-work” lands us: A tipped wage of \$2.13/hour and no heat safety standards for the many North Carolinians who do outside work.

Workers in Garner’s Amazon RDU1 facility are taking all of this head-on by citing safety, work conditions and pay as their top concerns they are voting on their union this week. If successful, Amazon’s RDU1 would be the first to unionize in the South. Amazon’s fear is palpable: in December they fired a lead organizer in the unionization effort and later had other organizers arrested while they served food and promoted the union outside the building.

I’m cheering the workers on. When workers anywhere win protections and wage increases, it impacts the market all across the state. I know it’s an uphill battle to unionize in a place like North Carolina, especially against a powerful company like Amazon, but I figure if they win, we all win.

— Gwen Frisbie-Fulton: writer, mother and organizer.  
This column is syndicated by Beacon Media.

## Tar Heel Verses

Sponsored monthly by Bob Young ‘57 in honor of his wife, Pat, and the 1957 UNC National Championship basketball team.

### Days Stained With Ink

By Daniel Anderson

The pen dragged across the page,  
each stroke a reminder of what I couldn’t get right.  
My hand cramped, the paper smudged,  
and I wanted to throw it all away.  
But she was there, calm and steady,  
like the moon over restless waters  
“Try again,” she said softly  
as if the mess on paper didn’t matter.  
I grew frustrated and longed for relief but  
Somewhere in the repetition,  
in the endless loops and shaky lines,  
I began to notice the way her laugh  
sparked warmth in the room  
“Not perfect,” she’d say, tilting her head,  
“But neither am I. And still, we write.”  
Day after day, ink-stained my fingertips,  
paper curled beneath my restless grip.  
Oh, how I miss those days  
When I was reminded mistakes meant progress  
and life was about growing instead of perfection  
The days when I awoke to the smell of biscuits  
That, in a way, was her signature  
when home was more than just walls,  
when love was feeling instead of remembering  
Oh, how I miss those days

Daniel Anderson is from Memphis, Tennessee. He is a football player at UNC. A Computer Science major, he has a newfound interest in poetry because it allows individuals to express themselves in abstract ways. He enjoys nature and delicious food.



COLUMN

# Let's stop pigeonholing business majors

By Anna Gage  
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It's hard to pin down who the business majors really are, because they go by so many names. There are the assured-admits, who were accepted into UNC's business school, Kenan-Flagler, before their years at UNC began. Pre-business students, who are fulfilling their prerequisites to complete a business school application after their freshman year, and a small group of students who claim that their major is the "investment banking track." As if someone fresh out of high school even really knows what investment banking is.

Unlike being a pre-medical or pre-law student, being a pre-business student doesn't merely involve completing a list of prerequisites: it's a lifestyle. They must involve themselves in all possible business extracurriculars, to increase their chances of making it to Wall Street, or at the very least, to the hallowed halls of Kenan-Flagler.

From the age of 18 these students are being asked to give up ambitions of working in other industries and solely focus on building their business expertise.

These expectations are not the fault of pre-business majors. Kenan-Flagler's admission standards ask for student work experience and extra-curricular involvement

which "correlate to career focus," driving students to abandon all other passions to join business frats, participate in consulting case competitions and complete investment pitch decks.

The skills Kenan-Flagler asks of their potential admits include "effective communication skills," "analytical skills," "intellectual curiosity," "community service" and "strength of character." There is no doubt that these qualifications would make for an excellent business major. However, these are attributes students can acquire doing a ton of other activities unrelated to business.

Being a writer for The Daily Tar Heel has trained my intellectual curiosity. My strength of character develops every time I have a challenging conversation with a friend. And my analytical skills grow every time I have to analyze a complex case study with my Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl team. So why are students being told these are skills they should only be acquiring in business-oriented activities?

"Being a pre-business student doesn't merely involve completing a list of prerequisites: it's a lifestyle."

Anna Gage  
Columnist

By providing students time during their university years to investigate different subjects and learn outside their majors, they can guarantee that business is really what they want to spend the



DTH DESIGN/MARIA CHETTOOR

next 40 years doing. And if it is? Great! There are so many ways to get involved in business endeavors at UNC.

However, if students realize that it isn't business alone that they want to pursue, they should be able and encouraged to involve themselves in as many extracurriculars as possible to gain knowledge of various industries.

Beyond this, UNC is doing itself a disservice by training students to all look the same on paper. It becomes much more challenging to stand out as a Kenan-Flagler graduate in a competitive job market when everyone is encouraged to rush the same

business frats and interview for the 180 Consulting Club.

While I'd love to say that Kenan-Flagler should change their admissions standards, I recognize that this is unlikely. However, to take pressure off of students to decide their career at such a young age and guarantee that business majors are truly ready to work, it may be a necessary step for the school.

So maybe the next time a prospective business major puts on a suit to rush an academic fraternity, perhaps they'll find themselves rushing an environmental frat instead of a business one. They'll be expanding their skillset and making themselves a more interesting applicant, without lowering their chances of getting into Kenan-Flagler.

X: @dthopinion

COLUMN

# The revival of '60s folk should come as no surprise

By Elisa Troncoso  
Columnist  
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Recently, I spoke to a woman who remembered vividly a concert she had once attended. It was 1965, she was fourteen years old and her father had taken her to see Bob Dylan and Joan Baez play at the Reynolds Coliseum in Raleigh on March 19. She didn't remember the exact date or even the year, but she remembered his performance of "Mr. Tambourine Man," a song that had not yet been released, and how she ran up to the stage at the end of the show and snatched the coffee mugs Dylan and Baez had been drinking from.

This kind of fanaticism toward these legends of the folk movement is recognizable to many young people my age, who have witnessed a revival of the music and messages of Bob Dylan in the last few years that amounts to idol worship. And why wouldn't it? The world young people are coming into now bears a great resemblance to the violent and riotous one of the '60s, and it's a great comfort to look back to those who once charted a path through similar disaster.

The decade that my friend had been thrust into as an adolescent was a chaotic one: by the time she saw Dylan and Baez play in Raleigh, President John F. Kennedy had been both elected and subsequently assassinated, bombing campaigns had begun in Vietnam, the Cold War and Space Race were in full swing and widespread civil rights movements had roiled the country for over a decade. Only eleven days before the show, the first major deployment of American troops landed in South Vietnam, initiating the ground war that would result in over a million deaths over the next ten years.



DTH DESIGN/CARRIE-ANNE ROGERS

Photo courtesy of Adobe Stock.

No wonder the blossoming folk movement appealed to the youth of America — what else was there to reach for? The music of Dylan, Baez and others like them pointed to a different world, a better one, motivated by equality, solidarity and class awareness. In his earliest albums, Dylan raged at "masters of war," the scions and war hawks and weapons manufacturers that sat back and watched the young people of America fight wars they could never win.

When he wrote these lyrics he was almost certainly thinking of the Vietnam War, but my generation hears these lyrics, with their universal poignancy, and thinks of a year of genocide in Gaza and the fragile ceasefire that has done little to stymie those who would see all of the

Palestinian territories seized and razed. The many students arrested in the thousands of pro-Palestinian protests across college campuses last spring should take comfort in knowing that more than a generation before, young people were arrested for protesting another unjust and racist war. And they did so with the music of the folk movement alongside them. Baez herself expressed support for the college movements in a May 2024 interview, praising them for their similarity to '60s anti-war movements.

It's no surprise that a Bob Dylan biopic starring Gen Z heartthrob Timothée Chalamet made over \$100 million in the U.S. alone, despite its 2.5 hour length, nor should it come as a shock that two of Dylan's

earliest albums — "Like a Rolling Stone" and "Highway 61 Revisited" — reentered the U.K. album charts early this year, almost certainly boosted by streams from young people. It's easy to ascribe this popularity to the release of the film alone and disregard political factors, but there has been perhaps no time since the '60s where a revival of such an explicitly political movement would resonate quite so powerfully.

In a time where the power of the war machine feels all-consuming, what could be more magnetic than a cultural movement that believed in radical peace?

OP-ED

## Rekindling passion for DNC's future

As we watch President Donald Trump's second administration steamroll the American people, members of the Democratic National Committee, like myself, have a choice: we can wring our hands and watch decades of gains for voting and human rights evaporate, or we can remember who we are and who suffers when we fail to communicate our platform and priorities effectively.

Real people from all walks of life are harmed by bad policy, and plenty of North Carolinians are hurting right now.

Western North Carolina rightfully captured the nation's heart after Hurricane Helene indiscriminately claimed lives, swept away homes and leveled entire communities. The souls affected have since witnessed their personal tragedies spun into rallying cries to dismantle both the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Life is complicated, and there are no quick fixes. We have to do the work, however long that takes.

North Carolinians see their cost of living continuing to rise unchecked, fueling fears of displacement among the most marginalized. Meanwhile, Republicans are baselessly challenging the legitimate reelection of Democrat Allison Riggs as an Associate Justice on the North Carolina Supreme Court and maneuvering to reduce the state's early-voting window.

The bold new leadership we elected Feb. 1 was a solid first step toward rekindling party passion, including the installation of Ken Martin, who has served as chairman of the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor (DFL) Party since 2011 and as president of the Association of State Democratic Chairs since 2017, as our new chair.

Now, we get to work.

First, the DNC needs to address budget transparency. Are our expenditures moving the needle toward a more democratic future, or are we just throwing money at the same problems with no measurable return on investment? We must open the books at every meeting and pore over those details.

Second, we must address the appointments of at-large members to the DNC. Unlike myself, who was elected by my state like 200 other members, some at-large appointments reward high-level donors, lobbyists and leaders of various affiliated groups with memberships, stripping chairs of the flexibility needed to identify and target prospective members whose skills, influence or connections better plug regional or statewide gaps. While many at-large appointments bring a wealth of experience and talent that cannot be matched, others raise questions, and we need to address this blind process that overrides input from rank-and-file committee members.

Finally, DNC messaging should center the underlying economic anxiety impacting all voters, along with championing social crusades. It needs to be an "and/and." It's time to speak passionately and scream fire from the gut. It's time to get hungry.

— John Verdejo, a DNC executive committee member

X: @elisatcabello



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL | N.C. STATE

UNC survives Wolfpack with bench's late-game performance

Grace Townsend, Lanie Grant secured win in fourth quarter

By Cade Shoemaker  
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As Grace Townsend dribbled down the court with the game in her hands, head coach Courtney Banghart called to her from the bench. "Go!" she shouted.

The one word was enough confirmation for Townsend to attack her defender. She made a crossover move to get to the rim before drawing a foul in North Carolina's final possession.

"I just gotta go," Townsend said. "That was my only thought."

Townsend made both ensuing free throws to lift the Tar Heels past N.C. State in the final five seconds of the game.

Townsend's game-winning trip to the line — along with four fourth-quarter points from first-year guard Lanie Grant — helped No. 12 North Carolina defeat No. 10 N.C. State, 66-65. It was UNC's bench that stepped up after graduate froward Alyssa Ustby went to the locker room due to an apparent lower-body injury. The bench scored the game's last six points and forced a stop to defeat the Wolfpack as time expired.

"We don't have [Ustby], but then you look around at who you have," Banghart said before later adding, "They found a way."

Ustby hobbled to the locker room three minutes after tip-off and never returned. The Tar Heels lost their leading scorer and rebounder before she attempted a shot.

In her absence, starters Reniya Kelly, Maria Gakdeng and Lexi Donarksi combined for 43 points. It was Kelly's 23-point performance that spearheaded the charge.

"We hate State," Kelly said. "I had to come out and play my best and my hardest."



DTH/HEATHER DIEHL

The UNC women's basketball team celebrates their win against N.C. State at Carmichael Arena on Sunday, Feb. 16. UNC won 66-65.

But late in the fourth quarter — after Donarski tweaked her ankle and starting junior guard Indya Nivar fouled out — UNC looked to its bench for someone to step up. Enter Grant.

She played a season-high 33 minutes in place of Ustby and handled the ball for much of the second half. And when the Tar Heels trailed by five, with a minute and a half remaining, Grant took over.

She began by muscling her way through the lane before drawing a shooting foul. She made both resulting free throws.

Grant then ran back on defense, got in position and drew a charge on the following Wolfpack possession. When she got the ball back, she had no hesitation driving to the basket, this time finishing a layup in the congested paint.

When Banghart was asked what stuck out to her about Grant's fourth-quarter heroics, she opted for a word to describe her character instead.

"Fearlessness," Banghart said.

Grant's four-point flurry brought North Carolina within one point of the Wolfpack. After getting a stop on the other end,

UNC had an opportunity to take the lead with 11.7 seconds left.

Then came Townsend.

In a play designed to use Kelly and her 23 points as a decoy, Banghart intended for it to be in Townsend's hands all the way.

The head coach stationed herself next to the referee, ready to call a timeout if the guard got in trouble. The Richmond transfer drove downhill and produced the free throws as a result.

"When I took my second dribble after the [hesitation] I knew there was no chance [of passing]," Townsend said.

It was six straight points from Grant and Townsend that lifted UNC into the lead over the final two minutes. North Carolina was then able to seal the game with a defensive stop, preventing N.C. State from even attempting a game-winner.

Despite the many setbacks, it wasn't enough to prevent North Carolina from clawing its way back to its first top-10 win of the season, thanks to the bench's fourth quarter performance.

X: [@cadeshoemaker23](#)

Tar Heels win despite playing without Ustby

Continued from Page 1

bench and left with only a slight hobble to the locker room.

Head coach Courtney Banghart didn't know what happened. No one on the North Carolina bench really noticed. It was only when the Tar Heels became a victim on the glass that Ustby's teammates recognized her absence.

"I was like 'Wait, why are we not rebounding the ball?'" sophomore guard Reniya Kelly said. "Because Alyssa's not in."

UNC was without Ustby — who is only 41 boards away from becoming North Carolina's all-time leading rebounder — for the remainder of the game. Without the clean-up machine, North Carolina was outrebounded by N.C. State by a margin of 20. Nonetheless, UNC prevailed over the Wolfpack, 66-65, in Carmichael Arena on Sunday afternoon in a last-second finish, mostly due to the use of a bigger lineup which made key plays down the stretch.

Banghart only learned at halftime that Ustby — who she describes as North Carolina's heart and soul — would not be returning to the bench for the rest of the game.

"Alyssa's been here for five years," Banghart said. "I don't really play a lot of possessions without Alyssa Ustby."

And without UNC's leading rebounder, who grabs more than nine boards per game, the Tar Heels faced a daunting challenge on the glass.

So how did an undermanned and undersized North Carolina squad defeat an N.C. State team that outrebounded UNC 55-35? And grabbed 18 offensive rebounds with 18 second chance points? And ranks second in the ACC in rebounds per game?

The victory was in part thanks to North Carolina's choice to go with a bigger lineup.

When junior guard Indya Nivar was assessed her third foul only a minute-and-a-half into the second half, Banghart replaced her with first-year center Blanca Thomas. Senior center Maria Gakdeng was already on the court, so UNC was running a lineup with the 6-foot-3-inch Gakdeng and 6-foot-5-inch Thomas.

During the nearly five-minute stretch with Nivar on the bench, North Carolina was much more competitive on the glass and was only outrebounded by three. The Tar Heels held onto at least a seven-point lead for that duration.

UNC also looked to implement some high-low action, with Thomas at the top of the key and Gakdeng deep in the paint.

UNC also went with that larger lineup of Thomas and Gakdeng to close the game. With UNC ahead 66-65, it was Thomas guarding the inbounder and Gakdeng and Kelly on the baseline trap, which ultimately led to a game-deciding Wolfpack turnover.

UNC also countered State's physicality by aggressively going into the bodies of Wolfpack defenders. N.C. State led the nation in fewest fouls per game at 11.9 per contest but committed 20 through the game on Sunday, tying its season-high for fouls in a game. The Tar Heels shot 16 total free throws.

"They don't give you points in the paint," Banghart said. "They don't give you free throws. They just don't."

Lineups, aggressive play and going without your star player make a difference in the outcome of any given game. But so does grit, which the Tar Heels had when they needed it most.

"How resilient they are is not something you drop on the board," Banghart said, later adding, "With a lot going against them, they just kept going."

X: [@meganosmithh](#)

OPENING WEEKEND

UNC baseball uses small ball identity to down Texas Tech

Diamond Heels swept the series with a 4-2 win on Saturday

By Harry Crowther  
Senior Writer  
[sports@dailytarheel.com](mailto:sports@dailytarheel.com)

Two measly ground balls. They won't show up on the highlight reel, but they manufactured a run to put North Carolina up 4-1 over Texas Tech in the fourth inning of game three. Not measly at all.

Small ball. Not the identity of last year's UNC baseball team that made it all the way to the College World Series.

The 2024 Tar Heels set a program record with 115 home runs as a team, which ranked 12th in the nation. UNC did not have a weekend series without a home run last season.

On opening weekend against Texas Tech, the 2025 Diamond Heels did not hit a single long ball in 27 innings. The different ways of scoring runs helped North Carolina sweep a three-game series against the Red Raiders at Boshamer Stadium. The Tar Heels have

now won their opening series in 11 straight seasons.

"Stringing hits together," graduate first baseman Hunter Stokely said after the Tar Heels took both games of a doubleheader on Friday. "Don't try to do too much. Just let the next guy behind you — you have trust in him — get base hits, and he's gonna knock you in."

In game three on Saturday, the Tar Heels led Texas Tech, 3-1, entering the bottom of the fourth inning.

Senior second baseman Jackson Van De Brake ripped a double down the left field line to start the frame. On second base with nobody out, the team needed that run to score. That's what the Tar Heels did.

Stokely hit a ground ball to the right side to advance Van De Brake to third. With the Red Raiders' infield playing back early in the game, junior centerfielder Kane Kepley followed with another ground ball to second to drive in the run.

Two ground balls. A scrappy run that gave junior right-handed pitcher Matthew Matthijs extra cushion when he found trouble in the ninth after the Red Raiders scored late. The Tar

Heels held on to take game three, 4-2. Without that extra run, things could have been different.

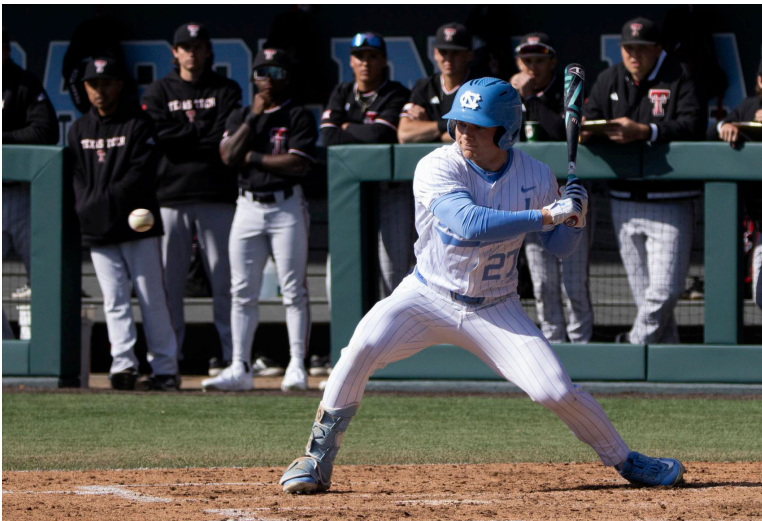
"That's the type of team we have," head coach Scott Forbes said. "A really unselfish group. That's a good sign."

UNC batted .333 with runners on base during a 5-1 victory in game one. They hit .444 with runners in scoring position in game two, an 8-3 win. And for the series, the Tar Heels were 5-for-7 with a runner on third and less than two outs.

The first inning on Saturday was another example of North Carolina's station-to-station offense on opening weekend. Kepley led off with a line drive single up the middle on the first pitch he saw. Graduate right fielder Tyson Bass and sophomore catcher Luke Stevenson both worked walks. Then, junior left fielder Rom Kellis laced a ball into center for a two-RBI single. Kellis recorded three doubles in the series. Graduate designated hitter Sam Angelo plated a third run in the frame with a sacrifice fly.

"You want a dynamic offense, one that can create runs," Forbes said.

Kepley led the team with five hits in the three games. The Liberty



DTH/OLIVIA PAUL

UNC junior outfielder Kane Kepley (27) hits the ball during the baseball game against Texas Tech on Friday, Feb. 14. UNC won 8-3.

University transfer replaced all-time home run hitter Vance Honeycutt in the leadoff spot, who hit 28 home runs last season.

Both Kepley and Forbes said the homers will come. Forbes said the guys were joking about it with hitting coach Jesse Wierzbicki in the locker room.

The Tar Heels played good team baseball to start the season. Long balls, when they start to fly, will only help.

"When our lineup is doing that, the small things right — we're gonna be a really scary team to play," Kepley said.

X: [@dthsports](#)



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# Special Projects The Daily Tar Heel

COLUMN

## We're players too: Behind the BOT project

By Special Projects Desk

[enterprisedesk@dailytarheel.com](mailto:enterprisedesk@dailytarheel.com)

UNC's Board of Trustees is no stranger to controversy.

Just last month, UNC System President Peter Hans issued a memo on the BOT's overreach into University athletics, stating that trustees "appear to act independently of their campus's administration in matters squarely within the responsibility of the chancellor."

But the Board's power grab is not limited to sports.

Within the last decade the Board has proposed directing D&I funds to police expansion, accelerated a School of Civic Life and Leadership without faculty input, denied civil rights journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones tenure and tried to house Silent Sam, a Confederate monument, within a \$5.3 million center on campus.

We know the actions and words of the trustees echo around our community, but we started this project to delve into what else they do. In many ways, the stories in this series are an effort to fill in our own blind spots. They range from large questions — like what is the connection between North Carolina's state government and the Board, and the state legislature, accountable for how it has governed UNC. While the news cycle has moved on from many of the Board's significant decisions, we, as reporters, have not. Though their bylaws call them an advisory board, few systems exist to check their power, which is where this project aims to increase transparency.

Along with answering our own questions this project is also full of stories that have the goal of holding the Board, and the state legislature, accountable for how it has governed UNC. While the news cycle has moved on from many of the Board's significant decisions, we, as reporters, have not. Though their bylaws call them an advisory board, few systems exist to check their power, which is where this project aims to increase transparency.



DTH DESIGN/HELAINA-ROSE BALL

The title of our project isn't an accusation — it's built on themes we've come across in our months of reporting and research. Strategy

and tactical choices are crucial to management and important characteristics of an advisory board. That said, there have been times where

the trustees have acted more like players in a game than administrators shaping our education.

The student body president serves as an ex officio member of the BOT — but how can one representative reflect the positions of over 30,000 students? Though the University receives state and federal funds, ultimately the institution relies on our tuition dollars, and more importantly, defines our futures. We too are stakeholders in the University, and major decisions by the Board should reflect our perspectives, needs and interests.

It is our responsibility as journalists, but more importantly as community members, to remember, historicize and reflect on their actions, not just when their statements receive attention.

X: @dailytarheel

### POLICY CHANGES

## Trustees raise concerns with DEI practices in hiring

Even before ban, BOT members took issue with programs

By Dania Al Hadeethi

Special Projects Writer  
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and Twumasi Duah-Mensah

Special Projects Writer

UNC Trustee Marty Kotis said he has worked to identify and challenge various DEI programs within the University for their legality and unfairness, since he joined the Board of Trustees.

The UNC Systems' "Policy on Diversity and Inclusion" was adopted into the UNC Policy Manual in September 2019. The policy stood steadfast until the Board of Governors repealed it in May 2024, replacing it with a section entitled "Equality Within the University of North Carolina."

For the five years that the aforementioned D&I policy existed, pre-existing programs to increase diversity and equity were expanded, and new initiatives added. Even before the cut, some members of the Board of Trustees took issue with many of those programs, specifically those that implemented D&I in hiring.

Toby Posel, a junior studying history and organizer with TransparUNCy, said he thinks University administration is overturning DEI to impose a specific cultural agenda.

"I think you will get a lot of rhetorical obfuscation and sleight of hand," Posel said. "On the part of, whether its Peter Hans the System president, leading members of the Board of Governors or the Board of Trustees, who will cloak their efforts in the language of neutrality, merit and nondiscrimination."

### Establishment of DEI

Deb Aikat, an associate professor in UNC's Hussman School of Journalism and Media, said that DEI was implemented at UNC in layers, beginning with the civil rights movement in the 1960s and '70s.

"We have gone through the evolution," Aikat said. "So anybody trying to wipe out diversity is trying to wipe out years and years of years and years of work."



DTH DESIGN/AUBREY WORD

Posel said DEI and affirmative action are inherently connected. He added that it is important to promote college admission of people from historically marginalized backgrounds in order to promote diversity on the campus, especially considering University's history of using labor of enslaved people and the land of Indigenous people.

"I think if you are to take an honest look at that history, it presents you with very clear moral obligations," Posel said. "The fruits of world-class higher education should be accessible to the people that were disadvantaged by that process."

Aikat said that starting in the 2000s, there were widespread commitments to diversity, and institutions used targeted hiring.

One example at UNC was the Valuing Inclusion To Attain Excellence or VITAE program, which was run out of the Provost's office. The VITAE program, previously known as the targeted hire program, was explicitly designed to attract faculty from underrepresented groups for tenure track positions.

Aikat explained that the murder of George Floyd and the increase in popularity of the Black Lives Matter movement prompted many campuses and corporations to start diversity initiatives by establishing officers and trainings.

On Aug. 1, 2020, former Dean of the Hussman School Susan King sent a memo to former Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz analyzing the school's strengths and weaknesses with regard to structural racism. In the formal address, King called for a renewed

commitment to diversity that went beyond the school's previous plans.

A year later, the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications conducted a review of the Hussman School's performance in its resolution on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and social justice.

It found the school out of compliance and voted to downgrade its accreditation in 2022.

### Hiring and compelled speech

Kotis said he came across the letter from King, and it seemed problematic to him because it had an action item to increase staff from underrepresented groups by five percent.

"It appeared that they were outlining how they would choose candidates or bring them in based on criteria other than merit and looking at racial or gender demographics," Kotis said.

The BOG passed a system-wide ban on compelled speech in February 2023. The policy prevented University representatives from requiring faculty or job applicants to make statements that require attesting to or affirming beliefs about matters of contemporary political debate or social action as part of these processes.

Louis Pérez, professor of history at UNC, said that there was a time when applicants applying for jobs or grants had to write statements on how they are pursuing equity, diversity and inclusion. Perez said that banning compelled speech is a part of the same exclusionary practice as banning DEI.

"What we are seeing now is a wave of reaction which is part of a larger

wave of reaction that's sweeping the country," Pérez said.

In March 2023, Kotis sent an email to Preyer taking issue with a question about DEI that the Kenan-Flagler Business School asked on its hiring application for a dean.

The question read "Please describe the steps you have taken to increase diversity, equity and inclusion in your current or recent leadership role. What outcomes were achieved as a result of your efforts?"

In his email, Kotis said the business school claimed it cleared the question with Human Resource, when he raised concerns about it. Kotis told The DTH that the business school had not cleared the question with UNC System Human Resources.

Kotis also raised concerns about aspects of the VITAE program. Kotis later said that problems may arise when a program targets and hires through a program like VITAE.

"I've heard commentary in various searches that candidates' gender or race were mentioned as reasons why someone should be in a certain pool that advances," Kotis said in one of the 2023 emails. "We need better policies and procedures in place to prevent discrimination and compelled speech."

Kotis said one of the first motions he brought as a trustee was a nondiscrimination resolution similar to the one the BOT passed on July 28, 2023, which eliminated the consideration of race and ethnicity in hiring. Trustee Perrin Jones proposed an earlier version of the resolution in July.

On June 30, 2023, Leah Cox, formerly the vice provost for equity and inclusion, emailed Provost Chris Clemens that she had left the VITAE program out of her annual D&I report "since we are making some changes." The following summer, in an email to deans and senior associate academic deans, Clemens announced that the VITAE program would be discontinued because it no longer complied with University policy.

In an email statement, UNC Media Relations said Clemens was referring to the UNC System's repeal of its DEI policy.

### Rhetoric and impact

In February 2024, a coalition of campus groups hosted a lecture by Jonathan Haidt, a social psychologist

and researcher at New York University. At the event, Haidt said that when you focus on identity, you lose academic excellence, and that the way diversity is implemented now cannot be reconciled with excellence or honesty.

In an email from Doug Monroe to trustees John Preyer, Marty Kotis, Ramsey White and Perrin Jones, Monroe wrote that Haidt being at the event shows "the impact of what they do."

In response, Jones thanked Monroe for bringing speakers of Haidt's caliber, and said he is hopeful the organizations that coordinated the event, along with the School for Civic Life and Leadership, will lead the nation in "combating identity politics, DEI and other encroachments on our civil society."

Posel said positioning DEI as oppositional to academic excellence is dangerous.

"To put those things in opposition to each other, to say that intelligence or academic achievement is somehow incompatible with programs of racial diversity, is to be blind to our historical obligations, and it's to be offensively dismissive of the things minorities and historically disadvantaged groups bring to our campus," Posel said.

Kotis said his concerns about DEI are more in the realm of its legality and potential for discrimination. He was particularly focused on the problems with DEI in hiring.

"You're not allowed to discriminate," Kotis said. "There's no allowance for discrimination, especially in hiring. The question with admissions was the only open question out there with [Students for Fair Admissions.]"

Pérez said he didn't see DEI in hiring as discrimination, and rather valued the impact of diversity in faculty.

"I think it's super salutary to have people of diverse all kinds of origins and affiliations and conditions to be in the front of a classroom, up there, teaching students," Pérez said.

*Special Projects Editor Aisha Baiocchi contributed to the reporting of this story.*

X: @dailytarheel



# State ethics reports analyze members' finances

Continued from Page 1

Blaine the Differentiators LLC, was mentioned in the SEC's report because it previously held a contract with the BOG. According to the 2021 contract, the firm was paid \$15,000 a month for their "policy advice and assistance."

Trustee Blaine did not respond to request for comment by the time of publication.

## What constitutes a full-on conflict of interest?

According to a statement from University Media Relations, the BOG manages and enforces ethical standards according to their policy 200.7 on Duties, Responsibilities and Expectations of Board Members.

The policy states that trustees may not "act as a registered lobbyist on behalf of any lobbyist principal in any matter or issue that is adverse to the interests of the UNC System, a constituent

institution, or a University-affiliated organization."

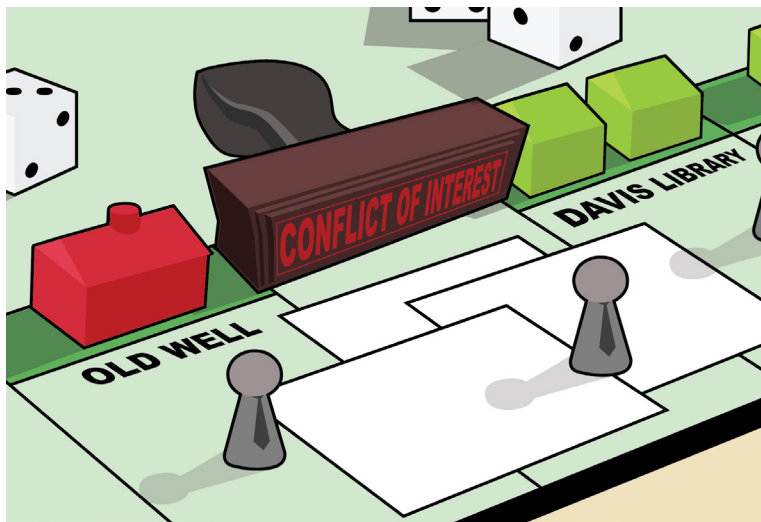
The SEI review noted that Patrick Ballantine is a registered lobbyist. According to his filings, he has registered for a number of principals. In 2022, 2023 and 2024, he was a principal for Sports Betting Alliance, which advocates for legalizing online sports gambling.

Neither Ballentine nor Turner responded to request for comment by the time of publication.

## Evaluation process

In a written statement, Kathleen Edwards, the executive director of the SEC, explained the process of potential conflict evaluation.

"The SEIs are reviewed by staff and then potential conflicts are noted based upon the disclosures made and the authority of the board in question," Edwards wrote. "The evaluation is intended as an initial overview of potential conflicts but



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is not an exhaustive list of conflicts which may arise during the board member's term."

The commission itself consists of eight members, four Republicans and four Democrats.

They evaluate the SEIs for over 300 boards every year. Edwards said they don't have the capacity to monitor each individual member for compliance.

"We do investigate complaints alleging violations of the Ethics

Act's conflict of interest standards and provide detailed advice when requested by officials under our jurisdiction on adhering to those standards," Edwards wrote.

Recently appointed Trustee Ritch Allison has filed an SEI, but the evaluation from the commission is not yet available. At the time of publication, there is still a vacant spot on the board left by Bradford Briner who was recently elected as the North Carolina State Treasurer.

Arbogast said conflicts of interests are not uncommon, or inherently problematic, they just need to be monitored.

"It's possible to have a potential conflict of interest, as long as the proper process is applied," he said. "That's the essence of it, and like any policy, it really depends upon execution."

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## GOVERNANCE

# UNC Board of Trustees has history of overstepping

BOT has acted outside of assigned role on several occasions

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Early last year, UNC System President Peter Hans sent a memo to the UNC Board of Trustees which transferred some of the BOT's existing powers to then-interim Chancellor Lee Roberts. In a memo this January, he reprimanded the board for their role in hiring new football head coach Bill Belichick.

"Instances continue to occur where members of the board appear to act independent of their campus's administration in matters squarely within the responsibility of the chancellor," Hans wrote.

According to their website, the BOT is intended to "promote the sound development of its institution" and advise the chancellor and the Board of Governors. However, the definitive bounds of their powers have been interpreted differently by different boards.

Michael Palm, an associate professor of communication and the president of the UNC American Association of University Professors chapter, said the powers of the BOT are unclear.

"The vagueness of their actual powers is something that they have taken advantage of," Palm said.

The Daily Tar Heel sent an email to UNC Media Relations requesting a statement outlining the powers and limitations of the BOT. Media Relations responded with a link to the BOT bylaws and the UNC Policy Manual and Code.

## Controversial personnel decisions

The Board of Trustees is tasked with the final review and approval process for all tenure appointments, as per Trustee Policies and Regulations Governing Academic Tenure.

According to Palm, these decisions are usually made long before the BOT gets to approve them.

In the summer of 2021, the BOT failed to grant tenure to Nikole Hannah-Jones, a Pulitzer prize-winning writer for The New York Times Magazine and investigative journalist known for her coverage of civil rights.



DTH DESIGN/JESSICA BAUGH

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media faculty issued a statement disapproving of the failure to grant Hannah-Jones tenure.

Hannah-Jones sparked backlash from conservative groups for her work on "The 1619 Project" for The New York Times Magazine, named for the year slavery began in the U.S. colonies.

Jay Smith, distinguished professor of history and president of the North Carolina AAUP conference, said the BOT had a political agenda and intervened in a dishonest process. He also said that it was a huge loss for the University.

"Our students suffered because boards got meddlesome in ways that were, if not unprecedented, nearly so, and just unhelpful and disrespectful of campus processes," Smith said.

Later that year, Chris Clemens, astronomy professor and outspoken conservative, was appointed as UNC's newest Provost.

The BOT approved Clemens' position in a closed session, voting on "action items," which did not name him or the provost position. When critics questioned if the process violated open meetings law, the board hosted an emergency meeting and approved Clemens again in a 12-1 vote. Then-Student Body President Lamar Richards was the only abstaining vote.

Prior to his appointment, then-chair of the faculty Mimi Chapman wrote an Op-Ed published in The Daily Tar Heel in which she claimed Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz was "under significant pressure to make a particular choice." She did not name Clemens in the Op-Ed.

## The University's public image

In 1792, the University's first BOT voted on where to build UNC. Since then, the BOT has played a role in shaping the direction of the University and creating what board chair John Preyer said is a path of "excellence."

Meekins later said that his concern stemmed from how the BOT resolution applied to the hiring of faculty and contractors.

"With my legal background, I'm familiar with the fact that there are still laws that we have to comply with with respect to minority hirings and contracting," said Meekins. "We didn't need to beat the Supreme Court to the punch."

## Protests on campus

Demonstrations against Silent Sam, a Confederate monument, date back to the 1960s.

The monument was torn down by protesters in August 2018. After its forced removal, the decision on what to do with the statue, and for the campus community, was left to the administration.

In December 2018, the BOT proposed \$5.3 million to house Silent Sam in a new campus museum with an estimated annual operating budget of \$800,000. The plan didn't happen.

In January 2019, former Chancellor Carol L. Folt announced her resignation and ordered the removal of Silent Sam's remaining pedestal and commemorative plaque. Three months earlier, she had issued an apology for the University's role in the "profound injustices of slavery."

"Had we been left alone to handle the Sam issue on our own, I think the statue would have been removed," Smith said. "Everybody would have been happy with that, and we would probably still have Carol Folt as our chancellor."

The Board responded to protesters' demands again when students demonstrated for Palestine last fall. Emails obtained by The Daily Tar Heel showed Board members raising concerns about these protests, specifically for students' use of controversial imagery and chanting in Arabic.

UNC Students for Justice in Palestine and other protesters began the Gaza Solidarity Encampment on Polk Place in April 2024. SJP demanded the University divest from Israel, be transparent on its investments and work with students, faculty and staff to ensure compliance.

The encampment remained active until April 30, when it was disbanded by law enforcement following a letter from Clemens and then-interim Chancellor Lee Roberts. Preyer criticized the Town of Chapel Hill for not supporting UNC with law enforcement at the protest, saying it was outrageous. He also said Roberts' actions in putting the U.S. flag back up was commendable, despite the fact that many community members raised

concerns about the police's use of force on April 30.

"I think all of us that have served on the Board for several years now have been hoping for this type of leadership," said Preyer. "We're delighted to see Chancellor Roberts out there leading by example."

## 'Openly hostile relationship'

Former Chancellor Holden Thorp said the Trustees were important advisors to him during his term. He said he found Hans' memos surprising.

"I never saw a situation where the president had to intervene, now twice, in writing, to tell the Trustees to mind their own business," Thorp said.

Trustee Vinay Patel said Hans' recent memo was appropriate because of the specific context of Belichick's hiring.

"We had board members that went out of their jurisdiction, doing things we're not supposed to be doing" Patel said. "At the end of the day, we have a call, we have a restriction on what we need to do."

Thorp said the BOT has often stopped the BOT from overstepping their roles and has substantially more power. Per the website, The Board of Governors is tasked with the planning, development and overall governance of the UNC System.

System-wide guidelines place the BOG over the BOT in terms of responsibility. Section 3.02 of the BOT bylaws says the BOT has powers and duties that comply with The Code of The University of North Carolina, state law, and as they are "defined and delegated by the Board of Governors."

Smith cited a statement from the AAUP and the American Association of Governing Boards in the 1960s that set a precedent that governing boards were supposed to refrain from intervening in University administration unless there was a genuine crisis. He said in recent years, that's changed.

Because the board mostly consists of those from non-educational backgrounds, Smith wondered if they feel freer to intervene on campus. He said the divide between community members and Trustees has a state-wide impact.

"The cultural separation between campus life on one hand and the formations received by members of the Board of Trustees is one of the things driving the openly hostile relationship between the board and higher ed in North Carolina," Smith said.

University Editor Ananya Cox and Special Projects writer Tuwumasi Duah-Mensah contributed reporting to this story.

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