



The Eastern Echo

Volume 142, Issue 25
Serving EMU and Ypsilanti since 1881

Tuesday, November 18, 2025
easternecho.com

Swoop's Food Pantry hosts annual Holiday Harvest Donation Drive

Natalie Heckert
Copy Editor

Yesterday, Swoop's Food Pantry finished hosting its second annual Holiday Harvest Donation Drive. The drive's purpose was to provide students and staff at Eastern Michigan University with food items for their Thanksgiving meals.

The event was organized by the pantry's graduate assistants Colton Ray and Emily Bryson, alongside students in the Social Work Practice with Organizations and Communities course. The goal of the drive was to provide 100 shoppers with Thanksgiving food items for their tables.

The shopping event for the holiday donations will be held Thursday, Nov. 20, from 4-6 p.m. at the pantry in Pierce Hall Room 100.

If that time does not work for shoppers, the pantry will also be open the following Friday from 12-5 p.m. Thanksgiving foods are not guaranteed during this time, though it is predicted there will be leftovers.

Students or staff looking to shop the event should fill out the food pantry's 2025-26 academic year intake form.

"Last school year, we had 80 people visit in the two-hour time span," Ray said. "Our hope is to have 100 people come by during that time this year."

Although donations for the harvest

event ended yesterday, the pantry is always open and welcoming donations. The pantry accepts perishable and non-perishable foods, personal hygiene items, clothing, diapers and more. Goods can be dropped off at Pierce Hall Room 104. Donation wish lists and pantry hours for drop-offs can be found on the Swoop's Food Pantry page of EMU's website.

Monetary donations are also welcome and can be given on the Ways to Give page on the EMU Foundation website.

Through the drive, the pantry is able to provide the EMU community with Thanksgiving meals by distributing items that are not regularly available, such as turkey and chicken with alternative halal and vegan options, pies, gravy, rolls and more.

"The holiday times are challenging for folks facing food insecurity," Ray said.

A survey done by Jamaal Jones-Peters, a wellness graduate assistant, and Sarah Joseph, the Rec/IM assistant director of well-being and programs, reported that 46.5% of EMU students experience some type of food insecurity. Swoop's Pantry is here to help combat that statistic.

"Swoop's is primarily focused on supporting currently registered students achieve academic success and support their well-being," Ray said.



Kimberly Waldroop, a Swoop's Food Pantry team member, helps to restock the shelves for students on Tuesday, Nov. 11. *Bea Dingman / The Eastern Echo*

Washtenaw County hires Southfield architect firm to design new recreation center



The property at 1500 Stamford Road. A sign on the site explains that the land is the future home of the Eastern Washtenaw Community Recreation Center. *Josh Cromwell / The Eastern Echo*

Josh Cromwell
Staff Writer

With the hiring of an architectural firm in October, the long-awaited community center for Eastern Washtenaw County moved closer to a projected 2028 completion date.

In an 8-0 vote with two members absent Oct. 22, the county Parks and Recreation Commission chose Neumann/Smith Architecture, based in Southfield, Michigan, to design the facility and create the necessary building documents. The vote authorized a contract with the firm of up to \$2 million for architecture and engineering services.

The decision signals the project's

move beyond the planning stage, which has been in the works since at least 2022, when the county identified the site of the former Cheney Elementary School at 1500 Stamford Road as an ideal location for the recreation center.

While not officially acquired until 2024, the property was purchased from the Ypsilanti school district. That land, combined with \$30 million in committed funding from local, state and federal sources, set the stage for the county to seek an architect to turn schematic designs into construction documents for the Eastern Washtenaw Community Recreation Center.

Ann Ziolkowski, communications manager for the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Department, said

the new center will prioritize energy efficiency, something the current Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center on Washtenaw Avenue does not have.

The proposals include creating an all-electric facility that includes solarized rooftops and parking lots, as well as a zero-waste design and operation.

While a recreation center on the east side has been discussed for years, 2025 included work that advanced the project from an idea to being deliverable. The county demolished the old school site this past February. By September, county officials were sharing schematic designs with the public, two presentations of the plans were held in public forums, and a

request was issued for architectural and engineering services.

Fifteen firms filed bids on the project.

Ziolkowski said the county chose Neumann/Smith in part because of its experience. All of the proposals were evaluated based on cost; experience with similar recreation centers, especially those with natatoriums; technical qualifications; proposed timeline; and their work plan.

"Our parks team conducted a robust interview process and ranked the various firms," Ziolkowski said. "In addition to their ranking, Neumann/Smith has worked on several similar projects. Examples of their related resume can be seen with Greater Midland Community Center, City of Livonia Community Recreation Center, City of Romeoville Aquatic Center, City of West Lafayette Wellness and Aquatic Center and Van Buren Charter Township Community Center."

Neumann/Smith will next focus on translating the county's proposed design and the public's feedback into a series of project documents. That work includes creating blueprints, site planning, coordination of mechanical and structural engineering, cost analysis, budget planning and more detailed community engagement to ensure the design serves local needs.

Drawings of the proposed center on the county's website outline plans that include a natatorium, a wellness floor, studios, a gym and locker rooms. The projected size of the facility is

50,000 to 65,000 square feet, with an adjacent 200 to 250 parking spaces on the 30-acre site. County officials said they expect design completion and permitting work to occupy the next 12 to 18 months.

When complete, the center's goal is to serve as an all-age group facility offering affordable programming and accessible spaces for communities that have lacked a large county-run recreation hub on the east side. The goal, presentation documents on the county's website states, is to include areas for a community meeting room, a teen center, youth zones for toddlers and for children ages 5 to 8, a gymnasium, fitness studios and pools.

Outside the facility, the county plans to add sports fields and courts, a playground, a walking trail, community gardens and a dog park.

"Our goal is to build a vibrant, affordable community recreation center that addresses the needs in that area," Ziolkowski said. "The biggest goal is to meet the unmet needs of residents in the community by providing robust programs for all ages and abilities."

Short-term milestones for the project include new design renderings, completion of construction documents, permitting approvals and the county's selection of a construction manager or general contractor.

County residents can follow the progress of the project on the Eastern Washtenaw Community Recreation Center Updates page on the Parks and Recreation 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.

COPYRIGHT © 2025 (The Eastern Echo) All rights reserved.
www.EasternEcho.com

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.

HOW TO REACH US

The Eastern Echo
Fall 2025 Editorial Board

Editor-in-Chief:
Natalie Kyle
editor@easternecho.com

Managing Editor:
Lilly Kujawski
managing@easternecho.com

News Editor:
Ameera Salman
news@easternecho.com

Sports Editor:
Caleb Henderson
sports@easternecho.com

Podcast Editor:
Gray Connor
podcast@easternecho.com

**Arts Editor,
Cellar Roots Editor-in-Chief:**
Madison Cantrell
cellarroots@easternecho.com

Graphics Editor:
Rylee Curley
design@easternecho.com

Photo Editor:
Max Taylor
photo@easternecho.com

Print Design Editor:
Jada Hauser
digital@easternecho.com

Copy Desk Chief:
Allie Beecher
copyeditor@easternecho.com

Marketing Director:
Gabriella Payeur
advertising@easternecho.com

Business Manager:
Quanzelle Wyatt
advertising@easternecho.com

Student Media Advisor:
Christine Uthoff
advisor@easternecho.com

CORRECTIONS

In the Nov. 11 issue of *The Eastern Echo*, the name of Myranda Wiggins was misspelled.

In previous issues of *The Eastern Echo*, the name of photographer Kaleb Stanley was misspelled.

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



CALENDAR

NOV 18 **Night Market**
7-10 p.m.
McKenny Hall — Ballroom

NOV 19 **"Othello"**
2 p.m.
Riverside Arts Center — 76 N Huron St.

NOV 20 **Thankful To Go: Drive-Thru Thanksgiving**
10 a.m.
George Gervin GameAbove Center

NOV 21 **Honors College November Pancake Breakfast**
10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Honors College — 107 Reception Hall

NOV 22 **EMU Theatre presents "Big Love"**
2 p.m., 7p.m.
Legacy Theatre

NOV 23 **Symphonic Band and Wind Symphony Concert**
3-5 p.m.
Pease Auditorium — 494 College Place

NOV 24 **Trumpet Studio Recital**
7:30-8:45 p.m.
Pease Auditorium — 494 College Place

WEATHER FORECAST

Tuesday, Nov. 18
High: 40 | Low: 31
Cloudy* / Mostly Cloudy

Wednesday, Nov. 19
High: 46 | Low: 34
Mostly Cloudy / Mostly Cloudy

Thursday, Nov. 20
High: 51 | Low: 40
Mostly Cloudy* / Mostly Cloudy with Rain

Friday, Nov. 21
High: 54 | Low: 35
Mostly Cloudy with Rain / Mostly Cloudy*

Saturday, Nov. 22
High: 46 | Low: N/A
Partly Sunny*

* Chance of precipitation

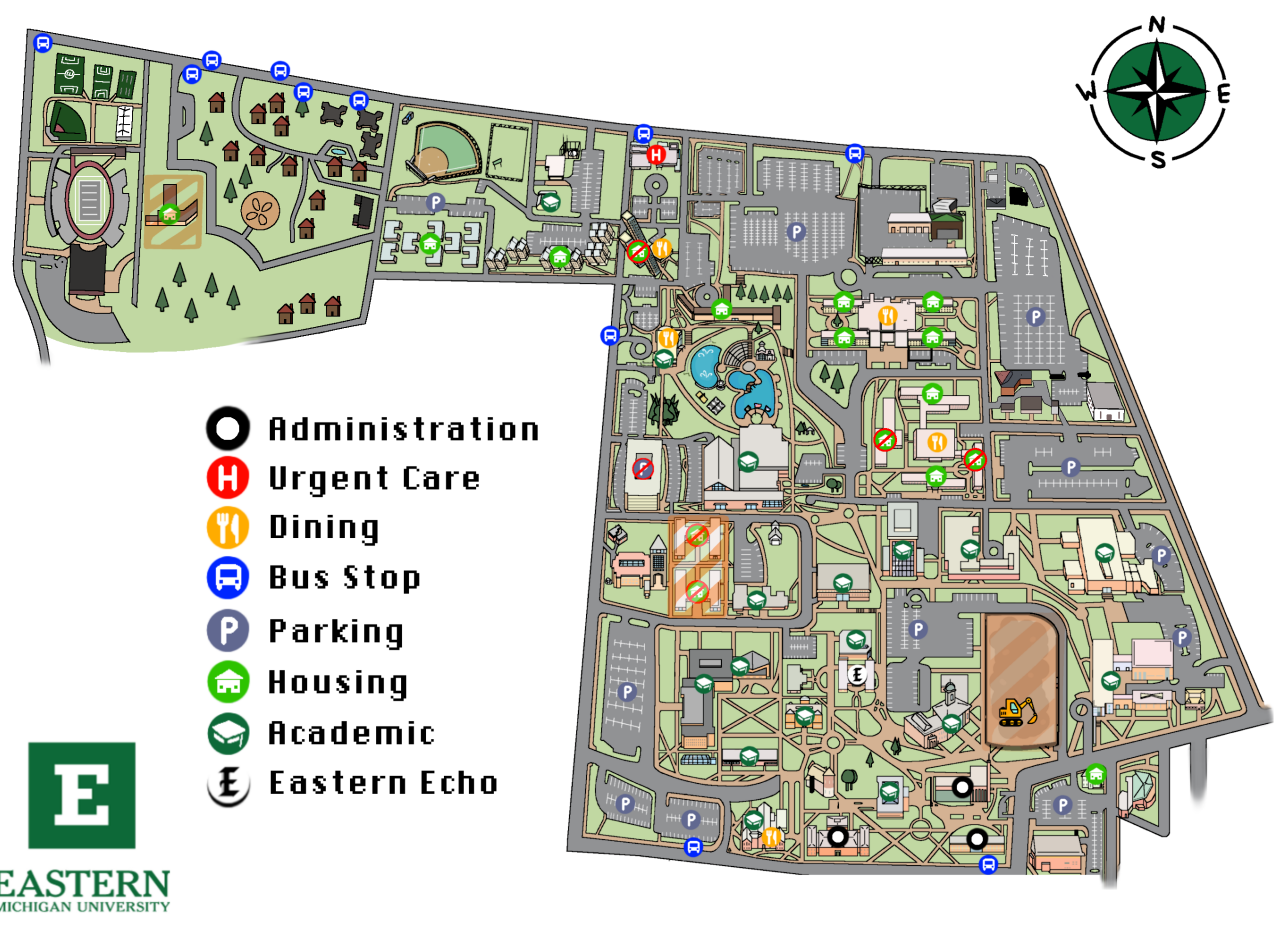


Source:
The National Weather Service

Where to find The Eastern Echo:

- Off Campus:**
- Speedy's Big Burgers, 10 N. Adams St.
 - St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, 5301 McAuley Drive
 - Cafe Liv, 202 N. Washington St.
- On Campus:**
- Halle Library
 - McKenny Hall

Where to find our links:



Eastern Michigan University to open second green space for campus park

Lauren Holloway
News Reporter

Eastern Michigan University is on track to open a new park space on campus within the next two weeks.

The fencing is scheduled to come down soon to give students time to enjoy the space before the winter weather sets in.

The green space is taking the place of the former Jones-Goddard residence halls and Brown-Munson apartments. The space was originally projected to open in October; however, there have been delays due to the goals of the space and routine setbacks, Vice President of Communications Walter Kraft said.

“Projects like this need to be flexible,” Kraft said.

Although there were delays, the plan was always for the space to be open in the fall.

Kraft said that even though the timing of the opening did not go according to plan, it’s still a fall opening, which is what the university was hoping for.

The new space will feature a plaza, sidewalks, preserved trees, benches, seating and limestone salvaged from the old Jones-Goddard site. Wi-Fi will also be available in the park, which will allow classes a new place to meet and



Construction wraps up in the new green space near Sill Hall. Photo by Lee Hammock / The Eastern Echo

grant students a new space to work on homework. Furthermore, there will be accommodations made for the space to host food trucks.

Chris Grant, the grounds manager for EMU, said the previous space of the Brown-Munson apartments needed grass and trees, but the former area of the Jones-Goddard residence halls is

getting sidewalks, seating areas and power hookups for food trucks. While this will increase the workload for the maintenance plant, Grant said the space adds character to the campus.

Kraft said the goal for the park is to provide a gathering area in a space where there wasn’t one.

Kraft said he hopes this new park

will be utilized as a place to read, do homework, meditate and gather. The addition of these green spaces is part of EMU’s overall commitment to sustainability and fostering a communal, open environment, he said.

What's the Move?

Nov. 18 - 24

Israel Shriki
Staff Writer

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

ESL Community Tutoring with Washtenaw Literacy, Tuesday, Nov. 18

Students who speak English as a second language can sharpen their speaking skills by participating in Washtenaw Literacy’s ESL Community Tutoring program.

The Ypsilanti District Library hosts the program’s tutoring sessions that provide an informal environment where students can practice English for free. Washtenaw Literacy is a nonprofit organization that focuses on helping adult learners develop reading, writing and language skills.

The session will take place 1-2:30 p.m. in the Superior Meeting Room of the library’s Superior Township branch office, at 1900 Harris Road in Ypsilanti.

“Othello”, Wednesday through Saturday, Nov. 19-22

PTD Productions and Brevity Shakespeare present “Othello” by William Shakespeare for another weekend, with performances on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Riverside Arts Center.

Brevity’s stage art perspective aims to bring freshness and inclusivity to Shakespearean stories.

Shakespeare’s classic plot focuses on Othello, a Moorish general serving in the Venetian army who secretly gets married to Desdemona, a rich Venetian lady. But tragedy follows the newlyweds as Desdemona’s spurned suitor Roderigo teams up with Othello’s assistant Iago to destroy the marriage.

Brevity’s production sets the 90-minute story in 1881 in San Francisco and Santa Catalina, California. Directed by Karl Sikkenga, Brevity Shakespeare reimagines Othello’s story as a contemporary tale, designed to offer a fresh perspective and greater audience inclusivity.

The main cast actors are ShaRod Collins (Othello), LeVale Walker (Iago), Indigo Devito (Desdemona), Andrew Saint John (Cassio), Cameron Graham (Roderigo) and Karrie Waarala (Emilia).

Ticket prices are \$20 for general admission and \$15 for seniors, students and active-duty military. Information about group discounts is available on the PTD Productions website under Additional Information.

Accessible parking and wheelchair seating are offered.

Merchandise is available for purchase on the PTD Productions website.

2025 Holiday Art Fair, Saturday-Sunday, Nov. 22-23

The Riverside Arts Center is hosting its third annual holiday art fair on Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 22-23. At this shopping event, patrons can find handmade art, vintage items and self-care products.

The fair is an opportunity for holiday shoppers to find custom gifts for family and friends.

On both days, the fair opens at 11 a.m. and closes at 6 p.m. Participating vendors are listed on the Riverside Arts Center Facebook page in the discussion section.

The entry fee is a suggested donation of \$1.

The Riverside Arts Center is at 76 N. Huron St. in Ypsilanti.

Beers with Queers, Monday, Nov. 24

734 Brewing Company in Ypsilanti’s Depot Town is hosting a Monday evening event designed to be a safe space for forgotten communities.

Queer folks and those looking to support a local business while enjoying good company and drinks are invited. The event begins at 6 p.m. and no registration is needed.

As posted on the company’s website, the owners and staff of 734 Brewing Company aim to bring people together and create chances for good times.

“Our mission is to extend the reach of craft beverages to forgotten communities and make quality and industry opportunities available to all,” event organizers said on the brewing company’s website.

The shop offers both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages for purchase.

To see 734 Brewing Company’s crafted drink options, visit the store’s website.

Regents say university president position to be filled by end of 2025

Lilly Kujawski
Managing Editor

After an ongoing presidential candidate search, the Eastern Michigan University community can plan for a new university president to be identified by the end of the year, with an announcement expected in November.

The search comes after EMU’s current president, James Smith, announced his intent to step down from his position at the end of his contract, which expires on June 30, 2026.

At the Oct. 23 Board of Regents meeting, Regent Anupam Chugh Sidhu, who chairs the Presidential Search Advisory Committee, announced that the university is on track with its timeline for finding a new president.

The 16-person advisory committee, which includes students, faculty, staff and community members, has selected four finalists for the Board of Regents’ consideration, Sidhu said.

The Presidential Search Advisory Committee was tasked with offering community input and providing recommendations to the regents. The Presidential Search Committee, composed of the eight members of the EMU Board of Regents, will make the final decision in hiring a new president.

“While I understand there are currently many demands and challenges facing university presidents, the Presidential Search Advisory Committee was enthused by the depth, breadth and diversity of experiences of the more than 100 individuals who applied for the president’s position at EMU,” Sidhu said at the meeting.

Jack Booth, student body president at EMU, sat on the Presidential Search Advisory Committee as a student representative. He spoke with *The Eastern Echo* about his experience working on the committee.

“What we’ve been able to do as a part of that committee is last semester, towards the end, we had listening sessions with the community, which is how we developed the rubric of what we were looking for in a candidate,” Booth said. “These were open forums for all different types of people; there were some for alumni, there were some for students, there were some for faculty members; there were some for just, you know, anyone in the Ypsilanti community who might want their [...] voice in the process.”

Through those listening sessions, the committee identified common



Eastern Michigan University's president, James Smith, addresses the audience at the 38th annual President's Luncheon celebrating the ideas and works of Martin Luther King Jr. on Jan. 15, 2024. The theme of the celebration was 'Driven by the Dream,' featuring Victoria Pratt as the keynote speaker. Photo by Kaia Tolu / The Eastern Echo

qualities that stakeholders wanted in a president, Booth said. With the help of WittKieffer, the executive search firm EMU hired to aid in the presidential search process, a leadership profile was created based on those common qualities.

“What surprised me at first was I thought the different communities or campus stakeholders would have really different opinions, but we saw a few very common themes that were then pulled into a leadership profile,” Booth said.

While student participation in the listening sessions wasn’t as high as it was for other groups, many students who did participate shared similar priorities, Booth said.

“A lot of students, and everyone

else, wanted to stay true to Eastern’s mission, and really be a place that’s open and welcoming for all students, all types of people and all types of learners, because we have a very diverse learner population here,” Booth said. “When talking to students, a lot of students were looking for communication and transparency.”

Another unifying theme among groups was the need for a president who can connect with the community, including students, staff and faculty, Booth said.

“There was a lot of talks about, especially from our faculty counterparts, shared governance and what that means for leading an institution,” Booth said. “There were a lot of different characteristics that we

saw really shine through, but I think everybody really wanted a very personable leader, who was good at getting out to the community.”

The input and the recommendations offered by Booth and Makayla Myers, the other student representative on the search advisory committee, were taken seriously by the whole committee, Booth said.

“Everybody made space for me and Makayla as students, which was really important; they wanted to hear our opinions,” Booth said. “They would defer to us for different issues that related to students and overall.”



Instagram @easternechoofficial



TikTok @theeasternecho



Facebook @ The Eastern Echo

Q&A: Political science professor explains presidential powers, overreach, local impact



EMU political science professor Jeffrey Bernstein. Photo courtesy of EMU

Hannah Borders
News Reporter

Editor's note: This Q&A was conducted on Nov. 10, 2025; since then, the federal government has reopened.

Jeffrey Bernstein, political science professor at Eastern Michigan University, is set to co-teach a new course next semester titled "Politics in the Time of Trump," with fellow political science professor, Joshua Koss. In an interview with *The Eastern Echo*, he explained the power and limitations of the United States president and how executive actions impact the Ypsilanti community.

Q: Can you explain the three branches of government and how they provide checks and balances on each other?

A: The Framers of the Constitution feared that if you let any one part of the government have too much power, then if that branch became dominated by what they called a "faction," or a group that was perhaps acting contrary to the public good, it would be dangerous to let one part of government take too much power. So, they set up a system where the different branches of government would each have separate responsibilities. In simple terms, the legislative branch makes the law, the executive branch enforces it, and the judicial branch interprets it. But then each part of the government would have the ability to check the others, to basically stop the others if they thought they were going off the rails and doing something wrong. For example, Congress can pass a law, but the president would have the power to veto that law.

Q: What are the constitutional limits of a president?

A: The Framers actually envisioned a much less powerful president than we have today. The Framers envisioned that more of the powers would go to the legislative branch, and that the president would have less power than he does now. Legislatively, the president is largely limited, at least in theory, to saying yes or no to the ideas that Congress has. Presidents are given more powers in foreign affairs. The president is the commander-in-chief of the military, but generally, presidential power is limited by what Congress would approve and what the court would deem constitutional.

Q: Are we currently witnessing a presidential overreach of power?

A: I believe we are. I believe that in various ways, this current administration is taking the power of the presidency and pushing it beyond where reasonable limits might go. For instance, when Congress is appropriating money for various functions, I think it's inappropriate for a president to say, "I'm gonna refuse to spend that money." I think it's problematic when presidents are governing heavily by executive order. And while all presidents have governed

by executive order recently, I think we're seeing it on a new scale with this president.

Q: What are some past examples of presidential overreach, and what did the response look like then?

A: A classic example of this is when the steel workers went on strike while [Harry] Truman was president. Truman got this idea that he would draft them into the military as punishment for striking. The courts, fairly quickly, ruled and said, "No, no, no, presidents can't do that," then Truman stopped. Another historical example is when Franklin Roosevelt got angry with the Supreme Court that was blocking a lot of his economic initiatives and came up with the idea that he would pack the court. With every justice older than 80 years old, he would be able to put a new justice on the court. The old one would stay, but he would just add a new one to the court; he would basically pack the court to get him the votes he needed. Public opinion largely shut that one down. And these were examples where in one case institutionally, and in another case public opinion-wise, presidents were limited and restricted.

Q: Those were problems that ended fairly quickly?

A: Fairly quickly and fairly decisively. Truman did not continue doing what he was doing; Roosevelt did not continue what he was doing.

Q: Is that different from what we're seeing right now?

A: I think it is a little bit different than right now. I think there are just so many issues that are out there. There are just so many cases where we're seeing attempts to really stretch the office of the presidency. And it's hard to stop. It's hard to limit it; it's like fighting a fight with the opposition on multiple fronts. And one other challenge that is going on right now is you have a situation where the president's party controls both houses of the legislature. Republican majorities are in the House and the Senate. We're not supposed to talk about the court as being partisan; justices don't have party labels after their name. But you currently have six justices on the court who were appointed by Republican presidents and are generally sympathetic to the president's agenda, and three justices on the court who were appointed by Democratic presidents that are not. I think this is testing the checks and balances idea because the same group, broadly speaking, is in charge across the board.

Q: Some people have described the Trump administration as a fascist takeover of government. Is that what we're witnessing?

A: I think the problem with the word fascism is that it becomes its own Rorschach test, and everybody has their own idea of what fascism means. I think it's an awfully tough concept to have a discussion about, because we are not all talking about the same basic word.

Q: Would you suggest a word or concept other than fascism?

A: It is a very unified control of government by a Republican party right now. I think one of the challenges you have is that there is a certain appeal to a team system of government. In so many governments around the world, one team gets into power, and they take all the power; they govern until the next team comes into power, and it kind of goes back and forth. What's interesting, and more than a little concerning, right now is, within the Republican team, I'm not sure there's a whole lot of questions or challenges to some of the things that are going on. By any reasonable standard of judgement, Robert Kennedy Jr. should not be secretary of Health and Human Services. By any reasonable standard, Pete Hegseth should not be defense secretary. In the case of Hegseth, I think there's just so little relevant experience there. We've never had a defense secretary that was

so underqualified for the job. In the case of Kennedy, some of his views are just bizarre. I think that there might have been room at other times in American politics to challenge these nominations from within the party. Even in one recent case, Trump's appointment of Matt Gaetz to be attorney general, even some Republicans challenged that one and said, "This is not a wise move." But there's not a lot of challenge going on within the party right now, and I think that's an interesting moment to be in.

Q: Do you think there's significance to Trump's own party recently challenging some of the things that he's doing?

A: I think there's always significance when it happens. But I think when you look at Barack Obama or Joe Biden, who experienced so much challenge within their party, I think they would look now at headlines that say "Republicans are challenging Trump," and say, "Wait a minute, this is not anything compared to what the Democrats did to me in challenging me." [The Nov. 4, 2025, election] results suggest that public opinion may be shifting a little bit; polling aggregation sites are suggesting that Trump's approval ratings are at a low point right now. Does that lead to more Republicans challenging Trump or breaking with Trump? It certainly could, but Trump maintains a great deal of power and a great deal of control within the party, and anyone challenging Trump puts himself at a certain amount of risk politically. We're not at the point where breaking from Trump is the politically wise move for most Republicans. We're just not there right now.

Q: How do executive decisions happening in Washington impact members of the local community, specifically in Ypsilanti?

A: In the government shutdown, SNAP benefits were very much on the table and remain very much on the table. Payments were in the process of not being made, so people were losing their benefits. It seems right now, based on all evidence, that the shutdown will end fairly soon and things will revert to where they were, but in the short term, there's certainly some pain. Air travel has been affected recently which, obviously, only affects a portion of the population, but does significantly affect that part of the population. Also, things like access to vaccines — what comes out of policy in Washington filters down to the state level. Even the One Big Beautiful Bill, which is reducing healthcare payments to the states — states have to figure out a way to make up that money. States can't run budget deficits like the federal government does. So when the state says, "We either have to let people lose their health coverage and lose health benefits or make that up in other ways," then that's where it can have a local effect.

Q: How can the community respond to decisions happening on the executive level?

A: I think that folks on all sides of issues can respond. Elected officials need to know from all political participants that if they act in a certain way, constituencies may be more or less happy with that. I do think that when people take to the streets to make political protests, it gets seen, and elected officials react to that. There are ways and room for folks to express their views. One of the challenges you have nowadays is that as gerrymandering has gotten as out of control as it has recently, the number of representatives who need the votes of people who disagree with them is going down. When you are seeing now more Democrats holding safe Democratic seats, more Republicans holding more safe Republican seats, I think that's going to be a challenge because elected officials can depend nowadays on smaller segments of the electorate to get elected.

Read the full interview at easternecho.com.

Opinion

The WellNest Watch

Preventing sexual harassment requires awareness and action



Ebrima Jobarteh
Contributor

Editor's note: In the WellNest Watch, master's degree candidates in the public health program at EMU's School of Health Promotion and Human Performance explore news, research and standard practices in the field of health and wellness.

College campuses are meant to be safe spaces for growth and exploration. A myriad of activities occur on campuses. These range from learning, sports, advocacy, friendships, courtships and sometimes, sexual harassment or abuse.

At this point, one might notice the natural history of how the latter end of the spectrum occurs. College students, especially freshmen, are usually in their late teenage years. This is often the stage when there are changes in hormonal levels, social interactions and intellectual capacities. It is a huge stage of adjustment, one that often leads others to make mistakes and get into trouble.

With every relationship, there are boundaries. Often, when these boundaries are crossed, it creates a state of unease, and occasionally, one begins to feel unsafe. Yes, we are talking about sexual harassment!

Sexual harassment is a scary topic that makes a lot of students uncomfortable. Freshmen and other students are often unprepared for these huge shifts in their interactions with friends, particularly those with special bonds. So, it becomes difficult to take action when boundaries are crossed.

There is also a feeling of shame, finger pointing, the uncertainty of what

constitutes sexual harassment and the anonymity of the reporter. Thus, the silent culture and the embracing-the-suck phenomenon.

Sexual harassment includes unwanted physical contact, stalking, emotional or academic manipulation. It stems from friendships, courtships, quid pro quo from lecturers or faculty, teaching assistants, graduates assistants and others in a position of power. When there is a power imbalance, social media, persistent unwarranted texting even without sexual intent can make a student feel unsafe or uncomfortable. When a student feels unsafe, it becomes noticeable in their interactions with their partner or colleagues and could lead to a decline in classroom concentration, which could affect grades.

Prevention starts with respectful communication and boundary setting. Reporting strategies include campus hotlines, Title IX offices and trusted faculty.

By educating students on what sexual harassment looks like, how to recognize it and how to respond, we empower them to protect themselves and support their peers. Awareness fosters a culture of respect and accountability, making campuses safer and more inclusive for everyone.

Editor's note: If you or someone you know is in danger, call 911. Sexual misconduct reports can be submitted by calling 734-487-9126, visiting Student Center Room 250, emailing emu_titleix_office@emich.edu or filling out the form on EMU's Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response office webpage. Campus police can be contacted at 734-487-1222.

Contributors to the WellNest Watch health column are 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 Public Health Program from the School of Public Health Promotion and Human Performance at Eastern Michigan University.

Subscribe to our newsletter!

Get Echo news in your inbox every week!

Chris Creighton scores 200th career win

Caleb Henderson
Sports Editor

Welcome to the 200 win club, Chris Creighton.

Becoming just the 38th coach in Football Bowl Subdivision history to reach the milestone, the 56-year-old is the fourth active coach to hit the mark. His team achieved the feat for him in emphatic fashion as Eastern Michigan University dominated Ball State University to score their first road win of the year, 24-9.

“If I’m being totally honest, I don’t want it to be a big deal, but it is a big deal because it makes me think of all the people that I’ve been on this journey with. So that does make me emotional,” Creighton said, reflecting on his historic achievement.

“This game, more than any other, you just can’t do anything by yourself. You just can’t. That part of it gets me super, super thankful of all the people — coaches, players, administration — that have allowed me to be a head of these programs. I’m thankful,” he added.

The Eagles went into Scheumann Stadium having not won a road game all season, facing off against a Cardinals team that was unbeaten at home in 2025.

However, from Eastern Michigan’s methodical opening drive of the game — a nine-play, 58-yard march down the field in four minutes and 13 seconds capped off by a rushing touchdown from quarterback Noah Kim — it was

clear that things would be different on this Saturday afternoon.

The Eagles defense proceeded to intercept Ball State quarterback Kial Kelly deep in the red zone on the ensuing possession courtesy of Joshua Scott, denying the Cardinals an early opportunity to respond and setting the tone for the remainder of the contest.

Eastern Michigan held Ball State out of the end zone for all four quarters, the first time its defensive unit has done so to an opponent all season, limiting the home team to just 62 yards passing and the aforementioned interception forced.

“Misery likes company — and so, Ball State, what are they, [4-5] right? We want them at home right with us,” Barry Manning, an Eagles starting linebacker, said during the team’s pre-game press conference.

“We want [Ball State] at home for Christmas too,” he added.

Manning, who wore the team’s sacred No. 0 this week doled out to the previous game’s most impressive defensive player, delivered on his pre-game wishes for the opposing team. Contributing six tackles, a sack, and two tackles for loss, the senior headlined the Eagles’ defensive efforts along with defensive back Bryce Llewellyn in his homecoming to the state of Indiana, who added six tackles and a tackle for loss of his own to the stat sheet.

Offensively, the green and white saw a new player step up and produce a big game — Jamarien Wheeler, who posted six catches for 131 yards and



Chris Creighton, head coach of EMU's football team, runs onto the field after pregame with his team surrounding him before the game against Ohio on Oct. 25. Bradan Copeland / The Eastern Echo

a 43-yard touchdown scored in the second quarter.

Wheeler, who had just 11 catches for 98 yards and a touchdown this season prior to his outing against Ball State, proved crucial for the Eagles’ passing attack as the Cardinals were able to hold red-hot Nick Devereaux to just one catch for 15 yards on the day.

It was a mixed bag overall through the air for Kim, as the graduate transfer threw for 229 yards and a touchdown but also tossed two interceptions — tied for his season high. Ultimately, those turnovers did not matter as Kim’s rushing touchdown was his sixth of the season, a mark that leads the team.

Eastern Michigan’s two-pronged rushing attack shone once more against Ball State, with Dontae McMillan

racking up 80 yards on 21 carries, while Tavierre Dunlap tallied eight rushes for 51 yards and a 36-yard rushing touchdown to cap off the team’s dominant performance at the start of the fourth quarter.

With the win, Eastern Michigan improves to 4-7 on the season and 3-4 in Mid-American Conference play, while Ball State drops to 4-6, falling to 3-3 in conference action.

Next time out, the Eagles wrap up the 2025 campaign with some mid-week MACtion on Senior Night, returning home to face Western Michigan University on Tuesday, Nov. 25, at 7:30 p.m. Viewers can catch all of the action live on ESPN2 or listen on WEMU 89.1 FM.

The MACcoon chain: how a YouTube comment birthed Eastern Michigan football’s newest tradition



Bryce Llewellyn flashes the MACcoon turnover chain during Eastern Michigan football's win against Louisiana Lafayette on Sept. 20. Courtesy of Marlon Llewellyn

Caleb Henderson
Sports Editor

Why has the Eastern Michigan University football team begun flashing a raccoon chain on a ladder after forcing a defensive turnover throughout the course of this season?

It all stems from a YouTube comment, a viral tweet, merchandise and a new tradition debuted by the program this year.

Origins

“That’s not football. That’s MACtion. You wouldn’t survive one quarter in Ypsilanti,” are the infamous

words of YouTube user @teaking701 on a viral comment under a YouTube video, the message being a prop of the Mid-American Conference and an indirect diss to the “Power 4” Southeastern Conference.

The comment in full reads, “Congrats on your 5-star recruits and \$100M facilities, SEC fans. Meanwhile, the MAC is out here playing real football in front of 14 people and a raccoon on a Tuesday night during a blizzard. You ever seen a punter throw a touchdown to a long snapper while the scoreboard’s on fire? Didn’t think so. While y’all are busy arguing over which frat-funded dynasty is less fraudulent, Toledo’s cooking up a triple-reverse flea flicker in a game that ends 43-42 after six missed PATs and a goalpost gets stolen. That’s not football. That’s MACtion. You wouldn’t survive one quarter in Ypsilanti.”

The comment quickly turned into a viral post on X from meteorologist Jefferson Donovan for KEPR and KIMA broadcast stations in Washington. Donovan’s post tagged the Sickos Committee, which brands itself as a committee of depraved college football fans in its bio on X. This eventually led to merchandise referencing the tagline “You wouldn’t survive one quarter in Ypsilanti,” in text on T-shirts written under a plastered image of a raccoon.

The MACcoon migrates to Ypsilanti

So, how did this cross the desk of Eastern Michigan Head Coach Chris Creighton and lead to the entire

coaching staff repping the merchandise during fall camp?

The Sickos Committee Podcast shared some lore on how the connection was made during an episode from Aug. 12, titled “Urban Meyer’s Ghost Kitchen,” with host George Smith revealing the team reached out via direct messages on social media and asked for t-shirts to be sent for the staff to wear.

“They made us T-shirts, and we wore them, and it just kinda became a thing,” Creighton said.

Eastern Michigan football’s social media channels fully embraced the concept, with multiple Instagram, X and Facebook posts promoting the raccoons and T-shirts. However, this was only the tip of the iceberg.

“Bryce Llewellyn was the one that spearheaded [the] ‘takeaway chain’ idea — so we just combined that with the ‘MACcoon’ and then our ladder,” Creighton said on how the tradition made its way from Sickos Committee merchandise to the gridiron each Saturday.

Llewellyn, a starting defensive back for the Eagles, divulged that his idea for the MACcoon spawned from a preseason meeting when the program was looking to add some swag to the defensive side of the ball with a unique twist.

“One thing that I thought about instantly was a turnover chain, or like a turnover belt,” Llewellyn said.

“But one thing about Coach Creighton is he likes to be very unique in our approach — his thing was like,

how many teams in the country have a turnover chain or turnover belt? What’s gonna make ours different; what’s gonna make ours special and mean something to us?” he added.

When Llewellyn heard about the viral YouTube comment, everything clicked.

“We were able to combine the gritty part of being in Ypsi and add the swagger to it with the chain — and then we climb the ladder and get to show off in front of the fans. It’s one of the best parts of playing defense right now,” he said.

It took four games for the Eagles defense to force their first turnover of the season, but when they did, thanks to an interception from Llewellyn, the defensive unit officially debuted the MACcoon tradition: Llewellyn standing on a ladder and flashing a raccoon chain in front of the home fans.

The jewelry, ceremoniously dubbed the MACcoon chain, was a part of the MACtion football photo of the week on Sept. 25, featuring Eastern Michigan defensive backs Caleb Dobbs and Dramarian McNulty spotlighted in the image holding the precious cargo. The chain has now quickly become a rite of passage when the Eagles defense forces a turnover.

Barry Manning, a starting linebacker for the Eagles’ defense who has flashed the MACcoon twice this season, concurred with Llewellyn’s sentiments.

“It always feels good to have the MACcoon — have worn it twice, but am looking to make it as much as I can [the rest of the season],” Manning said.

Robbie Britt steps down as Eastern Michigan baseball’s head coach for MLB opportunity

Caleb Henderson
Sports Editor

After two seasons in Ypsilanti, Robbie Britt’s tenure as the Eastern Michigan University baseball head coach has come to an end.

Britt leaves the Eagles after having led the program to 35 wins during his time at the helm, departing to take on an opportunity with Major League Baseball’s Boston Red Sox as a field coordinator.

“I’m incredibly grateful for my time here at Eastern Michigan,” Britt said in a statement to EMU Athletics.

“I want to thank Scott Wetherbee, Greg Steiner, and the entire Eastern community for welcoming us and supporting us over these last few years,” he added.

Britt’s exit comes after leading Eastern Michigan to its first Mid-American

Conference tournament appearance this decade and the school’s first postseason win since 2017. He also oversaw the program during the \$2 million upgrades provided to the Eagles’ ballpark, Oestrike Stadium, over the past 18 months.

“I want to thank Coach Britt for his commitment and dedication to our baseball program over the past two years,” said Eastern Michigan Vice President/Director of Athletics Scott Wetherbee in a statement.

Trevor Beerman named Eagles’ interim head coach

Following the news of Britt’s departure, Eastern Michigan moved quickly to appoint Trevor Beerman as the baseball program’s interim head coach for the 2026 season.

Beerman accepted the promotion following two seasons in Ypsilanti working under Britt. This past campaign,

he served as the team’s assistant coach and recruiting coordinator.

“I want to wish Robbie Britt the best of luck in his future endeavors. Without him, I would not be in this position,” Beerman said in a statement to EMU Athletics.

“We have a great group in this locker room and I’m excited and honored to continue to build off the momentum we’ve created over the past year,” he added.

A former relief pitcher for Division II’s Malone University, Beerman graduated from the institution in 2018, but his coaching career began while he was a student-athlete.

Serving as the president and head coach of the Columbus Storm from 2016-17 and the head coach and assistant director of recruiting, scouting and tournaments for the Midwest Marlins from 2017-20, Beerman was able to parlay his travel baseball coaching

acumen into bigger opportunities before decade’s end.

Beerman was an assistant coach for Bluffton University from 2018-20, where he received his Master of Business Administration in leadership before moving on to Hillsdale College in 2020.

Moves to the University of Charleston and Chatham University quickly followed between 2021-23, with Beerman continuing to obtain more and more responsibilities at each stop before arriving in Ypsilanti in 2024 as an assistant coach and recruiting coordinator on Robbie Britt’s staff.

Now heading into the upcoming 2026 season, Beerman steps into his biggest role yet.

“I’ve had the fortune to watch Trevor grow into this position over a number of years — he is a servant leader who cares deeply about people, and I’m confident he will shine in this new role,” Britt said about his former protege in a statement.

Eagle Sports

Tips & Tales: Nov. 18 - 24

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.

Men’s basketball | Eastern Michigan travels to Detroit Mercy, hosts Oakland

At 7 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 18, the men’s basketball team will head to Detroit for a showdown with the University of Detroit Mercy Titans. The Eagles and Titans will put another chapter in their long-standing basketball rivalry that dates back to 1898.

Eastern will be led by guard Carlos Hart and forward Mo Habhab, who have both found success early. Both players are averaging over 15 points a game and seven rebounds on the season.

Fans can find the game on ESPN+ or listen to it on the WEMU Radio Network.

The Eagles will then return to the George Gervin GameAbove Center Nov. 21 at 6:30 p.m. for another in-state matchup with the Oakland University Golden Grizzlies. The Grizzlies will prove tough after going up against three nationally-ranked opponents to begin the season.

Historically, Eastern has a 12-9 record against the Grizzlies with a one-game win streak.

The Grizzlies are averaging 77 points per game, while the Eagles only average 68 points per game, so defense could be a vital factor in the matchup’s outcome.

Fans can watch the game on ESPN+ or tune in on the WEMU Radio Network.

Women’s basketball | Eastern Michigan matches up with Purdue Fort Wayne in road test

At 7 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 19, the Eastern Michigan women’s basketball team will head to Fort Wayne, Indiana, to take on the Purdue Fort Wayne Mastodons. This will be its last away game before returning to Ypsilanti for its home opener next week.

The Eagles will be looking to avenge their 94-49 loss to the Mastodons last season. The Mastodons will pose a serious threat to the Eagles after upsetting the Purdue University Boilermakers on Nov. 12.

Senior captain Sisi Eleko aims to find success on both sides of the floor to ensure victory for the Eagles. Eleko is averaging 17 points and nine rebounds a game this season.

Freshman point guard Peyton Hill, a four-time Missouri state champion from St. Louis, is another player to watch, having started each game for the Eagles this season.

Fans can watch the game on ESPN+ or follow live stats on the Eastern Michigan Athletics website.

Swim and dive | Eastern Michigan faces off against Oakland in early non-conference test

On Wednesday, Nov. 19, the women’s swim and dive team travels to Rochester, Michigan, for its 41st meeting all-time with the Oakland Golden Grizzlies. The Eagles have won 22 of those matchups as they enter the competition on a two-meet winning streak.

The Eagles look to bounce back after two tough defeats — one against Bowling Green State University on the road, and one at home against Akron University.

Nehir Oz, a sophomore from Turkey, hopes to help Eastern get back on track as she looks to add two more wins to her accomplished freestyle distance resume. On the diving side, Rose Kendrick aims to pace the Eagles through the air as they aim for victory.

The results can be found on the Eastern Michigan Athletics website.



Jude Sears as Constantine and Frankie Cramer as Thyona. Photo by Wallace Bridges / Courtesy of EMU Theatre

EMU Theatre presents deadly dark comedy with 'Big Love'

Gray Connor
Podcast Editor

Eastern Michigan University Theatre's new main stage production, "Big Love," adapts an ancient play with a deadly spin.

Based on "The Suppliants," written by the Greek tragedian Aeschylus sometime around 400 B.C., "Big Love" explores themes of feminism, gender roles and independence. Taking place in modern Italy, the play follows 50 brides seeking refuge from their grooms with a family at a coastal Italian villa. Written by playwright Charles L. Mee, its first production took place in 2000.

Jennifer Felts, director of "Big Love" and full-time lecturer at EMU, has worked in EMU Theatre

for 18 years. While the play had been mentioned as an option for EMU Theatre to perform for years, it wasn't until recently that the story stuck out.

"Last year, when Roe v. Wade was overturned, and the conflict between people in this country was getting stronger, I thought 'Let me look at it again,'" Felts said. "I was mind blown at the connections to the world we live in today."

The play questions gender roles, with both the brides and grooms sharing their thoughts to the audience on marriage and equality between men and women.

"We get to introduce a story that asks hard questions and confronts the audience with hard topics, because that's the way that people come together and start talking about them," Felts said.

"The more that we can come together and talk about things, the more civil, supportive and loving we can be. Bella, a character in the show, says at the end, 'The greatest human quality we can have is sympathy.'"

Gary Zellely, a senior at EMU, plays Guiliano, an Italian man who finds himself in the crosshairs of the women and the men. Through him, audiences are shown the middle point of the brides' and grooms' different perspectives.

"It takes serious topics and really criticizes the world that we live in, but it does it in a comedic way," Zellely said. "Everything is very absurd. It makes it so that the production is ingestible to audiences, and very approachable."

The show takes an abstract approach to

storytelling and does not focus on being hyper realistic. While the set is more limited, audiences can expect a variety of props and moving pieces throughout.

"I don't want audiences to take away one particular thing," Felts said. "I want them to leave and have a conversation, or two or three. I want them to question the things that were brought up in front of them and hash it out."

Tickets for "Big Love" can be purchased on the EMU website or at the box office. While all ages are welcome, the show is suggested for theatergoers 15+ for violence, language and adult situations. The play will be in the Legacy Theatre Nov. 20-23, with showings Nov. 20-22 at 7 p.m. and Nov. 22-23 at 2 p.m.

Cellar Roots

Volume 52

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.

Deadline
Dec. 13

Submit Works Here:



cellar.roots

cellarroots

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

Winging it
An Eastern Echo Podcast

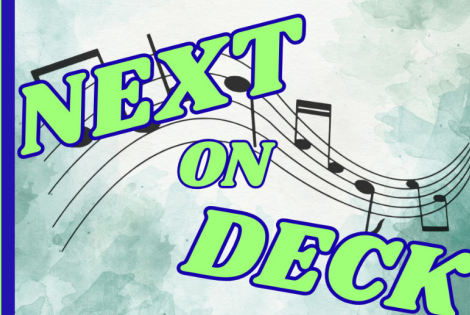
Join our host, Anthony Thaxton, along with guest Frankie Cramer on Episode 6 of Winging It. They discuss EMU Theatre's upcoming production of the play "Big Love."

LISTEN NOW ON
 Spotify

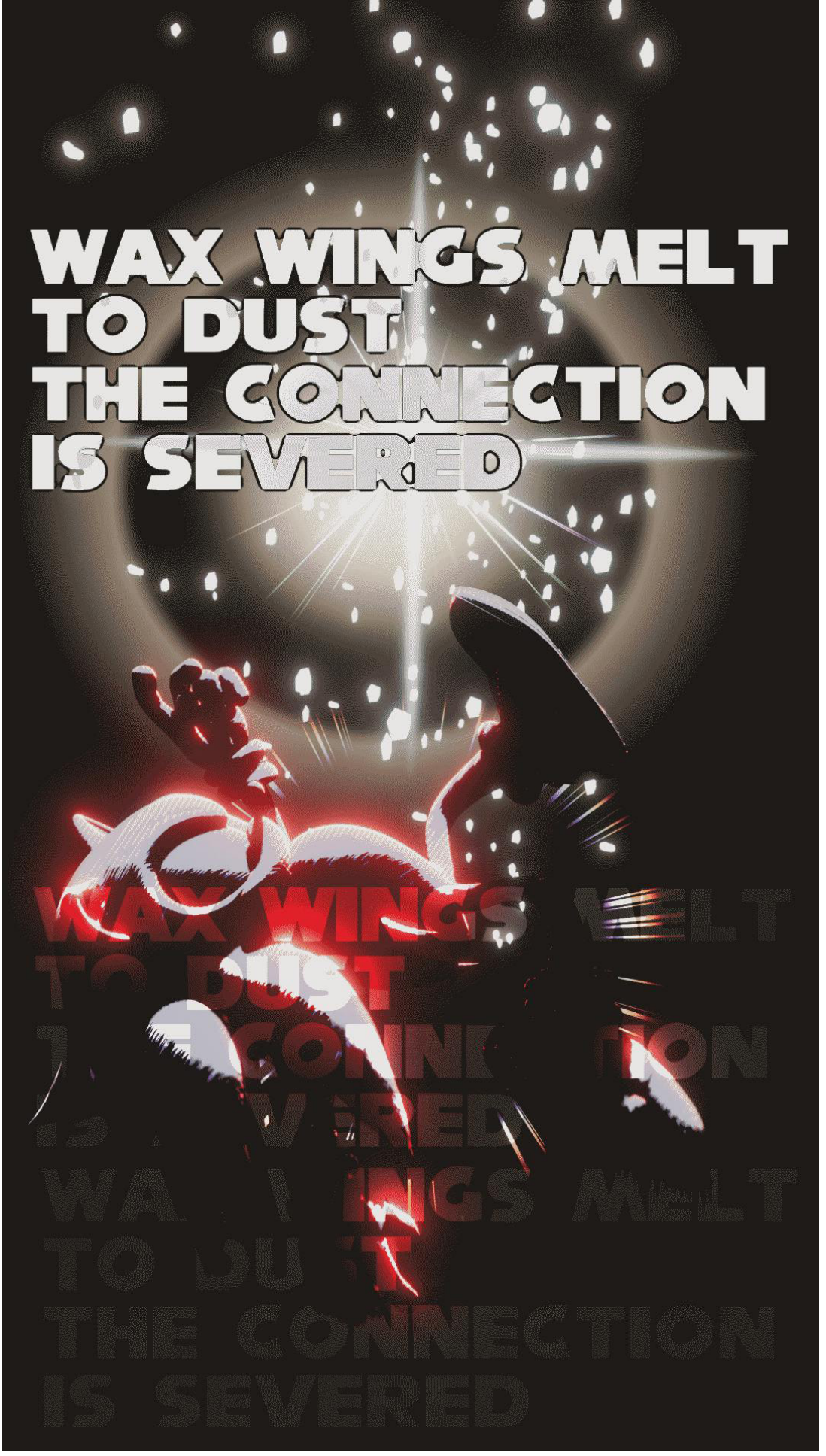
Next on Deck

There's a non-zero chance that your dorm neighbor is a musician, and there's a non-zero chance that they have music coming out soon! Next on Deck features interviews with EMU students creating music across a variety of genres, airing bi-weekly on Thursday.

follow now on Spotify



Dust | Yiri



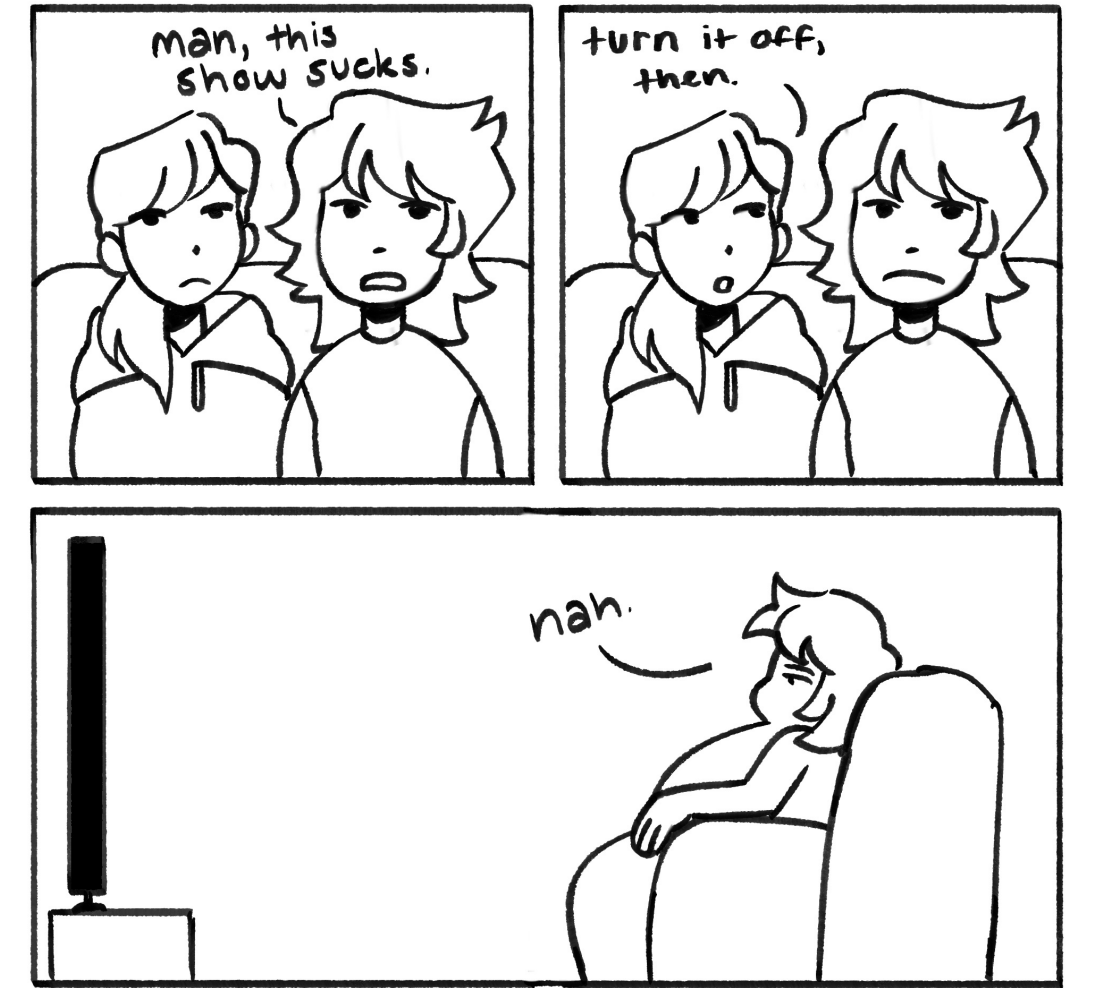
Something About a Freshie #4 | Isaiah Sanders



Weather Changes | Yiri



Lazy | FunkyLOaf



Moonlight 11-4 | FunkyLOaf



Scan to find our links!



SCOOP
Bundle up and stay warm!



Last week at EMU: Movies, anime, pizza and more

Robert Fronta speaks about the film "MR. SOUL!" after the end of the showing, asking the audience questions inside the EMU Student Center on Monday, Nov. 10. Kaleb Stanley / The Eastern Echo



EMU student Gabby Griffin poses for a picture at the Women's and Gender Studies pizza party on the seventh floor of Pray-Harrold on Tuesday, Nov. 11. Owen Cardenas / The Eastern Echo



The Anime Music Club put on many performances throughout the night, featuring music from multiple different animes for the Anime Ball on Tuesday, Nov. 11, in the McKenny Hall Ballroom. Max Taylor / The Eastern Echo



Tables line the Rec/IM Gymnasium for Registration Blitz on Thursday, Nov. 13. Lee Hammock / The Eastern Echo



From left, Chisom Ndukwe and Amanda Olang enjoy ramen at the Southeast Asian Student Alliance Ramen Bar in McKenny Hall on Thursday, Nov. 13. Lee Hammock / The Eastern Echo



EMU men's basketball player Mohammad Habhab dunking the ball in the game against Indiana University Indianapolis on Nov. 14 at George Gervin GameAbove Center. Bradan Copeland / The Eastern Echo



John Sanders II steps to the line for a free throw during the Eagles' home game Nov. 14 against Indiana University Indianapolis, as teammates and defenders await the rebound. Julius Stewart / The Eastern Echo

