



The Eastern Echo

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SNAP benefits pause amid federal government shutdown, Michigan food pantries offer hope

Gray Connor
Podcast Editor

As the federal shutdown brings uncertainty for households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, benefits, some local groups are filling in the need.

Approximately 13% of all Michigan households receive SNAP benefits. Across the state and country, SNAP recipients expect interruptions due to the federal shutdown.

However, two federal judges ruled Friday, Oct. 31, that the U.S. Department of Agriculture must continue supporting SNAP using contingency funds. It is not clear when or if the judges' ruling would reinstate benefits to SNAP recipients.

SNAP plays a fundamental role as a financial safety net for many American families. Local organizers and public officials have observed the pause in benefits straining the resources of local food banks and meal programs, many of which rely on donations and grants.

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced the state would use funds to mitigate some of the damage done by the pause, but that money accounts for only a fraction of the aid Michiganders receive daily.

Swoop's Pantry

Colton Ray, a second-year graduate student seeking a master of social work and graduate assistant for Swoop's Pantry, emphasized the impact the pantry has on Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti.

"Food pantries do a wonderful job at bridging the gap to food access and helping households and individuals

afford groceries," Ray said.

Swoop's Food Pantry was founded in 2015 and has since received 63,000 visits from community and student shoppers. In the last three years, Swoop's Food Pantry has reported an average of 1,600-1,700 annual shoppers, approximately 1 in every 7 students.

"We anticipate seeing an increase of folks who currently shop who will no longer be receiving benefits, along with those who don't currently use the pantry who will be seeking out additional resources," Ray said.

About 8% of pantry shoppers receive SNAP benefits, and 46.5% of all EMU students experience some level of food insecurity, Ray said.

"SNAP has a broad reach. It doesn't just affect those who receive aid, but it also stimulates the economy," Ray said. "When SNAP benefits are cut, it makes the job of food pantries a lot harder."

For those in need, students, faculty and recent alumni can receive Thanksgiving baskets and food items at Swoop's Pantry's Holiday Harvest event on Nov. 20, from 4-6 p.m. Located inside Pierce Hall, the pantry's regular hours are posted on their website.

SOS Community Services

SOS Community Services is a food distribution center with its own pantry that is open to anyone.

The pantry is open to shoppers on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and shoppers also have the option to place a pick-up order.

"We serve about 900 community members a month," said Amanda Kelly, SOS's food pantry coordinator.



The Swoop Pantry's staff celebrates Thanksgiving with their 2024 Holiday Harvest event by giving out holiday staples to shoppers of the pantry. Photo Courtesy of Swoop's Pantry

"We get our food from Food Gatherers. They provide the food to all the food pantries in Washtenaw County."

Food Gatherers is a food bank and food rescue program that serves 140 community partners across Washtenaw County. Throughout November, the organization plans to purchase more food and increase distributions to the pantries and partners they support in an effort to alleviate the impact felt by community members who access SNAP.

"They pick up perishables, bread and other items from grocery stores, often making the purchases out of their own pocket," Kelly said. "We would not be able to operate without them."

What happens next?

A statement released by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services said that SNAP benefits will remain paused throughout November. The statement came after the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service reported that the government shutdown would lead to an insufficient amount of funds left to distribute.

"The well has run dry," the USDA said in a statement.

On Sunday, Nov. 2, U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said SNAP benefits could be reinstated by Wednesday, Nov. 5.

The Michigan Department of Health

and Human Services encouraged those who qualify for SNAP benefits to reach out to their local MDHHS office with any questions and to check MI Bridges for further updates related to the pause.

Many local food pantries are helping with the community's pinch for groceries throughout the shutdown. The schedule and addresses of each pantry can be found on Food Gatherers' website at foodgatherers.org.

Those interested in donating to Swoop's Food Pantry or SOS Food Pantry can drop off donations at their facilities during operating hours. Swoop's also accepts clothing donations and other miscellaneous items.

Ypsilanti seeks renters for open seats on new Tenants' Rights Subcommittee



The Ypsilanti City Council meets in City Hall, located at 1 S. Huron St., Ypsilanti. Gabriella Payeur / The Eastern Echo

Matt Hodges
Staff Writer

The City of Ypsilanti is seeking three city renters who are willing to devote

their time to addressing tenant concerns and improving the quality of leased housing. The renters would become part of the city's newly created Ad-Hoc Tenants' Rights Subcommittee.

The expected responsibilities of the subcommittee members include creating new policies, communicating with landlords, preparing annual reports and engaging in public

discussion regarding rental issues. The subcommittee was created in September 2025.

City Council Member Amber Fellows, who represents Ward 3, sponsored the resolution that created the committee.

"We want people that are not only interested in having a perspective of being a renter in Ypsilanti but are also motivated around creating new conditions and rules for which tenants can have more say and self-determination in the renting process," Fellows said.

In the announcement the city posted about open applications for the Tenants' Rights Committee, city officials said the subcommittee's work will focus on advancing a goal in the city's master plan: "Anyone, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti."

The committee's creation comes soon after Michigan lawmakers announced the introduction of a statewide legislative package addressing tenants' rights. Michigan State House Rep. Jimmie Wilson Jr., who represents the 32nd District, including the city and Ypsilanti and Superior townships, was one of many sponsors of the bill.

"I would say there's momentum in some ways because the conditions have

gotten so bad," Fellows said. "I started in tenants' rights organizing back in 2015. We started putting pressure on the city in 2016-2017, and we're still talking about these issues now. Eviction rates have increased; homelessness has increased; housing insecurity is kind of common at this point. We have to change the organizing conditions so that people can stabilize and remain in their housing."

While the city's website states that residents should apply by Oct. 31, 2025, Fellows said that is not a hard deadline and that applications are still welcome in the coming days.

"EMU students that live on campus are certainly [welcome]," Fellows said. "I would love to have EMU representation. I think it would be a great way to get more engagement between the student population and the city."

The three tenant members will join six others on the committee, which will operate for three years. The current committee members include two city council members and a representative of each of four other agencies: YpsiBIG, a ballot initiative group; the city's Human Relations Commission; the Planning Commission; and the Sustainability Commission.

Interested residents can apply on the city of Ypsilanti's website.

The Eastern Echo

The Eastern Echo serves the Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti communities as an independent student-operated newspaper. Founded in 1881 as *The Normal News*, *The Eastern Echo* distributes weekly print editions on campus and throughout the surrounding Ypsilanti community during the fall and winter academic semesters. *The Eastern Echo* also publishes online year-round. Published content is subject to copyright and may not be reproduced without prior written consent of the newspaper.

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THE ECHO MISSION

The Eastern Echo informs the Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti communities by highlighting newsworthy content in a fair, accurate and timely manner.

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CORRECTIONS

At *The Eastern Echo*, we correct our mistakes. If we got it wrong, we want to make it right. Errors should be brought to the attention of the editor-in-chief by email: editor@easternecho.com.

Where to find the newest volume of *Cellar Roots*, EMU's Fine Arts and Literary Magazine:



CALENDAR

NOV 4

WonderFest

5-8 p.m.

Student Center — Ballroom

NOV 5

Board Game & Bites

11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Student Center — Lower Level Dining Room

NOV 6

Understanding Autocracy and the Fight Back

5:30-7 p.m.

Honors College — Lower Level Lounge

NOV 7

EMU Theatre presents "Home"

7-8:30 p.m.

Judy Sturgis Hill Building — Sponberg Theatre

NOV 8

EMU Football vs BGSU

Kickoff at 1 p.m.

Rynearson Stadium

NOV 9

Ann Arbor Music Instrument Swap 2025

From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Student Center

NOV 10

"Mr. Soul!" – A film presentation with AAAS

5-7:30 p.m.

Student Center — Room 352

WEATHER FORECAST

Tuesday, Nov. 4

High: 58 | Low: 40
Mostly Sunny/Mostly Cloudy



Wednesday, Nov. 5

High: 58 | Low: 34
*Mostly Cloudy/Mostly Clear



Thursday, Nov. 6

High: 54 | Low: 41
Mostly Sunny/Mostly Cloudy



Friday, Nov. 7

High: 59 | Low: 38
Rain Likely/Mostly Cloudy



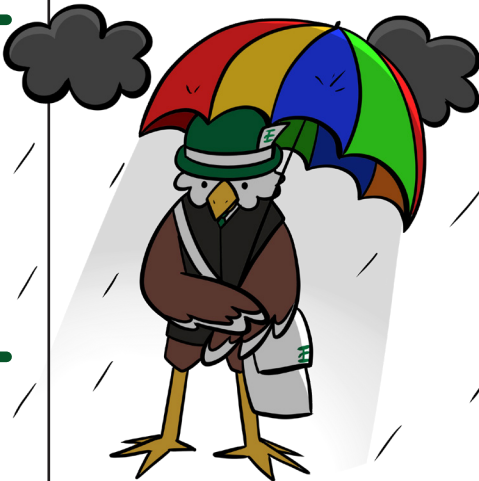
Saturday, Nov. 8

High: 55 | Low: N/A
*Partly sunny



*Chance of rain

Source:
The National Weather Service



Where to find The Eastern Echo:

Off Campus:

- Basil Babe, 701 W. Cross St.
- Ypsilanti Food Co-op, 312 N. River St.
- Golden Egg, 2660 Washtenaw Ave.

On Campus:

- Sherzer
- Rackham

Where to find our links:



Instagram @easternechoofficial



TikTok @theeasternecho



Facebook @ The Eastern Echo

CORE changes Multicultural Graduation to annual event, skips fall 2025 ceremony

Ameera Salman
News Editor

The Multicultural Graduation Celebration will transition to a once-a-year schedule, the Center of Race and Ethnicity announced in a statement on Instagram.

CORE said the next Multicultural Graduation Celebration will be held May 1, 2026. However, fall 2025 graduates will still have the opportunity to receive a complimentary cultural stole that can be worn at the campus-wide commencement in December 2025.

The MGC aims to celebrate Eastern Michigan University graduates and their cultures. As part of the celebration, registered graduates receive a stole of

their choosing and six tickets for guests.

Center Coordinator Sariah Metcalfe explained why the change was made.

“The staff that hosts MGC is very small, and we call upon volunteers from the campus community,” Metcalfe said. “It became really clear that two MGCs a year was not sustainable.”

Metcalfe acknowledged the disappointment and frustration students might feel and encouraged them to bring feedback to the Center.

“We do understand that this is a very significant transition to the expectations of the lineup for celebrating graduation,” Metcalfe said. “We are still open to hearing how that’s landing for folks via the CORE inbox, and we’re also on the third floor of the Student Center.”

In an effort to still celebrate 2025 summer and fall graduates, CORE is partnering with the LGBT Resource Center and the EMU Foundation for Cap and Gown Countdown.

The event will be held Dec. 9, 2025, in the Student Center Ballroom from 4:30-6 p.m. Graduating students will have the opportunity to decorate their caps, receive their cultural stoles from CORE, enjoy food and more.

Registered graduates received an email from CORE with information on requesting a cultural stole. Registration for the Cap and Gown Countdown can be found on GiveCampus.com. Students can reach out with questions about stoles or with other concerns to the office at core_emu@emich.edu.

What's the Move? Nov. 4-Nov. 10

Israel Shriki
Staff Writer

Looking for something interesting to do this week? Check out *The Eastern Echo’s* list of upcoming events in Ypsilanti.

Better Living Health Fair, Tuesday and Saturday, Nov. 4 and 8

The Ypsilanti District Library, with the University of Michigan Pharmacy School, Yes Rx and Lookout Project, will host two free events about health education.

Everyone in the community is welcome to participate.

The wellness meeting will be available twice this week, first on Tuesday, Nov. 4, from 1-3 p.m., and again on Saturday, Nov. 8, from 2-5:30 p.m.

YDL-Whittaker is located at 5577 Whittaker Road in Ypsilanti.

No prior registration is needed.

Overall EMU crime rates down in last 3 years, annual report shows

AnnaBelle Favre
News Reporter

Editor’s note: The following contains references to sexual violence that may be distressing for some readers.

Each fall, the Eastern Michigan University Police Department releases a fire and safety report with statistics from the past three years.

This year’s report states, “The 2025 Eastern Michigan University Annual Security and Fire Safety Report is provided to you as part of the University’s commitment to your safety on campus. The Annual Security and Fire Safety Report is made available to EMU students, employees, prospective students and prospective employees as required by the Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Act.”

The report begins with a welcome message from Eastern Michigan University Chief of Police Matthew Lige.

“The Eastern Michigan University Police Department (EMUPD) is committed to providing an inclusive environment for students to be inspired, for faculty and staff to inspire, and for the many visitors who enjoy the cultural, sporting and charity events to feel a sense of safety and security while on campus,” he said in the message.

This message also describes new services and programs implemented on campus such as the Code Blue emergency phones, approximately 500 cameras that can recognize guns and the new emergency app called Eagle Ready.

The report also thoroughly describes emergency notification systems, important contacts and phone numbers, evacuation procedures and system tests before listing the data from the past three years.

Here are a few statistics that stand out. The full report is available on the EMU police web page at www.emich.edu/police/index.



Graphs by AnnaBelle Favre

Violence

In the past three years, there have been zero cases of murder or manslaughter.

Aggravated assault is defined as “an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury.” This type of assault is usually accompanied by the use of a weapon and is likely to produce death or great bodily harm. There have been six reported cases of aggravated assault on campus in the past year, which is a slight decrease from 9 and 10 cases in 2022 and 2023, respectively.

Sexual offenses and domestic violence

Sexual offenses are some of the most numerous crimes at EMU. In 2024, there were 14 reported cases of rape on campus. This is a slight decrease from 2023’s 18 reported cases and 2022’s 19 reported cases. The report explains that “rape is defined as the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object,

or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.”

Fondling, defined as “the touching of the private parts of another person for the purposes of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental incapacity,” had a notable decrease in 2024. In 2022, there were ten reported cases of fondling, and in 2023, 12 cases were reported. However, in 2024, only two cases were reported.

There have been zero reported cases of incest or statutory rape in the past three years at EMU.

In short, dating violence is described as physical or sexual abuse, or threats of such abuse, in a relationship of a romantic or intimate nature. On the other hand, domestic violence is classified as violence committed by a

spouse, intimate partner, a person who shares a child in common or a person living with the victim. Visit the report for the full definitions.

At Eastern Michigan University, there have been no accounts of dating violence in the last three years, but there have been several of domestic violence on campus. There were 37 cases reported in 2022, 38 in 2023 and 33 in 2024. Almost all of these cases have been reported in the residence halls or apartments, with only three over the years being off-campus reports.

Cases of stalking at EMU have also been reduced from previous years. Stalking refers to “engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to: (i) Fear for the person’s safety or the safety of others; or (ii) Suffer substantial emotional distress.” In 2022, there were 16 reported cases of stalking on campus, and 14 reports were made in 2023, whereas in 2024, only six reports were made.

Arrests

In 2024, eight arrests were made by campus police. One of these was an on-campus drug law violation, and five arrests were made for drug law violations on public property. The other two arrests made were for illegal weapons possession on public property.

Judicial referral

Campus police made 37 judicial referrals for drug law violations in 2024, all of which were in the campus residence halls and apartments. This is a significant increase compared to the nine referrals in 2022 and the 13 in 2023.

Last year, there were also 37 liquor law violations on campus, 36 of which happened in the residence halls and apartments. There were 19 violations in 2022 and 15 violations in 2023.

For more information, visit the EMU 2025 Annual Security and Fire Report available on the campus police website.

Downtown Queer Crafting Group, Monday, Nov. 10

On Monday evening, Nov. 10, art lovers ages 18 and up are welcome to visit the Michigan Avenue branch of the YDL for a crafting meetup.

This program provides a space for LGBTQIA+ individuals to create a community while crafting.

Paper crafts, paints, fiber arts, drawing, writing, digital art and more are all welcome at the program.

Participants can bring their own art project to work on in the shared area, and participation is free.

The event will last two hours from 6-8 p.m.

This meeting is part of a series of meetings that take place in the Michigan Ave. Program Room at the YDL’s Michigan Avenue location at 229 W. Michigan Ave.

For more information, contact librarian Aaron Smith at asmith@ypsilibrary.org or call 734-482-4110 extension 1335.



The Echo Q&A Series: EMU Student Government President Jack Booth

Laura Meriweather
Staff Writer

Editor’s note: The Eastern Echo staff meets regularly with interesting people on and off campus. Engage in those conversations with us through our weekly Q&A report.

Jack Booth has been involved in student government since he was in high school. Arriving at Eastern Michigan University, he became a senator in his freshman year. Soon, he was serving as vice chair of the Business and Finance Committee. He also served as the EMU Student Government vice president during the 2024-25 school year under former President Hamzah Dajani. He now serves as the Student Government president.

Q: What prompted you to join Student Government as a freshman?

A: When I got here, I really didn’t know what I wanted to get involved in. I heard the vice president at the time come speak at an honors kickoff, and it was like, oh, cool, I can definitely do that again. I got involved hoping that somebody would point me in the right direction, and I was placed on the Business and Finance Committee.

Q: What did you learn from your first campaign in Student Government?

A: I learned to really enjoy helping student organizations by giving out money. In my sophomore year, the Business and Finance director at the time approached me about maybe running together for my junior year, and I’d be the vice president. I was like, yeah, I want to take on more leadership roles. In that role, I got to see a lot of the behind-the-scenes of Eastern and how things run, how the money moves, and what I need to do in order to get stuff done. I felt, halfway through that year, that I wanted to continue that opportunity. I saw that we were doing some good things; like, a lot of what we were really trying to focus on last year was trying to remove some barriers to access for students, increasing more funding opportunities... making sure that we’re a force for good, and that, in these behind-closed-door conversations where Student Government is present, someone is there advocating for students. As I got a few other opportunities to continue doing that, I decided I’d run for president.

Q: How did you decide on a running mate?

A: I chose Nina Freeman, my vice president, because she had gotten involved in the Student Government last year, and she was the first senator to get anything done that year in the form of a resolution. I really liked how efficient she was. She was really kind, open and was good at involving other people in projects, and that was someone who I wanted to invest in the same way I had been invested in.

Q: What are your goals for the office?

A: This year, we had campaigned on a few different things. We campaigned on improving the platforms that we had been creating over the past couple years and fostering new interdepartmental relationships, especially when budgets are shrinking. We also try to work with the community a little bit. One of the ways that we’re going to be doing that is, we’re going to be releasing a sign-up soon for a democracy dinner with some local elected officials to talk about how to get civically



Eastern Michigan University Student Government President Jack Booth works from an office in the Student Center in room 342. *Laura Meriweather / The Eastern Echo*

involved in your community as a college student.

And then, we’ve been working to remove some more barriers to entry for students. Like, one thing that we do that’s pretty well known is we purchase bus passes for students. We did that again this year to a number that’s never been done before. We did about \$7,500 worth of passes, which students are able to get on a need-based system. We also pay for the flu vaccine clinics for the uninsured student population. What we try to focus on is how can we remove barriers to entry, make EMU really equitable and inclusive, and improve what’s already existing.

Q: What does an average day look like for you, and how do you balance that with your schoolwork, especially as a senior?

A: We definitely have different levels of involvement. Mine and Nina’s are probably the highest level. I’m in the office every day because I want to make sure that my directors that I’ve hired to work for me have all the tools to do their jobs well. I also like that students can know that there’s someone they can go talk to every day.

I’m in a lot of different subcommittees, so I do a lot of different things for the university. I sit on the EMU Foundation Board of Trustees, so I go to different trustee meetings. We talk about funding and how to increase donor engagement. I present at the university Board of Regents meetings. I’m on the search committee for the university president, and I’m on the University Budget Committee. So, I do a lot of meetings most days, a lot of personal management and then a lot of emails.

Balancing that with schoolwork, it’s difficult. I think that some people have a better work-life balance than I do. I just answer emails or do anything at any time of the day. So, when I see something come in, I might be doing something else, but I’m still going to pull up my phone and answer it really quick. I think Nina is a little bit better at work-life balance and she knows when to stop answering me, which, good on her, you know, it’s just not something I ever developed or that I need to now.

Q: Did your service in the administration last year provide opportunities to build on the same initiatives, or have you pivoted in some ways?

A: What really helped me, being a part of this last year, was building a lot of connections. So now, when I’m getting into office, I’m not running with a blank slate. One thing we do is we write

resolutions. Next month, we’re subsidizing a farmer’s market so students can get their first five dollars of groceries for free. A lot of people don’t understand the back-end stuff for that. I have to reach out to our contact at the Office of the President to release the budget. I’ve got to talk to dining to purchase the vouchers. It’s a lot of facilitating things that I learned last year, which is really helpful. Understanding what we’re allowed to fund and what we aren’t allowed to fund, so when students are coming in here asking, can we do this for a student organization, I can tell them no. However, I can do something else because I know a lot of the rules really well.

Q: What initiatives did you continue?

We’ve definitely built off of a lot of what we started to do last year. I think that any good change has to be sustained. I can’t do something for a year and then, for example, if Nina decides to run next year, and she goes, oh, we’re not going to do any of that, then what we did this year doesn’t really matter in the scheme of things. We’re still trying to work to remove barriers and make EMU very inclusive and equitable. We’re really trying to make sure there’s more resources for students. This year, there’s a lot of challenges facing students, and we have a really unique position of advocating for them in these closed-room conversations and making sure that the decision makers are keeping in mind students’ desires.

Q: Have been any changes, especially with what’s been going on regarding federal funding?

A: There have definitely been some small federal grant cuts, not that they affect Student Government personally. We’re still waiting on the state appropriations budget for Michigan, which is definitely delaying higher education funding because a lot of people don’t know what contributions we’re going to get from the state of Michigan at this point.

Across the board, with declining enrollment and everything like that, we have to budget on fewer credit hours. But we’re still trying to offer the same amount of resources for students, so that’s where the bottleneck really comes in. Every budget decreases, so each year we have to make the hard decisions of what stays and what goes. We’re proud to announce that this year, our highest line item that we’ve ever set in, at least the four years I’ve been here, was for student organizations and engagement on campus. So even when budgets decreased, we were able

to increase our spending there by cutting back on some internal spending. I was able to cut on payroll. Some things like that, like optimizing our budget, have been hard, but we haven’t been hit nearly as hard as some other departments. So, we’re thankful for that as well.

Q: One of the recent changes on campus is the EIDining closures. What is your administration’s stance on that?

A: I understand it in a two-faceted approach. My first understanding is the same understanding that every student had, which was this very raw, emotional reaction to [it]. We thought we were going to have all of this, and now all of a sudden, two weeks before, we don’t. That’s a very real and valid reaction to the situation at hand that I wish would have been handled differently. Maybe it could have been, like, next year, this is going to be the change, rather than, we bought meal plans, and now this is the change.

But I also understand the monetary approach of this at the end of the day. Our partners at Chartwells, they’re a business; they have to make money. A lot of these places were either barely breaking even, or they weren’t. And because we have declining enrollment and not as many people are staying on campus, we’re not meeting our contractual obligations to this business. For that reason, I understand why they would have to renegotiate the contract. Because obviously, as a business, as an external partner to Eastern, you can’t really operate if you’re losing.

So what I like is that the focus now from administration, EIDining, and everything that I’ve seen is not focused on the past. It’s like, okay, we’re here. How can we make things better a little bit at a time? What I’ve been seeing now that the focus is on The Commons, is that the executive council is regularly checking in on The Commons during lunchtime, saying, what is the food like that we’re serving to students?

The EMU Student Senate meets at 6 p.m. every other Tuesday in Room 300 of the Student Center. The next meeting is Nov. 4, 2025. The meeting location is subject to change. For more information, visit the Student Government pages on the university’s website.

To read the full Q&A with Jack Booth, please visit our website: easternecho.com.

The WellNest Watch

What is public health?



Kegan Tulloch
Contributor

Editor’s note: The Echo is introducing a new health column feature called The WellNest Watch. In this space each week, graduate students in EMU’s College of Health of Human Services will explain news, research and standard practices in the field of health and wellness.

When people think about health, they often think about hospitals, doctors and the care received after they are already sick or injured. Behind the scenes, another field works quietly to keep entire populations healthy before illness strikes — public health.

Public health is the practice of protecting and improving the well-being of communities through education, policy, research and preventive care. Instead of focusing on treating illness after the fact, public health aims to stop problems before they start.

Public health professionals tackle everything from researching infectious diseases to promoting healthier lifestyles, preventing injuries, responding to public health emergencies and reducing health disparities that unfairly affect certain populations. In many ways, it is one of the most important fields for shaping longer, healthier and more equitable lives around the world.

Public health is not just about vaccines, clean water or preventing pandemics, though those are essential. It also addresses complex issues that affect daily life, such as mental health, nutrition, reproductive health, workplace safety and access to health care.

Public health professionals wear many hats: educators who design programs to help people make healthier choices; policy advocates who push for safer laws, such as seat belt requirements or smoke-free zones; researchers who investigate patterns of disease; and administrators who bring services to underserved communities. They work locally, nationally and globally, with populations as small as a single neighborhood or as large as entire regions.

One notable aspect of public health is its ripple effect. A single new policy, research discovery or awareness campaign can touch millions of lives. When smoking rates decline because of public health campaigns, lung cancer deaths drop. When vaccination programs expand, childhood mortality falls. These interventions are not just reactive; they create healthier futures.

The COVID-19 pandemic thrust public health into the global spotlight, highlighting the importance of prevention, education and rapid response. But the relevance of public health extends far beyond times of crisis.

Chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and mental health disorders remain major challenges, and public health works to reduce their impact. By promoting exercise, healthier eating, stress reduction and early screening, public health reduces the burden of these conditions before they become debilitating. At the same time, it addresses structural barriers such as poverty, racism and lack of access to resources that make staying healthy harder for some communities.

At its core, public health blends research, advocacy and action. It thrives on collaboration — drawing people from diverse disciplines to tackle some of the most pressing issues of the time. The goal is not only to prevent illness but also to build healthier societies where people have equal opportunities to live long, fulfilling lives.

Unlike medicine, which primarily responds to disease, public health is proactive. It asks not just how to treat illness but how to stop it from occurring in the first place. Every day, public health professionals work on solutions that might not make headlines but quietly change the trajectory of millions of lives. Clean drinking water, safer workplaces, stronger nutrition programs and effective health communication campaigns are all public health victories often taken for granted.

Looking toward the future, public health is a reminder that health is not just an individual responsibility but a collective one. Human well-being is interconnected, and when one group is left behind, the ripple effects can reach everyone.

Public health ensures that prevention, protection and opportunity for good health are shared by all.

So, the next time you put on a seat belt, get vaccinated or learn about nutrition from a campus campaign, remember that is public health in action.

Contributors to The WellNest Watch health column: Kegan Tulloch and Ebrima Jobarteh, graduate assistants in the Office of Health Promotions; and Shafaat Ali Choyon and Nathaniel King, graduate hall directors in the Department of Residential Life. All four are master’s degree candidates in the School of Public Health at Eastern Michigan University.



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Eastern Michigan men’s basketball 2025-26 season preview: turning a new leaf?

Caleb Henderson
Sports Editor

Replacing four players who averaged over 10 points per game a year ago is an audacious task for any team — and it will be the one that the Eastern Michigan University men’s basketball team embarks on during the course of the upcoming 2025-26 season.

With Jalin Billingsley, Christian Henry, Da’Sean Nelson and Jalen Terry all having departed Ypsilanti, Eagles Head Coach Stan Heath welcomes a new squad heading into the new year featuring nine new players from the previous campaign.

“This environment now is so different that you have brand new teams, and you’re trying to get things done with new pieces almost every year — it’s hard to sustain the same guys. But I think my staff and I are doing a really, really good job of building these rosters from year to year,” Heath said.

The 60-year-old head coach leads an Eastern Michigan program that has shown consistent improvement throughout his tenure at his alma mater thus far. After posting a combined 18 wins over the course of his first two seasons at the helm, Heath’s squads have racked up 13 and 16 wins respectively each of the last two campaigns.

This year, the veteran coach believes his Eagles are capable of even greater heights.

“I expect us to surpass what we did last year — I do think this team has the personnel to be better than what we were last year,” he said.

Players to watch

One of the key additions to Eastern Michigan’s 2025-26 roster is redshirt freshman Mohammad Habbab, an incoming transfer from Central Michigan University who played sparingly for the Chippewas a year ago.

Habbab, a 6-foot-9-inch 220-pound center hailing from Dearborn, Michigan, has already broken into the starting lineup according to Coach Heath.

“We wanted to get some size — adding Mo Habbab, I think, was a great addition for us. Even though he’s a young player, I think he’s gonna be a very impactful guy,” Heath said.



Arne Osojnik shoots during the Eastern Michigan vs. Akron men's basketball game on Saturday, January 11th.
Kaleb Stanley / The Eastern Echo

Another name to be on the lookout for in green and white this season will be Addison Patterson, the redshirt senior from Northwestern State University.

Patterson’s path to Ypsilanti has been anything but easy. The native Ontarian has suited up for four different schools throughout his college career, with Eastern Michigan set to be his fifth after graduating high school in the class of 2019 and having a waiver approved to compete by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

“His background is simply, he’s only played three years of college basketball. He had an ACL injury one year, he had a JUCO year one year, he had a COVID year one year. So when you start adding those factors in — these are all legitimate things in the past,” Heath said, elaborating further on Patterson’s winding road to Eastern Michigan.

“He’s a very good player; he’s fitting really well with what we’re doing,” Heath said.

Eastern Michigan fans should also be on the lookout for the new No. 2 hitting the hardwood this season, Valdosta State University transfer Carlos Hart.

Averaging 19.2 points per game and 6.8 rebounds per game last year for the Blazers, the 6-foot-6-inch redshirt senior guard from Miami, Florida, could emerge as a top scorer for Eastern Michigan in 2025-26.

“He’s a dude. He’s aggressive, he gets fouled a lot, he’s an attacking guy. As I said before, he can play any position you want, one through four. His game’s not pretty; it’s a little more old school, but he gets a lot done,” Heath said.

Offensive & defensive scheming

With wholesale changes to the roster in 2025-26, Eastern Michigan fans can also expect the green and white to play a different type of basketball throughout the campaign.

“The level of what we’re doing [will be] much higher, especially on the

defensive end,” Heath said.

“On the offensive end, we have tweaked some things. I felt like because we have more guys that can handle the ball and make plays, we’re in more of a ‘random offense’ than we are [running] a lot of set plays,” he added.

Heath elaborated further on his 'random offense' philosophy, emphasizing his team’s ability to be versatile and unpredictable through key components such as playing in space and spreading the ball around in the paint.

“Last year, it was always Da’Sean [Nelson]; now there’s about four, five guys that may go down low and post up for us,” he said.

The end result, Heath hopes, is a philosophy on both ends of the floor that fits his personnel.

“That’s really my coaching style — you tell me what’s on the table to eat, and I can figure out the menu. What ingredients we have in the refrigerator, I can figure out the menu to eat,” he said.

Eastern Michigan women’s soccer loses to Central Michigan 2-0, misses MAC tournament



EMU Women's Soccer player Cameryn Sussey keeps the ball in play during the Eagles' match against Ball State on Oct. 9. Bradan Copeland / The Eastern Echo

Caleb Henderson
Sports Editor

The Eastern Michigan University women’s soccer team sat on the precipice of a Mid-American Conference tournament berth heading into their Oct. 29 match with Central Michigan University, needing either a win or help from other conference foes to secure the final spot in the bracket.

The Eagles’ chances hinged on a Bowling Green State University loss or draw if the green and white won, or a University at Buffalo win against

conference-leading Western Michigan University. But, as fate would have it, neither of these things would happen — and the Eagles would lose in Mount Pleasant to the Central Michigan University Chippewas in a 2-0 stunner.

Central Michigan entered the match without a single win on the campaign, but they would not leave the CMU Soccer Complex with that being the case.

Despite holding a 17-8 advantage in shots, the Eagles were only able to put seven on goal — none of them hitting the back of the net.

Eastern Michigan was held scoreless for the fifth time in 12 MAC matches in 2025. Leading scorer Olivia Sipsock generated three shots on goal but was unable to replicate her two-goal performance from last time against Northern Illinois University.

The match remained scoreless throughout the first half. The first goal did not come until the 63rd minute, when Central Michigan’s Jimena Perez Ayala pushed the ball past Eagles goalkeeper Ella Holland.

The Chippewas added an insurance score in the 68th minute to go up 2-0

when Jordan Bailey netted her shot. Both scores were assisted by Central Michigan’s Ella Betzold.

With their first win of the season in their final match, Central Michigan improved their record to 1-14-3 (1-8-3 MAC), while Eastern Michigan fell to 6-8-4 (4-4-4 MAC) and is now eliminated from postseason conference tournament contention.

The 2025 season has now come to a close, with the Eagles finishing seventh in the final MAC conference standings for the second straight year.

Eagle Sports Tips & Tales: Nov. 4 - 10

Jeffrey Ellingsworth
Sports Reporter

With fall sports in full swing, here’s a look at some of this week’s top stories from Eastern Michigan University’s various athletic disciplines.

Football | Eastern Michigan returns from bye with matchup against Bowling Green

Eastern Michigan’s football team will return to Rynearson Stadium on Nov. 8 at 1 p.m. After last week’s bye, the Eastern Eagles will be in line for a Mid-American Conference matchup with the Bowling Green State University Falcons.

Both teams hold losing records and are looking to get back on track. Eastern holds a 1-4 record in the MAC after their loss to the Ohio University Bobcats prior to the bye.

Noah Kim, the Eagles quarterback, is the second leading passer in the MAC. He will lead the Eagles on Saturday in hopes of getting back in the win column against a struggling Bowling Green defense that has allowed 25 points a game on average this season.

Eastern holds a historical 14-25 record against Bowling Green with their first-ever matchup being back in 1919. However, their most recent contest ended in an Eagles victory back in 2021.

All the action can be streamed live on ESPN+.

Men’s Basketball | Eastern Michigan faces off against Power 4 opponent Pittsburgh

The Eastern Michigan men’s basketball team will head to Pittsburgh to do battle with the University of Pittsburgh Panthers on Monday, Nov. 10, at 7 p.m.

This will be the first road game for the Eagles as they approach an overhauled Panthers team. Pittsburgh has lost four of its five leading scorers from last year’s team as both squads hit the reset button on their rosters over the offseason.

Eastern has four returning players with transfers and new recruits making up the rest of the roster. New faces will control the outcome for Eastern as they look to make a run deep into March.

The Eagles are 1-3 against Pittsburgh with their last game going into triple overtime in a 93-90 loss for the Eagles back in 2016.

Viewers can catch the game on ACCNX, while live stats will be on the Eastern Michigan Athletics website.

Women’s Basketball | Sahar Nusseibeh leads Eastern Michigan in matchup against former school

On Nov. 7, another Eastern team will be looking to put a win in the books. The Eastern Michigan women’s basketball team will be in Buffalo taking on the Canisius University Golden Griffins for their second straight away game to begin the season.

The Eagles have a 6-2 record over the Griffins with their last game being played back in 2011.

The Eagles will showcase a completely new team as there are only two players remaining from the 2024-25 season. The team is filled with transfers and seven freshman recruits from across the world.

Second-year head coach for the Eagles, Sahar Nusseibeh, will look to quickly turn around the program and return to the success of Eastern’s winning past. Nusseibeh was the former Golden Griffins head coach from 2021-24.

Eagles forward Sisi Eleko will have a major role in helping Eagles to victory this season after earning Preseason All-MAC First Team for the upcoming season.

Viewers can catch all the action between Eastern Michigan and Canisius University Nov. 7 on ESPN+ at 6:30 p.m.





Local painter and EMU alumnus, Rocco Pisto, with his watercolor piece, "Violet Cityscape," on display in the Michigan Water Color Society Traveling Exhibition at Riverside Arts Center.

Madison Cantrell / The Eastern Echo

Local artist, EMU alumnus Rocco Pisto featured in Michigan Water Color Society exhibition

Madison Cantrell

Arts Editor, Cellar Roots Editor-in-Chief

Riverside Arts Center, located at 76 N. Huron Street in Ypsilanti, is currently hosting an exhibition featuring select works of the Michigan Water Color Society. The exhibition is free to attend and open to the public on Fridays from 4 - 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The gallery will be on display until Nov. 14.

The Riverside Arts Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing art to the Ypsi community in an accessible manner. It hosts a variety of performing and fine arts events, including theater performances and art galleries. Additionally, it has art studios, dance studios and classrooms available.

Eastern Michigan University alumnus Rocco Pisto has been a member of the Michigan Water

Color Society since the late 1970s. Pisto has one painting, "Violet Cityscape," displayed in the show at Riverside Arts Center.

The Michigan Water Color Society, or MWCS, founded in 1946, is an organization of watercolor painters in Michigan. Each year, MWCS has a traveling exhibition.

"We have an annual exhibition that goes around the state. The juror [of MWCS] picks the top 30 pieces, and those travel to different galleries in underserved areas. Riverside is gallery two of six," Pisto said.

Attending this current exhibition at the Riverside Arts Center is a great opportunity for students to look at someone's professional work, Pisto said. He said he was often seeking opportunities to go to galleries during his time at Eastern.

Pisto noted some of his most important shows being a solo show he did at the Alfred Berkowitz gallery of University of Michigan-Dearborn in 2018 and a two-person show in Frankfort, Michigan. The Frankfort show was the first joint show he had with his daughter, a ceramicist. Now he teaches watercolor painting, hosts workshops and has been featured in galleries around the country.

To students working to become professional artists, Pisto said, "My advice to anyone that wants to pursue [art] that's studying at EMU is to take advantage of opportunities working with professors, and soak it in. You will never have the time to focus on your major like you do now. There were times that I had to force myself to do work because I was in a field that was constantly changing. Dive in because art is not an easy

field. Work hard, and work hard to articulate in discussing your work."

Pisto's time at EMU helped shape his experience and motivated him to pursue a career in art. EMU watercolor professor Igor Beginin was his guiding hand. Beginin encouraged freedom and experimentation in painting and played a big role in inspiring Pisto's creative process, Pisto said.

In regard to his creative process, Pisto said, "Art is therapeutic. Art can change you in a day. For me, when I start painting, I'm an intuitive painter, which means I may not know what I want to do when I start doing it, but when I start evolving the work, the brain starts kicking in; it becomes a painting, not just a splash-splash on the paper."

"At this point I am living the dream I had when I was going to Eastern," Pisto said.

Cellar Roots

Volume 52

Deadline
Dec. 13

An annual fine arts / literary magazine that highlights student artists and provides a platform to publish creative works. Features 2D & 3D artwork, written works, and more.

Students and EMU alumni can submit their own work to be featured in the upcoming edition of Cellar Roots, Volume 52.

Submit Works Here:

cellar.roots

cellarroots

Please email cellarroots@easternecho.com for any questions or inquiries.



Michigan Water Color Society's traveling exhibition is on display at Riverside Arts Center in the North Gallery until Nov. 14. Madison Cantrell / The Eastern Echo



From left, "Morning Light" by David Giordan and "Trish's Clothesline No. 3" by Stan Myers on display in the Michigan Water Color Society Traveling Exhibition at Riverside Arts Center. Madison Cantrell / The Eastern Echo



From left, "Violet Cityscape" by Rocco Pisto and "Cargo" by Gayle Sanchirico on display in the Michigan Water Color Society Traveling Exhibition. Madison Cantrell / The Eastern Echo



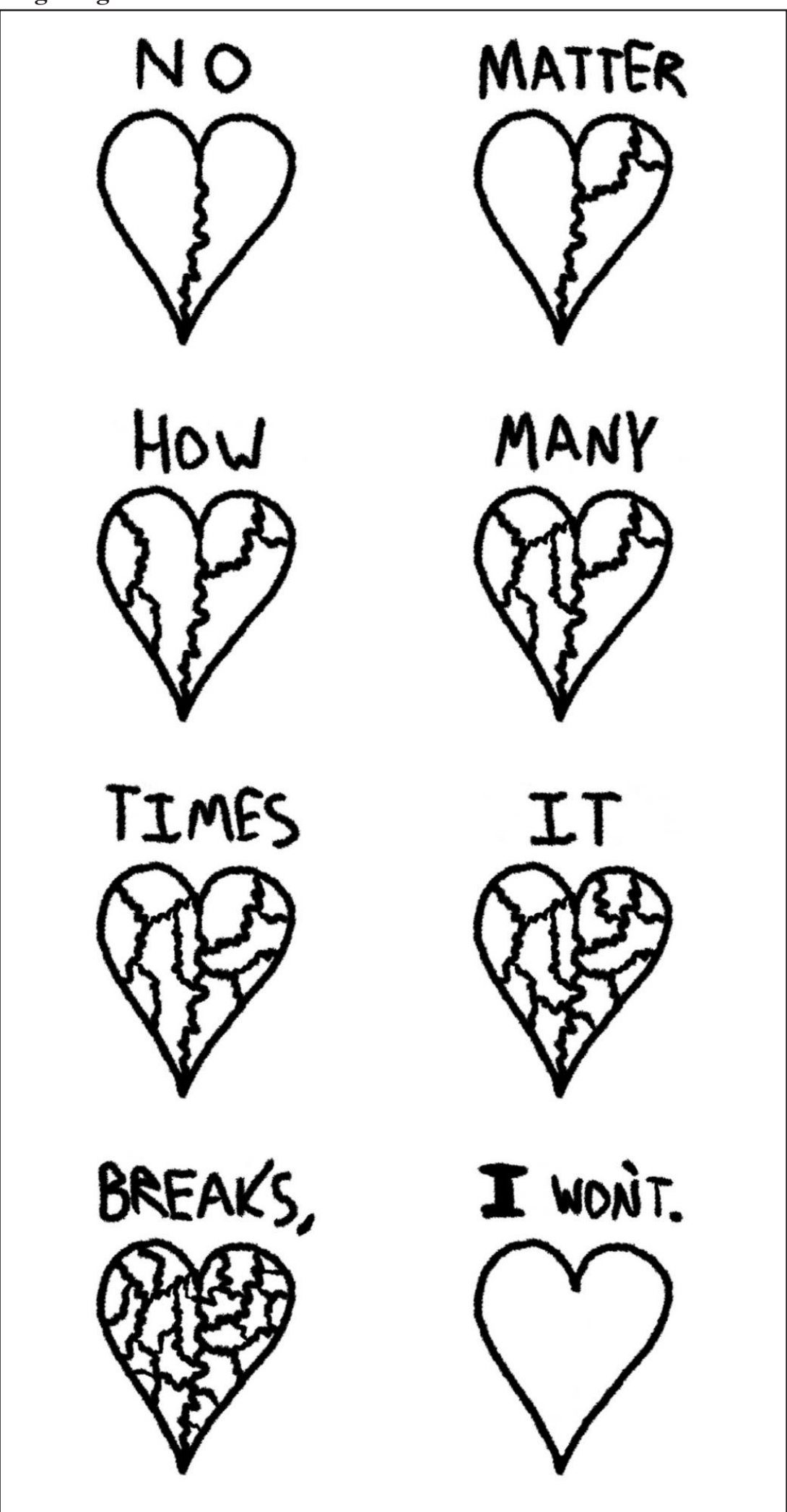
From left, "Fragmented Leaves" by Lori Zurvalec and "Robin Back Too Soon" by Lori McElrath Eslick on display in the Michigan Water Color Society Traveling Exhibition. Madison Cantrell / The Eastern Echo



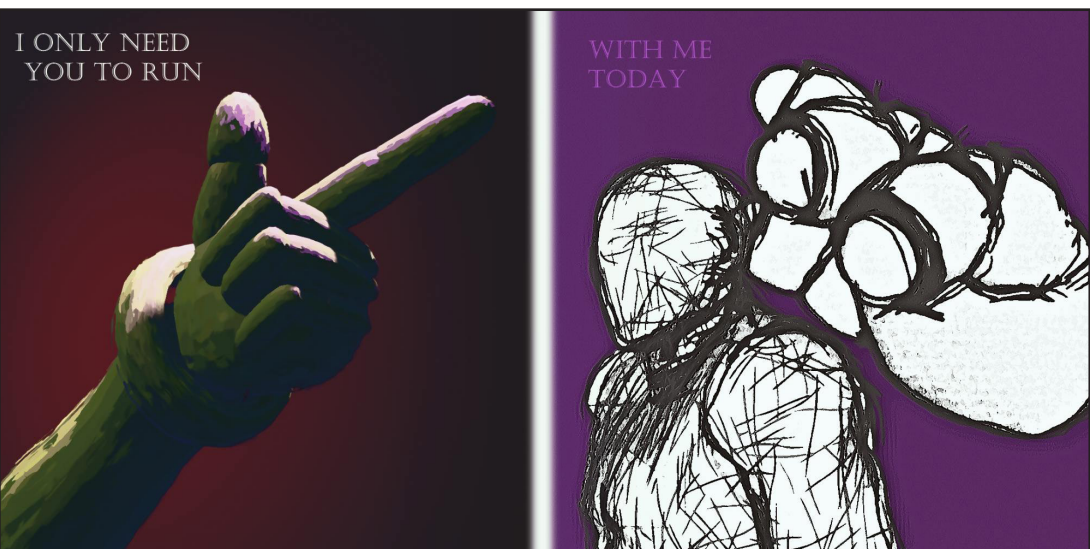
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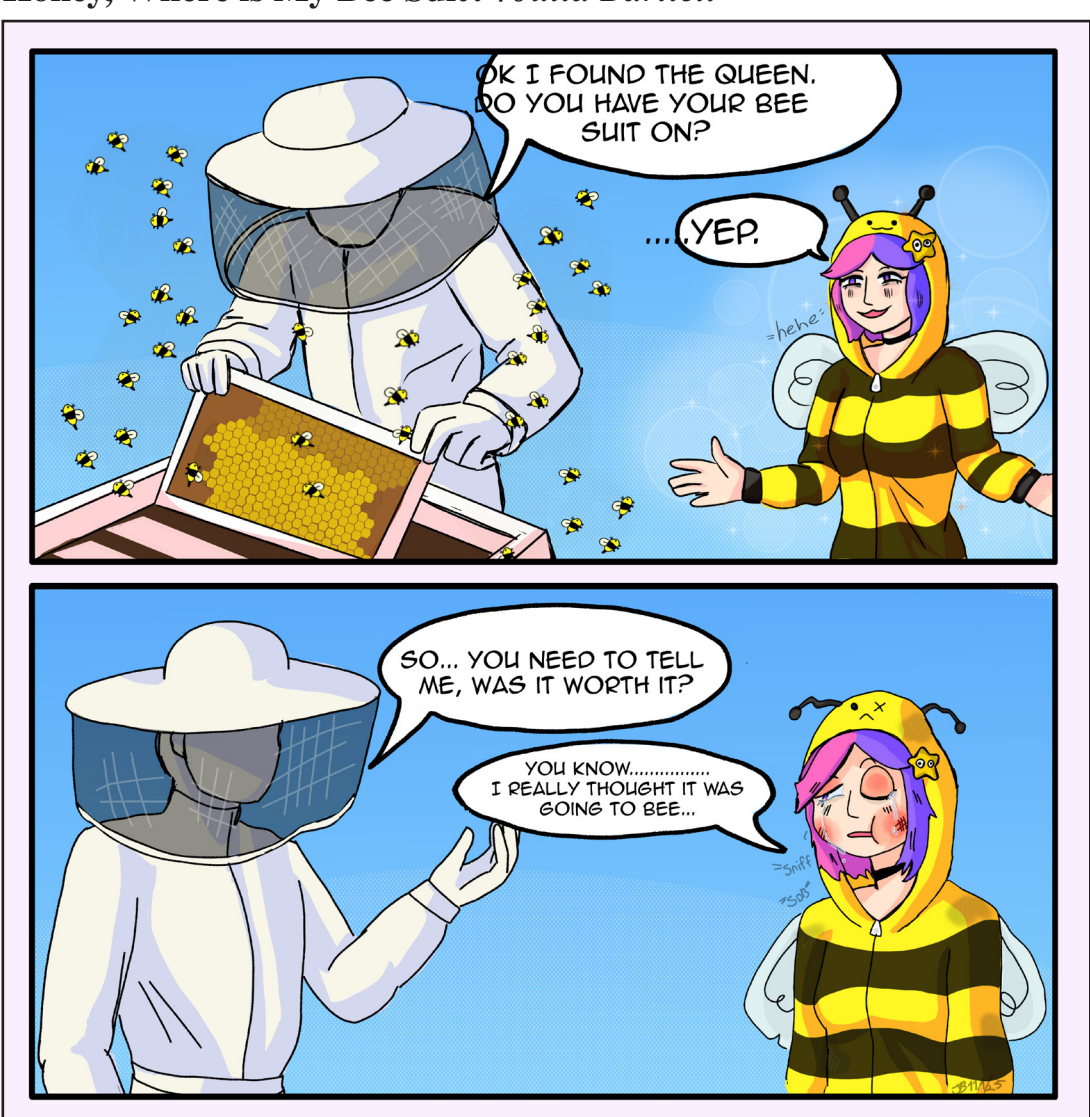
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Moonlight 11-3 | FunkyLOaf



Honey, Where is My Bee Suit? | Julia Bartlett



Scoop says...



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EMU students carve pumpkins, show off Halloween spirit with campus events



Antonio holds a pumpkin he carved while dressed as Jason Voorhees for Pumpkins on the Patio 2025 on Tuesday, Oct. 28. Max Taylor / The Eastern Echo



Gabriella Payeur, marketing director at The Eastern Echo, hands out candy at The Echo's trick or treat event, held on Thursday, Oct. 30. Kaleb Stanely / The Eastern Echo



Aiden holds his pumpkin, which was one of the three winners of the Pumpkin Carving Contest during the Pumpkins on the Patio event on Tuesday, Oct. 28. Max Taylor / The Eastern Echo



From left, EMU students Emilia Southerland, Angelina Sull and Teagen Nazaruk pose at the Pumpkins on the Patio event on Tuesday, Oct. 28. Max Taylor / The Eastern Echo



Students color in Halloween themed pages at the Childhood Halloween event on Tuesday, Oct. 28. Max Taylor / The Eastern Echo



Graphic design student Alina Levandowski shows off their "The Starry Night"-inspired pumpkin which was one of the three winners of the Pumpkin Carving Contest as part of Campus Life's Pumpkins on the Patio event on Tuesday, Oct. 28. Max Taylor / The Eastern Echo



Graphic Design student Alina Levandowski whittles away at their pumpkin, taking inspiration from Van Gogh's "The Starry Night" on Tuesday, Oct. 28 during Pumpkins on the Patio. Max Taylor / The Eastern Echo



An EMU student carves a pumpkin with tools at Campus Life's 2025 Pumpkins on the Patio event on Tuesday, Oct. 28. Max Taylor / The Eastern Echo



Two students pose with Katie Tatomir, The Eastern Echo newsletter editor, at the team's trick or treat event, held on Thursday, Oct. 30. Kaleb Stanely / The Eastern Echo



Student-carved pumpkins line the Student Center patio after Pumpkins on the Patio on Tuesday, Oct. 28. Max Taylor / The Eastern Echo



Alina Levandowski's pumpkin was one of three winners of the Pumpkin Carving Contest, decided by student vote and declared by Campus Life after Pumpkins on the Patio on Tuesday, Oct. 28. Max Taylor / The Eastern Echo



A student participates in a free pin-making station inside the Student Center during Pumpkins on the Patio on Tuesday, Oct. 28. Max Taylor / The Eastern Echo



Students craft snacks at the Childhood Halloween event in the Student Center on Tuesday, Oct. 28. Max Taylor / The Eastern Echo



Student-carved pumpkins line the Student Center patio, waiting to be voted on during Pumpkins on the Patio on Tuesday, Oct. 28. Max Taylor / The Eastern Echo

