

## YEAR IN REVIEW

### *Political on every level*

By Ananya Cox

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What we have seen from UNC and the local community this year has changed what regular news looks like at the University, especially in terms of polarization. As both a writer and editor, things this year just felt different.

We started off the year with the departure of former Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz, with University leadership transitioning to then-interim Chancellor Lee Roberts, a former state budget director for Republican governor Pat McCrory. Some members of the campus community questioned Roberts' partisan ties and lack of higher education experience.

We then saw the election of Student Body President Jaleah Taylor, campaigning with priorities surrounding diversity, equity and inclusion.

In March, just before UNC Men's Basketball faced a bittersweet loss in the sweet 16 of the March Madness competition, Jed Atkins was named as the director and dean of UNC's new School of Civic Life and Leadership.

Continuing from the 2023 fall semester, UNC Students for Justice in Palestine held demonstrations surrounding the war in Gaza, calling for UNC to divest from Israeli and Israeli supporting companies.

Also in March, the Graduate and Professional Student Government passed the Gaza Ceasefire and Israel Divestment Resolution, calling for divestment and for UNC's condemnation of war crimes committed in Gaza.

On April 26, UNC SJP began the Triangle Gaza Solidarity Encampment with hundreds of students and community members gathering on Polk Place. On the morning of April 30, the last day of class in the spring semester, police swept the encampment, detaining 36 and arresting six demonstrators.

That afternoon, several hundred people gathered for a vigil for Palestine outside of South Building, later removing fencing put up by police surrounding the Polk Place flagpole and removing the U.S. flag, replacing it with the Palestinian flag.

Roberts emerged with UNC System police as they clashed with the crowd, forcefully moving demonstrators and using pepper spray. The response increased criticism of his leadership and garnered praise from Republican leaders in the N.C. legislature. Over \$500,000 was raised for a party later deemed "Flagstock" for a group of fraternity members who held up the U.S. flag.

When President Joe Biden dropped out of the presidential race this summer, the Democratic ticket was reinvigorated. As Vice President Kamala Harris selected her running mate, speculation surrounded N.C. Gov. Roy Cooper. Harris ultimately chose Minn. Gov. Tim Walz.

This semester also saw outrage surrounding the departure of Kenan-Flagler Business School professor Larry Chavis. Chavis' classes were recorded without his knowledge. His contract was not renewed after 18 years of working at UNC. Chavis has since filed a legal complaint UNC this September on grounds surrounding a retaliatory First Amendment violation.

Right before the beginning of the fall semester, Roberts was elected by the BOG as UNC's 13th chancellor. UNC has faced questions surrounding the chancellor search process and its integrity, especially surrounding the members of the board and the firm selected to run the process.

In September, the BOG announced changes to DEI-budget related items throughout UNC System schools after voting to remove requirements in May. \$5.3 million were redirected at UNC with 20 positions eliminated and 27 realigned. Changes included completely cutting the Diversity and Inclusion office. Many students, faculty and community members said the decision would contribute to less feelings of belonging at the University, especially after the removal of affirmative action in admissions.

In typical swing state fashion, President-elect Donald Trump won North Carolina's electoral votes, but Democrats secured five offices in the council of state. Additionally, BOT members David Boliek and Brad Briner won their statewide elections of auditor and treasurer, respectively, leaving the BOG and General Assembly to fill two seats this January.

While reporting on a number these events over the year, I found that they often felt uniquely monumental. But when I sat down to write and research, I saw that the past provided a context that often made me think that all of the big and "crazy" stories were no longer shocking.

Instead of being surprised by the news, let's try to understand it. Let's look towards the future by analyzing our past. This is our year in review.

X: @a\_nanyabusines

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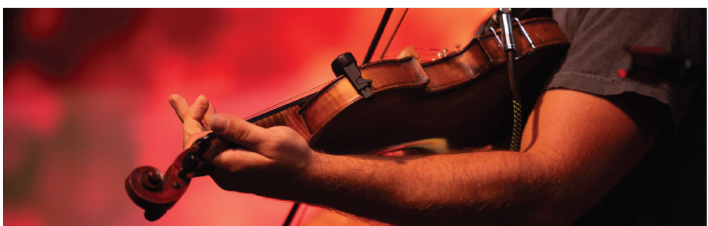
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“ A new beginning is forged from the shards of the past, not from the abandonment of the past. ”

CRAIG D. LOUNSBROUGH





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- Corrections are printed on this page and noted in the online versions of our stories, which are also edited to reflect the new information.
- The Nov. 20 print edition front page misattributed the pull quote in "Undergraduate Senate advances own interests through gerrymandering." It was Samuel Hendrix, not Andrew Gary, who said the quote. The Daily Tar Heel apologizes for this error.
- In the same paper, the graphic byline for the opinion piece on tradwives was incorrect. Jessica Baugh created the graphic. The Daily Tar Heel apologizes for this error.

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## Q&amp;A

## Roberts talks DEI, SCiLL, more

## New chancellor reflects on semester heading UNC administration

*Wednesday will mark the end of classes for UNC students, and the end of the first full semester led by Chancellor Lee Roberts. University Editor Ananya Cox sat down with Roberts to talk about the unprecedented year, including changes to admissions and criticism from different members of the community.*

*This interview has been edited for brevity and clarity.*

**The Daily Tar Heel:** This is the first year that we've seen the incoming class come in without the use of affirmative action in our admissions process. Some students have described this feeling of belonging less at the University. There was a system-wide removal of requirements for DEI services, as well as racist text messages sent out to Black people across the country, including UNC students. How is the University providing support and protecting students at a time when some don't feel safe here?

**Lee Roberts:** I can't imagine what it would have been like to receive one of those text messages. I did see them. They were repulsive and my heart does go out to the students who received them. We're working with law enforcement to try to get to the bottom of that.

We were a defendant in the Supreme Court case. We spent years defending our affirmative action policy and millions of dollars, as has been broadly reported. I think it's too early to identify the impact. First of all, one year wouldn't be enough data— but this year, we have the additional complication



DTH/HEATHER DIEHL

Chancellor Lee Roberts sits in his office for an interview reflecting on the past year at UNC on Tuesday, Dec. 3.

of the change in the FAFSA administration. I think there's broad bipartisan consensus that that was botched. The DEI policy is obviously a system level policy, not a Carolina policy. We've implemented the policy. I have heard from students that they feel that these factors, taken as a whole, have, as you put it, made them feel as though they belong less. And that's terrible. I mean, we have to be a place that works as hard as it can to make sure that every North Carolinian feels as though this is a place that they are wanted and welcome.

**DTH:** Can you briefly describe how the university is supporting students that are affected by Hurricane Helene, and if there are any other plans in the works or future that we're not yet aware of to support those students in that area?

**LR:** We've done everything we can administratively to support the students from the counties that are affected, but to me, the

part that is most compelling is the direct action from our community, even without any top down guidance. We had people from our pharmacy school set up a temporary pharmacy immediately after the storm to dispense insulin to people who needed it. We had students who were activated in the National Guard who left campus to go work on the relief effort. We've done everything we can to support the other UNC System schools in the area.

**DTH:** In the Spring, professor Larry Chavis departed from the University after his class was recorded, without his knowledge, and then he decided to take legal action in September against the University. How is the university letting faculty and professors know that they are supported to speak freely given this situation?

**LR:** I think everyone agrees that was an isolated incident, and my understanding is that it was confined to this particular

professor, particular set of circumstances, but it identified the need for a policy around when classes can be recorded, which has the authority to approve the recording of classes.

The provost has been working with the deans on trying to craft a policy on recording of classes so it should just give more clarity, predictability, transparency for everybody more broadly. I can't think of anything before I got here, that in any way restricts the faculty's ability to teach, say, research, whatever it is that they want to speak or research or write about.

**DTH:** With high faculty turnover, the narrative from previous faculty that the School of Civic Life and Leadership has taken a religious focus and ongoing claims that the school was created for the purpose of conservative discourse, has your perspective on where you see the school going in the future changed?

**LR:** The speed with which they've been able to attract faculty is remarkable. Those faculty are all hired and reviewed by a committee of faculty members from across the college, not just from within SCiLL, just as the dean was hired by a committee of faculty members that itself was chosen by a committee of other faculty members. There's been comprehensive faculty involvement, college faculty, not the SCiLL faculty.

*Read the longer version of the interview online.*

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## Front page photos from top to bottom:

President Joe Biden speaks at a rally in Raleigh, N.C. on June 28. DTH/Grace Richards; Pro-Palestine protestors surround Gerrard Hall demanding arrested students be released on April 30. DTH/Jennifer Tran; UNC Field Hockey head coach Erin Matson celebrates the team's 4-1 defeat of Boston College with her players on Nov. 8. DTH/Dylan Thiessen; A group of students hold up the American flag in Polk Place on April 30. DTH/Grace Richards; UNC junior forward Harrison Ingram (55) moves down the court during the men's basketball game against Duke at the Dean E. Smith Center on Feb. 3. UNC beat Duke 93-84. DTH/Kennedy Cox; The partial eclipse is photographed from the Loonie Poole Golf Course in Raleigh on April 8. DTH/Nate Skvoretz; Sherita "Rita" Baker talks to a pedestrian as they cross South Road on Oct. 28. DTH/Mckenzie Bulris; Former President and Republican nominee Donald Trump speaks at a rally in Raleigh, N.C. one day before the election on Nov. 4. DTH/Heather Diehl; Saksquatch poses as he finishes his set on East Franklin Street on Sept. 28. DTH/Mason Miller; UNC junior outfielder Vance Honeycutt (7) celebrates after getting splashed with water at the Charles Schwab Field in Omaha, Neb., during the College World Series game against UVA on June 14. DTH/Lara Crochik; MJ Lenderman and the Wind performs at City Plaza for Hopscotch Music Festival on Sept. 6. DTH/Anna Connors

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## TOGETHERNESS

## University community developed projects and protected each other in 2024

## Recent impacts made by UNC students, faculty and organizations

By Alice Scott

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2024 was a busy year for Keegan Lee.

After serving as a youth council member for a national nonprofit and conducting psychology and technology research, the UNC sophomore was recognized as one of PEOPLE's Girls Changing the World.

"I was very ecstatic. I don't do it for the recognition. I don't do it for the extrinsic reward, but it is nice to see that it's a cause that people deem important."

Lee is one of several UNC community members who went out of their way to help others this year. Here's a look back at some of the ways students, faculty and organizations made a difference in 2024.

## Student achievement

Lee said her digital wellness work this year is largely an extension of a high school project where she authored

a book, "60 Days of Disconnect — A Personal Perspective of How Social Media Affects Mental Health."

In May, Lee worked with a team at Mental Health America, a national nonprofit organization, to host their first youth-led summit, which she said focused on understanding the social media landscape.

Lee said she has also taught at schools nationwide and conducted research in hopes of helping people better navigate their mental health in an increasingly technology-driven world.

"I wouldn't wake up and do this every day if I didn't have hope that people could responsibly adapt and grow," Lee said.

Third-year graduate student Madyson Barber also spent much of the year conducting research — specifically for her thesis project on transiting planets. Barber said it was this research that led her to discover the youngest transiting planet ever, TIDYE-1b.

On Nov. 20, Barber's finding was published in a paper authored by her and her advisor, associate professor Andrew Mann.

The planet, TIDYE-1b is roughly three million years old. On a human time-scale, Barber said that would make it between 10 to 14 days old.

"Previously, we weren't sure if we could find planets younger than about 10 million years," she said.

## Faculty action

Professors' impact extended beyond the classroom this year. On April 5, Dr. Abhi Mehrotra, a UNC Hospital physician and UNC School of Medicine clinical professor, was taking his dog for a walk to clear his mind before a shift at the emergency department.

On his walk, Mehrotra saw smoke coming from a neighbor's home and noticed she was still inside.

As the flames spread and the dark smoke intensified, he realized that she needed to get out immediately. He managed to pull her out of the first-floor window, to safety.

"I think it was just being in the mindset of moving to action," Mehrotra said.

After making sure his neighbor was OK, and the firefighters were there, Mehrotra left for his shift. He said when he arrived at the emergency department, one of the first patients he treated was a firefighter who had been injured putting out the same blaze.

"If I hadn't had thought to see if there's someone in the home, this could have been a tragic situation," he said.



DTH DESIGN/MILA HORSLEY

## Community impact

When Carolina Across 100 began looking for the focus of its fifth project, lead coordinator Anita Brown-Graham said housing stood out as the primary concern of North Carolinians.

That's why, in September, the organization launched Our State, Our Homes. The program accepted applications for communities to get involved until Nov. 22. Brown-Graham said they will likely select between 12-15 county representatives.

CX100, organized by the ncIMPACT Initiative at the UNC School of Government, is an effort to partner with every North Carolina county to address their most pressing needs since the pandemic.

"In 24 months, they won't have built all the housing, they won't have rehabbed all the housing they need, but there should be a different level of inspiration about doing this work together," Brown-Graham said.

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## ADMINISTRATION

## A timeline of the DEI repeal and its effects

## The entire UNC System experienced cuts and realignments

By Claire Harutunian

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## A system-wide repeal

On May 23, the UNC System Board of Governors repealed the policy on Diversity and Inclusion Within the University of North Carolina and replaced it with an Equality Within the University of North Carolina section.

Ten days before, the UNC Board of Trustees diverted \$2.3 million budgeted for DEI services to be redirected toward public safety in the budget they sent to the BOG.

"The DEI policy change by the UNC Board of Governors focused on funding and programs for student support and employee well-being both centrally and across the campus," UNC Media Relations wrote in an email statement to The Daily Tar Heel.

The new mandate, which replaced the policy initially instated in 2019, includes a requirement for UNC System universities to maintain institutional neutrality and includes exceptions for student-led organizations.

"It didn't come as a shock, considering that we have seen DEI being removed from many schools across the entire country," Elise Ramos, co-director of the Department of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Undergraduate Student Government Executive Branch, said.

On Aug. 30, Chancellor Lee Roberts and Provost Chris Clemens submitted a mandatory certification and report to System President Peter Hans detailing compliance with the new policy.

This document included a list of eliminated, realigned and



DTH FILE/GRACE RICHARDS

A protester holds up a sign reading "DEI matters" before the Board of Governors meeting in Raleigh, N.C. on May 23.

re-named positions; the closure or refocusing of offices, committees and programs; and additional redirected funds totaling to approximately \$5.3 million.

Ramos said she and her co-director of DEI, Alexandra Versace, met with Provost Clemens in October to discuss compliance with institutional neutrality.

## DEI-related positions and programs impacted

Versace, who was selected to participate in the DEI Fellowship program this academic year, said she found out that the program no longer exists in a September meeting with her fellowship cohort.

"It was a program that I thought I would benefit really well from, and I was very interested to get to work in a position on campus and help solve DEI issues, as well as learn and build connections in that community

since it's so niche," Versace said. "But unfortunately, that was unable to happen."

Following the repeal, the University Diversity and Inclusion office no longer exists. Project Uplift, a program for high schoolers that introduces them to the University, now sits under the Office of Carolina Higher Education Opportunity Programs.

Identity-based centers including the Carolina Latinx Center, Sonja Haynes Stone Center and Asian American Center remain open.

In September, Ramos and Versace organized a DEI Town Hall to address students' confusion about the policy changes. Leah Cox, former vice provost for equity and inclusion and the current vice provost for the office of the provost, attended the town hall and answered questions.

"I'm glad student government was able to kind of step in and play

this role of, 'here's the information that you need, here's how it will affect you, here are the resources that you will still have [and] here are the ones that unfortunately we're losing,'" Ramos said.

## 'Affirmative Action was a bridge'

In September, UNC reported the statistics and demographics for the class of 2028 — the first class admitted since the U.S. Supreme Court repealed race-based affirmative action in 2023. The percentage of Black or African American identifying first-year and transfer students dropped about 25 percent.

Sarah Zhang, a UNC senior and founder and internal affairs chair of the Affirmative Action Coalition, said UNC's Black student population was already not representative of the racial breakdown in North Carolina.

"But now it's just like we just took a giant step back again, and we're never really going to reach that equality level that some of us wanted to see," Zhang said.

Media Relations wrote that the changes to the undergraduate admissions process were handled by the Admissions Office.

Versace said she and Ramos met with Rachele Feldman, the vice provost for enrollment, in October. In that meeting, Ramos pitched for UNC students to visit high schools in low income areas to encourage students to apply.

"Affirmative Action was a bridge in those gaps to higher education, right? So when you take away affirmative action, it's taking away that bridge for a lot of different types of people," Ramos said.

In a Sept. 18 BOT meeting, Feldman said there were issues with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid this year. She also said that one year of data does not determine a pattern.

Zhang said the AAC leadership team is working on a "disorientation guide" for the class of 2029.

"I don't think the University administration is ever going to provide students with the resources to educate themselves about the University, just because they're doing so much shady stuff," Zhang said. "And especially for students of color, we want them to come in acknowledging that the University is not serving their best interests, and here are some ways they can do so."

Zhang said the DEI repeal represents people who are out of touch with what students really want.

"I think it's important that the student body is still very loud about how, you know, the narratives that you might hear about our school is not our school," Ramos said. "We are still the Carolina that champions diversity, that champions inclusion [and] that champions equity."

X: @dailytarheel



ACADEMIA

# Undergraduate students participate in studies across disciplines

Classes, programs and initiatives provide research opportunities

By Ryan Parsaee  
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Penny Gordon-Larsen, UNC's vice chancellor for research, said that undergraduate students are a critical part of the research enterprise. In 2024, their efforts continued to play an important role.

"A lot of really amazing ideas come from undergrads just dreaming up what's possible," she said.

UNC offers a variety of pathways for undergraduates to get involved in research, from structured programs to faculty-led initiatives.

UNC's new Institute for Risk Management and Insurance Innovation provides undergraduates with opportunities to address challenges in natural disasters and other emerging risks. First-year Dhairyra Agarwal joined the institute after connecting with research director HB Zeff at the UNC Research and Discovery Fair.

Agarwal optimizes wildfire risk and carbon credit buffer pool models to ensure they are more accurate.

"Because wildfires were not really that predictable 10 years ago, and these buffer pools calculations were calculated 10 years ago, we want to make them more accurate so they're able to account for modern day changes," he said.

Zeff said that the institute is accessible for students new to research.

"What we do is try to teach the undergrads basic research skills about how to kind of formulate a research question [and] where to go and find data to be able to answer that research question," he said.

The lab has attracted nearly 20 undergraduates. For Agarwal, mentorship from Zeff is critical to navigating graduate-level



DTH DESIGN/JESSICA BAUGH

research questions.

"We'll teach you how to build off [of your experience] and go to more complex coding," Agarwal said. "And so that's really crucial with these complex topics."

At the Family Enterprise Center, an institute of Kenan-Flagler Business School, junior Freeda Alvarez is leading a research project to build stronger connections within North Carolina's family business community. Alvarez organizes a group of students collecting data on local family-owned businesses to create an accessible database.

"Family businesses can connect, we can connect with them, and just kind of create, foster more of that family business community and how to share it," Alvarez said.

This notebook database is intended to help local businesses network and access mentorship opportunities.

Many students at UNC start their research in a class. First-year Alicia Gebara discovered this path through Biology 102L: Introductory Biology Laboratory with Research. Gebara enrolled in the class to learn more about wet lab research.

"I barely read the course description," Gebara said. "When I walked in on the first day, I saw

it said 'coral-algal symbiosis.' It was like, okay, so I don't know a single word in this title."

At first, she struggled to see the relevance of studying corals. However, as the weeks went on, she engaged with the course.

Taught by Barbara Stegenga, the class focuses on collaborative research and exposes students to writing in the sciences and poster-writing.

Stegenga's enthusiasm, Gebara said, made a difference.

"Her excitement is an infection to us," she said.

According to the UNC Office for Undergraduate Research, enrolling in research-focused classes is one of the best ways for students to get started in research.

And now that Gebara can define coral-algal symbiosis, she plans to continue her involvement in labs next semester, citing her recent biology class as a transformative experience.

X: @dailytarheel

FINANCE

# Out-of-state tuition increases

Rates go up while in-state price remains stagnant

By Tulsi Asokan  
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UNC's out-of-state tuition increased by five percent for the 2024-25 academic year, while the in-state tuition has remained flat for the past eight years.

Out-of-state tuition and fees for 2024-2025 total to \$41,218, which, according to The U.S. News & World Report, is around 42 percent higher than the national average.

Due to the cost, applicants may seek to qualify for in-state tuition rates. The U.S. News & World Report estimates that in-state tuition is 35.5 percent lower than the national average. North Carolina Residents without aid pay about \$9,000 in annual tuition and fees.

The Office of The University Registrar states that students must maintain legal residence for at least 12 consecutive months to qualify for in-state tuition. For Lamees Sohail, a first-year student at UNC, eligibility for the in-state rate was a "huge factor" in her decision to attend the University.

Originally from New York, Sohail said she lived with her aunt in North Carolina for her senior year of high school. Her new primary residence and North Carolina license were factored into her eligibility.

Sohail said that the in-state cost of attendance is a good rate, especially with UNC considered a "public ivy." "It's such a rigorous school, academically and sports wise, that it's worth it," she said.

While the in-state tuition alone remains unchanged, the fees and costs of living for residents continue to increase.

Over the last 10 years, the combined tuition and fees for residents have increased by eight

percent. The University Cashier's website states that such fees go towards campus health, campus security and student organizations.

This growth rate is higher than the University of Florida's, which is about one percent, but lower than many other public institutions. The University of Wisconsin-Madison has raised resident tuition and fees by 11.5 percent, the University of Pittsburgh increased by 23.4 percent and the University of Virginia by 65 percent.

UNC-CH has the highest public school tuition in UNC System, but the lowest general fees, which lowers total costs. In-state students at UNC paid \$166.79 less in combined tuition and fees than residents at North Carolina State University during the 2022-23 academic year.

The University Cashier's Cost of Attendance Budget also predicts that on campus housing and meal plans will see a \$1,138 total average increase at UNC during the 2025-26 academic year.

In terms of what tuition is funding, the 2023-24 Use of Tuition Statement said that over 50 percent of tuition went towards supporting the University's instruction, or "direct academic mission." A total of 30 percent of the funds were allocated to need-based aid and operation and maintenance of the University Cogeneration Facility plant, utilities and IT infrastructure.

Santiago Patino, an international student from Colombia, said that he needs a "clear, concise list" of what tuition is going towards and what projects will be improved.

"If you guys want to raise tuition, tell me why you're doing it," Patino said. "Tell me, where is it going, right?"

While future tuition rates are determined annually by the UNC System Board of Governors and the UNC Board of Trustees, in-state tuition rates have remained stable over the last eight years.

X: @dailytarheel

DATA

# UNC rankings and statistics reveal top programs

The University gathers information to reflect student needs

By Nina Levret de Melo  
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In September, the U.S. News and World Report released the 2025 Best Colleges rankings in anticipation for applicants in that year's admissions cycle. UNC was ranked No. 5 among public universities and tied for No. 27 across the country.

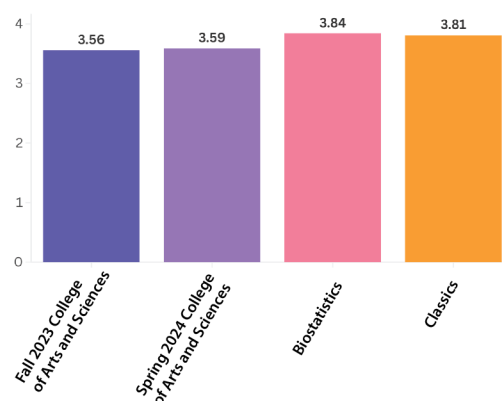
This is the 23rd year UNC has been one of the top five public schools in the U.S. with the University's ranking dropping from 22nd nationally last year.

Some undergraduate programs offered by the University are ranked higher than others, with UNC ranked No. 4 for nursing, No. 6 for business and No. 1 for pharmacy.

In the Fall 2023 semester, the UNC Office of Institutional Research and Assessment reported 17,808 undergraduates within the College of Arts and Sciences, making it the most popular school at UNC. For the Fall 2024 semester, that number dropped to 17,559 students.

Ian McNeely, senior associate dean for undergraduate education, wrote in an email to The Daily Tar Heel that the median grade-point average for a UNC undergraduate in spring 2024 was 3.59.

## Year in review: By the numbers



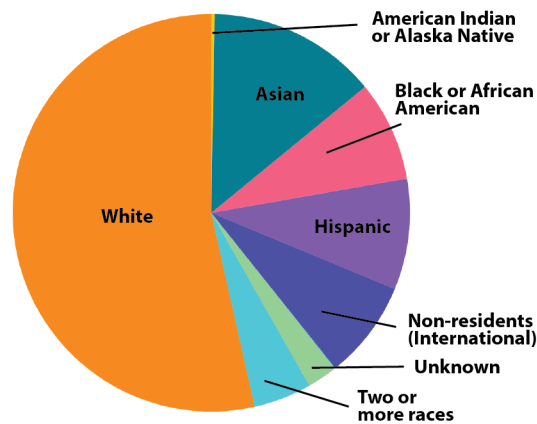
### GPA

For the spring of 2024, the median GPA for undergraduates in the College of Arts and Sciences was 3.59. Within the college, biostatistics majors had the highest median GPA at 3.84 followed by classics majors with a median GPA of 3.81.

Source: Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education and Office of Institutional Research & Assessment Analytics Reports | Racial Demographics chart does not display Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander student population due to size.

### Racial Demographics

Based on data from fall 2024, white students make up approximately 53.5 percent of UNC's student body. Asian students are the second largest group at 13.8 percent.



DTH DATA/ADITI PATIL

Across all departments and major-specific tracks in the College of Arts and Sciences, McNeely wrote that the major with the highest median GPA was biostatistics, followed by classics. He wrote that those numbers represent their grades in all the courses they have taken, not just their major-specific requirements.

"This could mean a number of things," McNeely wrote. "Those

students could be academically more accomplished (on average) than other undergraduates. Or they could tend to take courses that are more generously graded than the average course. Or it could be some combination of the two."

Since January, University researchers have brought in \$1.21 billion in research awards, funding the discoveries in the University's

research centers. Media Relations Manager Gabriella Neyman wrote in an email to The DTH that the 7,839 academic papers published since then land UNC in the twelfth spot nationally for research by volume.

Beyond rankings and financial success in University operations, UNC gathers data on the services it provides for its student body.

"There's just so many students using

all the services that the University has to offer that with so many students, the only way to make things work properly, and work better and improve how they function, is looking at statistics related to how students use them," David Hix, a sophomore studying statistics, said.

Tori Hooker, associate director of programs at Campus Recreation, said Campus Recreation gathers data to address problems such as crowdedness in facilities.

According to an email from Campus Recreation to The DTH, the Student Recreation Center saw an average of 1,650 users daily in fall 2024, approximately 60 percent more than Rams Head Recreation Center.

Students also remain active outside gym facilities, with thousands participating in almost 500 intramural teams or 50 Club teams, Campus Recreation wrote.

Neyman wrote that since January 2024, Campus Health and Counseling and Psychological Services have had a combined 74,000 visits from 75 percent of UNC students.

According to the University's common data set, 20,880 undergraduates were enrolled in the University during the 2023-24 academic year. U.S. News found the undergraduate student population to be 60.6 percent female and 39.4 percent male. Of undergraduates, the University reports that 6.16 percent are international students.

X: @dailytarheel

GENERAL ASSEMBLY | CONTENTION

## Hurricane Helene aid packages reveal partisan tensions

Recent bill not solely a relief measure, vetoed by Gov. Cooper

By Defne Önal

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In 2024, the N.C. General Assembly approved three aid packages in response to Hurricane Helene: the Disaster Recovery Act, Senate Bill 743 and Senate Bill 382.

The General Assembly passed the initial \$273 million Disaster Recovery Act on Oct. 9. It created a new Hurricane Helene fund with money from the state's savings reserve fund, according to Mitch Kokai, senior political analyst at the John Locke Foundation. On Oct. 23, Gov. Roy Cooper recommended that the General Assembly pass a \$3.9 billion package. However, the next day, the General Assembly approved over \$600 million more to add to the Hurricane Helene fund with SB 743.

"The first package had unanimous support, and nothing negative was said about it," Kokai said. "I think that's not surprising because it was shortly after the storm and everyone just wanted to get something put in place. The second package still had substantial support, but you started hearing some questions about whether more could be done at that time — not enough to derail the package or to make it have a large opposition."

N.C. Rep. Caleb Rudow (D-Buncombe) said Cooper's package would have been a much stronger way to get funding for rental assistance

and small businesses in western North Carolina. Kokai said one of the reasons why the General Assembly disapproved the recommendation was because Cooper added a \$175 million request for the N.C. Office of Recovery and Resiliency, which needed the money to continue its operations.

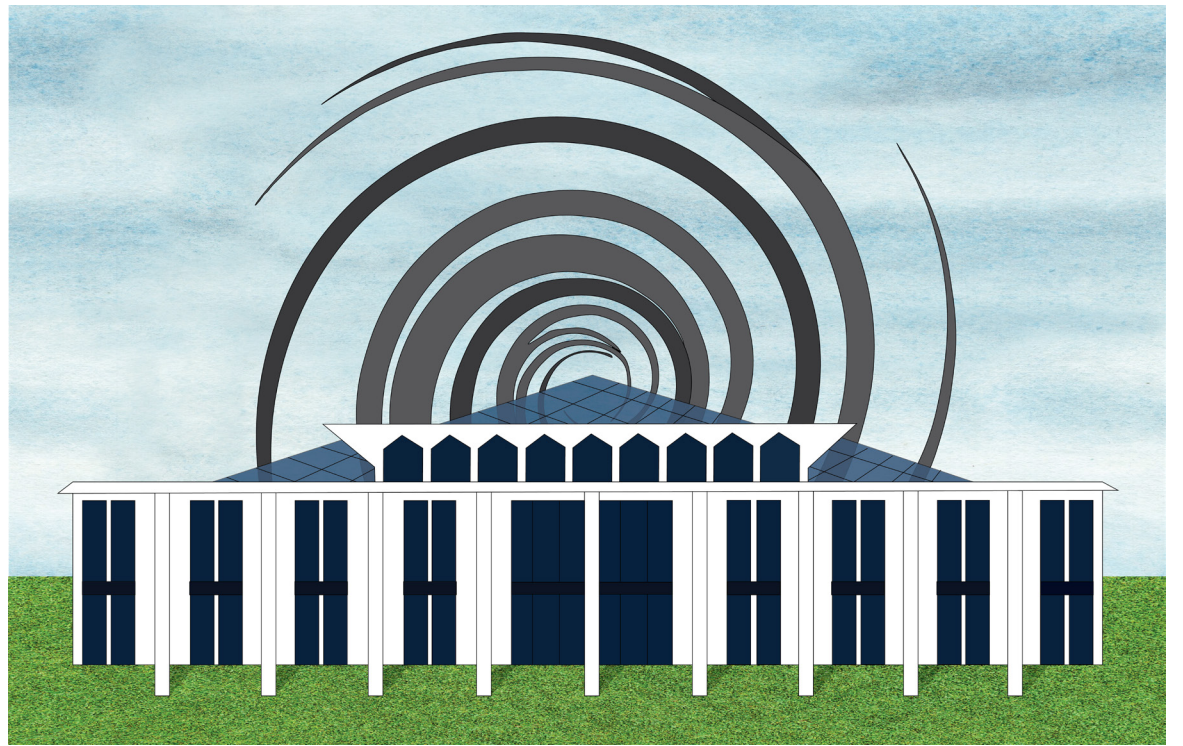
SB 382, the General Assembly's latest Hurricane Helene relief measure passed on Nov. 20, aimed to allocate an additional \$227 million to the Hurricane Helene fund. Cooper later vetoed the bill.

N.C. Rep. Eric Ager (D-Buncombe) said the relief portion of the bill largely did not appropriate the money, with only \$2 million being appropriated for technical assistance to soil and water conservation districts in affected areas.

"The remaining \$225 million — it just moved from one account to another in Raleigh," Ager said. "While it is now in the Hurricane Helene relief fund, it doesn't actually do anybody in western North Carolina any good because it's not appropriated."

The bill was not solely a hurricane relief measure, for it would also impact the power to appoint N.C. State Board of Elections members. This power would shift from Democratic Gov.-Elect Josh Stein to Republican State Auditor-Elect Dave Boliek.

Ager said he thinks the Republicans' thought process was that if they called it a hurricane bill, then no one would pay attention to the unrelated measures. If a Democrat voted against it, Republicans could later criticize them during their reelection



DTH DESIGN/AMANDA HESS

campaigns for opposing hurricane relief, he said.

"You name the bill 'hurricane funding' and 95 percent of the bill is about taking power away from people," Rudow said.

Currently, both the N.C. House and Senate hold Republican veto-proof supermajorities. However, Kokai said this will change due to the November elections — while the Senate will maintain its veto-proof supermajority, the House will be one vote short, requiring Democratic support to override a veto from Cooper.

"[Republicans] built in enough time that they could come back in

December, override the veto, then go home for the year and let the new General Assembly deal with other issues," he said.

Justin Parmenter, a seventh grade English teacher at South Academy of International Languages in Charlotte, said the changes in SB 382 take power away from the governor, attorney general, lieutenant governor and superintendent solely because the individuals who won the election are Democrats.

He also said Cooper might have received a funding recommendation that would have

been better for people in western North Carolina, but it was not considered because Democrats do not have the votes to impact decisions in legislature.

"When we can get back to a place to where we're a state with some political balance and the will of the voters is respected, I think we're going to be able to serve people better," Parmenter said. "Until then, I think we're going to kind of be trapped in this cycle of political retribution going on in policy that is not helpful to anybody."

X: @defnesonalll

## Legislators override veto and implement ICE compliance

House Bill 10 also expands private school voucher funding

By Joseph Cole

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On Nov. 20, the N.C. General Assembly overrode Gov. Roy Cooper's veto on House Bill 10, approving both new immigration compliance regulations and allocating funding for private school vouchers.

The private school voucher expansion will fund the waitlist of nearly 55,000 students. The waitlist increased when the General Assembly removed the income eligibility requirements for the program in 2023.

The portion of the bill relating to immigration requires all sheriffs to cooperate with the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency.

Rick Su, UNC law professor, said the bill removes local sheriff's departments' discretion in dealing with immigration enforcement.

"Essentially, any detainer that comes through, they would have to abide by it," Su said.

N.C. Rep. Allen Buansi (D-Orange) said the compliance restriction had been introduced in legislation for several years, but Gov. Cooper vetoed the attempts.

Buansi said that the Republican supermajority allowed the party to bundle unrelated but politically aligned provisions.

"When [House Bill 10] came back later as a conference report... that's when we saw the private school voucher component attached to it," Buansi said.

Su also said that sheriffs across the state, including conservative sheriffs, have previously opposed similar measures because of budgetary impacts.

N.C. Rep. Kelly Hastings (R-Cleveland, Gaston) was one of the bill's 41 sponsors. He said ensuring that the state aligned with federal policies on immigration was a principal concern for this bill.

"As much as the law and the Constitution allow, we should do our part to make sure that people are here legally and to make sure that they follow the law to get here legally," Hastings said.

However, N.C. Sen. Graig Meyer (D-Caswell, Orange, Person) said policies like these impose additional burdens on local law enforcement.

"There's also a negative impact to local law enforcement in general," Meyer said. "Local law enforcement generally don't want to be responsible for doing the work of federal law enforcement, and particularly for immigration law enforcement, because local law enforcement needs to have trusting relationships with every community that they serve."

Hastings said that other countries' immigration policies influenced his support for the bill. He said that it's difficult to become a citizen in many other countries, which is a strong

signal that most nation-states are protecting their borders.

Su said the policy will create side effects beyond the bill's original intention.

"You might get picked up for something, or you might get arrested for something and not even charged, and then suddenly you're in immigration removal procedures," Su said. "And that's terror to the community."

The effects of the bill also impact the wider community, including citizens and legal immigrants, by discouraging crime reporting and reducing the use of essential services, Su said.

Meyer said that while the implications for crime may change for immigrants, at the basic level, this law does not change much.

"If you do break the law, and you are here without documentation, you are now much more likely to be deported," Meyer said.

X: @dthcitystate



DTH FILE/CRISHAUN HARDY

The North Carolina State Legislative Building in Raleigh, N.C., is pictured on April 11, 2018.

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## RESILIENCE

# Mental health experts reflect on impact of political stressors

Study showed 69 percent of Americans felt election anxiety

By Maddie Policastro  
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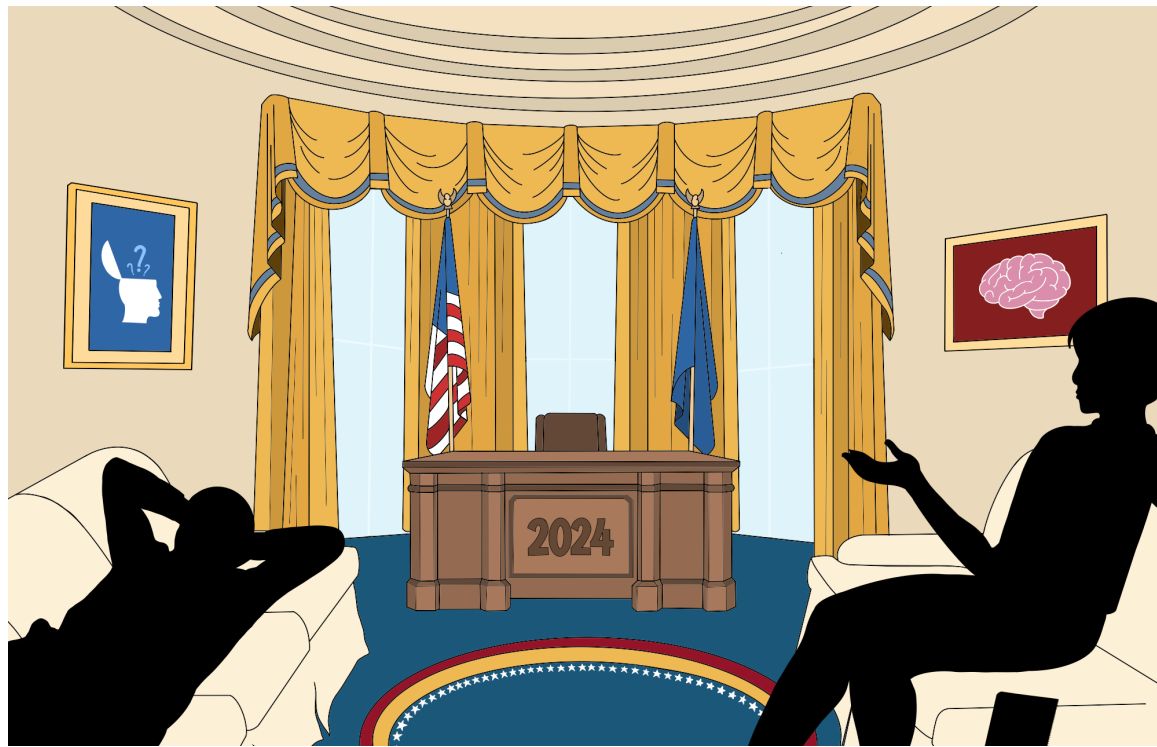
When the election was called on Nov. 6 for former President Donald Trump in the early morning, the results were met with mixed reactions — both excitement and anxiety for the next four years to come. These elevated feelings, however, did not begin on election day.

According to a study from the American Psychological Association, 69 percent of Americans said the 2024 presidential election was a significant source of stress in their lives leading up to Nov. 5.

Tina Lepage, a psychologist and founder of Lepage Associates Psychological Services, said language and media coverage have contributed to these increased anxieties. Lepage Associates offers services in Durham, Chapel Hill and Raleigh.

“I think that this election season, and maybe even the last couple, have just been more elevated almost in the way that the parties talk about politics, and kind of the gloom and doom and scariness if the other side wins,” she said.

Looking back on the last 20 years, Lepage said, these big upticks in election anxiety did not exist. She said the change came with the 2016 election as the



DTH DESIGN/LIZA SMITH

rhetoric and decorum in debates, political advertisements and interviews shifted.

Politics can be really personal and many people are often worried how they will be impacted if a certain candidate takes office, Lepage said. Things like health services and finances, she said, can be a source of stress surrounding elections as they often have a direct affect on people's lives.

Jennifer Walker, a licensed clinical mental health counselor based in Raleigh, has been practicing for almost 30 years. During her time, she said this

election has been the only time other than the pandemic when she experienced the same stress as her patients in real time.

Walker said her experiences with the pandemic taught her how to manage conversations and media input in her own life to help stay balanced during this election season.

Organizations like the American Psychological Association, Clearly Clinical and Licensed Clinical Counselors of North Carolina offered several continuing education materials for therapists to navigate the election, she said. Walker said it was also helpful to speak with

her own professional network of therapists who were experiencing similar trends with their clients.

With current anticipatory anxieties about what's to come once Trump takes office, she said she leans on models of intervention that encourage people to stay grounded in what they actually know to be true rather than what may happen.

“On Nov. 7, if people were grieving, it was important to take time to breathe,” she said. “At some point, if they're anxious about things being anticipated, it's also important to figure out

how can that happen and use the anxiety productively.”

Psychologist Neil Barry, who serves the Chapel Hill and Raleigh areas, said during election season it can often feel like the world is just happening to you. He said certain groups, such as LGBTQ+ individuals and people of color, are afraid about Trump taking office again.

For his patients who were concerned leading up to the election, he said he suggested canvassing or donating to support their preferred candidates, helping people feel more empowered in the electoral process.

Following the election, Barry said he worked with patients to develop strategies for managing stress and how to cope during the next four years. Lepage said post-election season can even be a respite for some, even if their side lost.

Barry said he tells his patients not to marinate in the stress. Life is about so much more than just who is in office, he said, so it is important to keep living.

“We can't stop awful things from happening in the world, but we can build up our strengths so that we're more resilient when it does happen,” Barry said.

X: @mkpolicastro

## REFERENDUMS

## Chapel Hill passed five bonds in November. What happens now?

Town will not need to increase property taxes to pay project debt

By Kristin Kharrat  
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In the November election, Chapel Hill voters approved five bond referendums allowing the Town of Chapel Hill to borrow up to \$44 million. The Town plans to invest the money into local infrastructure projects.

Peter Norman, UNC economics professor, said general obligation bonds are essentially loans that are borrowed by a municipal government that are typically paid back through tax revenue.

Since 2009, the Town has been setting aside a fraction of existing property tax payments to develop a fund to help pay back debt and interest payments. Town of Chapel Hill Business Management Director Amy Oland said. Oland said the fund will assist in paying back the bonds.

The debt fund serves as a funding mechanism that allows the Town to borrow money in the future, Oland said. Oland said this means the Town will not need to increase property taxes in order to pay back the money borrowed through the bonds.

“The nice thing about that [debt fund] is that we've built

this into our model, it's a long-term forecasting model, and so we've built up this ability to issue these bonds over this period of time and we will have the capacity to make those payments,” Oland said. “There won't

be any negative financial impacts because we've already built that into our plans.”

Chapel Hill Town Council Member Melissa McCullough said the Town has a very high bond rating, meaning it can borrow more money with a lower interest rate. She said the Town's issuance of the bonds will not impact Chapel Hill's financial health and credibility, as long as the money is paid back on time.

Oland said the bonds are the most cost-effective method for the Town to borrow money because they have low interest rates and are risk-averse.

However, the approval of the referendums only grants the Town the authority to issue the bonds and does not necessarily grant the Town the money, Oland said. To have the money deposited into the Town's accounts, they must undergo a rigorous and prescribed process through the state, she said.

Oland said Town staff will have to go to the Town Council three times for approval and fill out a lengthy application that must be approved by the Local Government Commission (LGC), which operates under the state treasurer's office.

Oland said if the bonds are approved by the Town Council and the LGC, they will be issued in three phases. Around \$13 million will be issued in the Spring of 2025, between \$10 million and \$15 million in 2027 and between \$10 million and \$15 million in 2029 or 2030.

Oland said the infrastructure investment projects are not entirely planned and will be developed over the next six years, in alignment with the bond issuance schedule.

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DTH DESIGN/CHAMP LYERLY

Photos courtesy of Adobe Stock.

six years, Oland said. The Town's debt fund will grow over time, as it is currently unable to pay back the entire \$44 million outlined by the bonds.

Oland said if the bonds are approved by the Town Council and the LGC, they will be issued in three phases. Around \$13 million will be issued in the Spring of 2025, between \$10 million and \$15 million in 2027 and between \$10 million and \$15 million in 2029 or 2030.

Oland said the infrastructure investment projects are not entirely planned and will be developed over the next six years, in alignment with the bond issuance schedule.

The sequence of the projects' implementation will depend on the community's priorities, the Town Council's priorities and the Town's capacity to issue the bonds themselves, Oland said. She said the projects can change as the community's priorities shift, yet the funds they require cannot change.

One disadvantage of the general obligation bonds, Oland said, is the interest cost the Town will accumulate. She said it is very common to borrow to complete large-scale projects, such as those outlined by the bond referendums, that cannot be financed by the Town's annual funds.

“The expenses are getting kind of similar to what they would need to do on a yearly basis, so that's why I

don't think that it's a good idea to borrow,” Norman said.

McCullough said that without borrowing, such long-term projects would take longer to be completed. She also said that costs of the materials needed to complete the projects are increasing over time, so borrowing and spending money sooner rather than later will be more effective.

“If we borrow money at the most affordable level, we can get these things done sooner,” McCullough said.

X: @kristinkharrat



LEGISLATION

# Community discusses laws impacting LGBTQ+ youth

Three 2023 bills restricted transgender rights and choices

By Sarah Clements  
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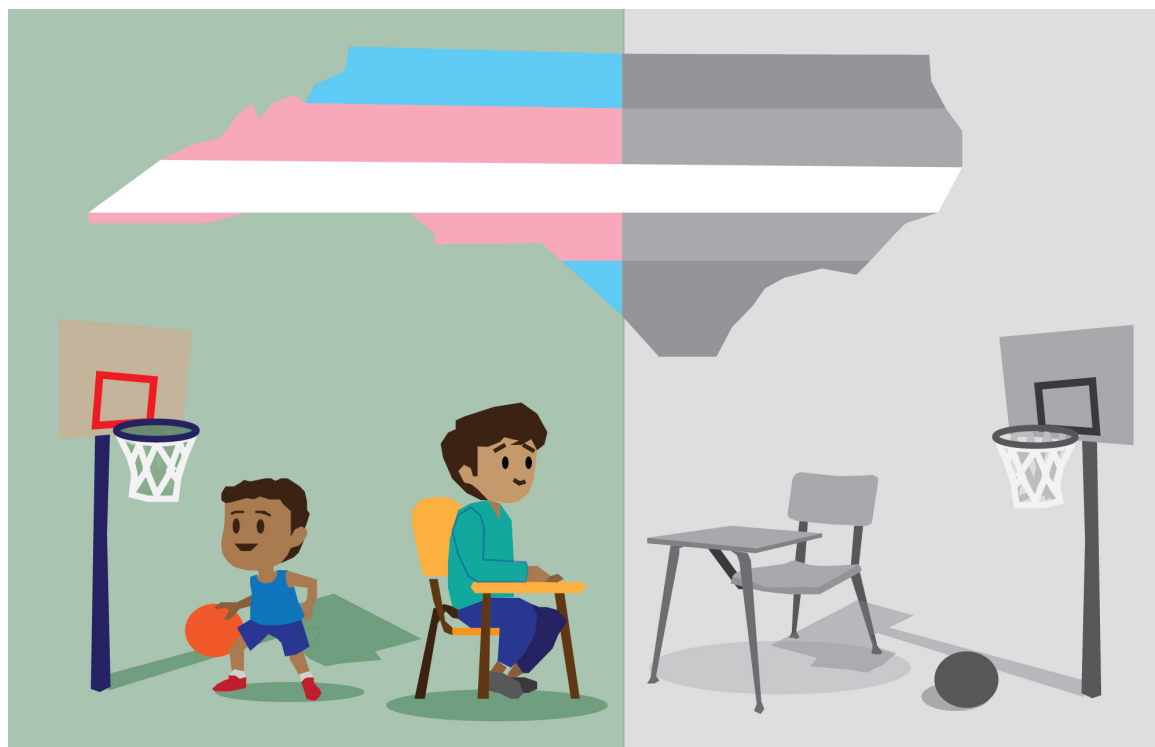
In August 2023, Wren Motley, a sophomore at Longleaf School of the Arts in Raleigh, was looking into options for gender-affirming care, including top surgery. Around that time, the North Carolina General Assembly passed House Bill 808, which prevents health care providers from giving minors gender-affirming care.

For Motley, this was demotivating. “Some of the few things that I can actually change about myself to make me feel more comfortable in my body are being taken away,” they said.

Also in August 2023, the General Assembly passed two other laws, restricting the discussion of gender identity in school with Senate Bill 49 and banning transgender youth from participating in women’s sports with House Bill 574. Although Gov. Roy Cooper vetoed all three bills, the General Assembly’s Republican supermajority overrode the vetoes.

Over a year later, transgender and nonbinary students, parents and advocates across North Carolina say youth and their families are feeling the impacts of the laws.

During the 2023 legislative session, Republican lawmakers who supported the bills emphasized they were meant to protect children and parents’ rights. Lou Jent, a nonbinary parent of a nonbinary child who lives in Durham, said all three laws take rights and choices away from transgender youth and their families.



DTH DESIGN/HELAINA-ROSE BALL

Artie Hartsell, director of organizing at the American Civil Liberties Union of North Carolina, said the restriction of hormone blockers is particularly harmful to minors starting puberty.

Since the medications put a pause on the effects of puberty, Hartsell said the blockers allow transgender youth more time to figure out their identity before going through permanent developmental changes.

S.B. 49, known as the Parents’ Bill of Rights, requires schools to notify parents if a student asks to use a different name or pronoun, which Hartsell said can be a safety concern if the student is not out to their parents. They also said the laws impact student-

teacher relations by driving students away from trusted adults.

The bill also restricts discussion about gender identity and sexuality in kindergarten through fourth grade. Hartsell said this erasure negatively impacts students as they learn how the world works.

“Seeing themselves in books in their libraries and having their names be spoken and on their documents at school are all affirming techniques that we can use to support literally less than 1 percent of our children,” Jent said. “But even though it’s less than 1 percent of our children, they are sacred and deserve just as much care, respect and dignity as any

child that is in our school system, our neighborhood or our churches.”

H.B. 574, the Fairness in Women’s Sports Act, prevents transgender females from participating in sports inconsistent with their assigned sex at birth. Hartsell said these laws exclude transgender students and embolden anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric and action.

“We know bullying can cause problems for a child who is bullied and has a negative impact on mental health,” they said. “But now, you have the media debating your existence, your state legislature determining you don’t have rights and the federal government using its power to attack your welfare. This amounts to a very large adult institution using their

scope of power to target a very small numerical minority population.”

Hartsell said this has a detrimental impact on youth who are in the developmental stages of their lives and, therefore, more vulnerable to attacks on their personhood.

According to a study by The Trevor Project, suicide attempts by transgender and nonbinary youth have risen up to 72 percent in states that have enacted anti-transgender legislation.

Escher Hutton, a transgender student at UNC, said anti-trans actions by those in power have given people space to express hateful views. They said this has negatively impacted both their own and others’ mental health, causing increased anxiety about the future.

Hutton said they have been coping with this stress by engaging with others who are supportive and also want to fight to make change.

“You worry about yourself,” Hutton said. “You worry about your future. You worry about what kind of future your friends are going to have. But you also worry about and have empathy for the people who are like you, only a few years younger. You’re worried about the kids who are impacted by these laws and what standard that sets for them as they become adults. It takes a toll on you.”

Jent said they find joy in fighting for social justice alongside other members of transgender and nonbinary communities.

“I think this is a roadblock, but I think that community and standing together and supporting one another is going to get us through this,” Motley said.

X: @sarahhclements

HEALTH CARE

# N.C. Certificate of Need lawsuit continues in trial court

Medical professionals argue for freedom over areas of practice

By Brantley Aycock  
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North Carolina’s Certificate of Need law is still being challenged by the lawsuit originally filed in 2020 by Jay Singleton, a New Bern ophthalmologist. The CON requires that the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services determines a need for a health service in an area before health care providers can apply to provide the service.

Singleton sued the NCDHHS because he wanted to perform outpatient eye surgeries at his clinic, but the department did not find a need for surgical facilities in his area.

The N.C. Supreme Court ruled in October of this year to have the case sent back to the trial court. There, the case will be tried as a facial constitutional challenge, meaning that the CON could be ruled unconstitutional in all applications. Singleton originally brought an applied constitutional challenge,

meaning a ruling in his favor would overturn the CON only for his situation.

“What’s significant about the Supreme Court

case — which is now being sent back to the trial court — [is] if plaintiffs are successful, instead of just an incremental change and scaling back of the law, it would throw out the law altogether,” UNC Law

Professor Richard Saver said. “That would be monumental.”

Saver said data on health care effects from CON law repeals in other states is subject to conflicting interpretations. He said areas with high competition between health care facilities will likely continue to experience competition if the CON is thrown out in North Carolina.

Without a CON law, the existing competition will hopefully drive down prices and make potential new providers think carefully about entering the market, while other communities with only one or two health care providers may be subject to increased competition, he said.

He said when one health system applies for a CON, the others will try to get the CON for themselves or say there is no need, which has arguably led to increased regulatory costs and delays.

“Certainly, we’ve seen some interesting battles in Orange County and the Triangle,” Saver said. “I like to joke with my students that if you think Duke-UNC basketball games are tough, you should see when the Duke Health System and UNC Health System battle over a certificate application.”

Saver said a repeal may be bad for rural communities because

“If you think Duke-UNC basketball games are tough, you should see when the Duke Health System and UNC Health System battle over a certificate application.”

Richard Saver  
UNC law professor

the CON incentivizes providers to open health care facilities in underserved areas.

UNC Law Professor Joan Krause said Orange County is a good example of how the CON can get

complicated because it is a large county with its health care services concentrated in Chapel Hill.

“The example could be: Orange County has enough hospital beds, even though where you are, you’re really far from anything else in Orange County, which is one of the reasons the Hillsborough facility makes sense,” she said. “But, if you said, ‘Well, Orange County has plenty of space, plenty of hospital services and medical services, you can all get into the university,’ that doesn’t necessarily help people

without transportation, way far on the edge of the county.”

The CON’s purpose is to ensure that North Carolina does not over-invest in health services, which can sometimes mean that health care access is limited under circumstances of rapid population or technological growth, UNC Health Policy and Management Professor Mark Holmes, said. In other states where CON laws have been relaxed, he said there’s been an immediate increase in available services.

Though there would likely be no major change in long-term care beds or nursing home facilities if the CON is repealed in North Carolina, he said there may be a rapid increase in the number of

private offices offering imaging and other technology.

While Holmes said this might mean greater access to services, he also said private offices may overuse them, garnering profit to pay off the services or equipment.

Community hospitals rely on having both profitable and unprofitable services, UNC Health Policy and Management Professor Karen Volmar said, and the CON would maintain a balance between the two.

“But if you let folks come in and build all of the most profitable things, that makes it more difficult, ultimately, for hospitals to balance their own books,” she said.

X: @dthcitystate



DTH DESIGN/KATRINA DONG

# The albums that defined this year's mainstream music scene

By Alexis Dorf

Staff Writer

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2024 was a year of genre-bending experimental albums within the music industry.

With my credentials — over 100,000 minutes listened on Spotify in 2023 — here are my picks for the albums that defined 2024.

## The cultural movement: 'Brat'

Charli XCX has been experimenting with her idiosyncratic style since her 2013 Billboard's Top 100 debut for her feature in Ikon Pop's "I Love It." After a decade of ups and downs for Essex's pop icon, Charli managed to reemerge in the mainstream as one of 2024's most influential artists.

After the release of Charli's 2022 EP "Crash" failed in the mainstream (an album that followed the blueprint of a typical pop album), she decided to no longer wrestle her qualms; if she was destined for pop stardom, her authenticity would bring her there.

Charli XCX begins "Brat" with her song "360" and the lyrics "I went my own way and I made it," and she did just that. "Brat" is not just a collection of hyper-pop tracks — it's a cultural movement that not only redefined Charli XCX's artistry, but changed everyday life, notably making its mark on Kamala Harris' political campaign in the 2024 election.

"Brat" is a deeply autobiographical record that explores Charli XCX's unapologetic vulnerability marked



Photos courtesy of Adobe Stock.

DTH DESIGN/BRIDGET HIGHT

with tinges of both narcissistic pride and gendered insecurity. She explores her inner-turmoil grappling with fame, youth culture and success, making it a relatable album that many have embraced with open arms.

"Brat" provided the "Club classic" anthems for those willing to embrace the unhinged. After all, what would 2024 have been without "Brat summer?"

## My personal favorite: 'Hit Me Hard and Soft'

Billie Eilish's third album, "Hit Me Hard and Soft," shows her fully coming into her own as she explores her relationship with sexuality and individualism. The album serves as Eilish's most experimental, personal and expressive body of work that reintroduces an artist of unexpected versatility.

As someone who was never an Eilish stan, this album has completely captivated me (I know, I'm late!). On this record, Eilish

steps out of her comfort zone with her smash hit "Birds of a Feather," which showcases powerhouse vocals that the general public usually do not associate with Eilish. Between the haunting acoustics of "Wildflower" and the lo-fi electronic dubstep of "Chihiro," this album truly has something for every listener.

The album explores a wide-range of emotion, flowing seamlessly from heart-wrenching "SKINNY" to fun and sexy "LUNCH." The production of this album is beyond tasteful

— the blend of Eilish's incredible vocals with her brother Finneas' genius production is uniquely brilliant and places the duo in a category of artistry that they have made completely theirs.

Beyond the album itself is Eilish's self-portrait she has put out for the world: a master of contemporary pop and a woman unafraid to express her sexuality, making "Hit Me Hard and Soft" this year's must-listen.

## The people's choice: 'Short n' Sweet'

If 2024 was a year of anything, it was certainly the year of the pop princess. From Taylor Swift to Olivia Rodrigo and Gracie Abrams, the fandoms have spoken and they want more glitter-gel-pen-pop. Sabrina Carpenter's "Short n' Sweet" epitomizes the pop-princess genre, delivering tracks that are fearlessly fun and feminine.

Each song has a unique genre, yet the album flows naturally. "Slim Pickins" has a western Dolly Parton influence while "Bed Chem" has a clear R&B finish. Sabrina's lyrics are funny and clever as she reports on the unfortunate circumstances of modern dating.

Beyond the album itself, Sabrina's effortless star power delivers the album flawlessly on stage during the "Short n' Sweet tour," and her colorful outfits and fun choreography bring the album to life.

Read the honorable mentions in the online story.

X: @dthlifestyle

# The Good, the Bad and the 'Madame Web' of 2024 movies

By Charlie Bagwell

Staff Writer

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Well, moviegoers, we made it. Another hellish trip around the sun. Which, of course, means a whole new batch of movies. We've had some great films! We've also had some really, really awful films. We also had "Megalopolis." That was weird. In case you missed every movie that came out in 2024, have a seat by the metaphorical fireplace as we reminisce on the epic highs and lows of the last year's silver screen.

## 'Dune: Part Two'

I've raved about "Dune: Part Two's" proverbial Desert Power in a dedicated review I did of it for The DTH back when it released, but I wanted to throw it in here because I literally can't rave about it enough. Then, I called it "the best movie of the 21st century." I stand by that. Go watch "Dune: Part Two."

## 'I Saw the TV Glow'

If "Dune: Part Two" is my favorite film of the year, "I Saw the TV Glow" is probably the one that impressed me the most. It's also my second favorite. I went into this one with reasonable expectations, having heard only that it was an experimental coming-of-age horror inspired by "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." All of these things are true, but it's so much more than that.

Without spoiling too much, "I Saw the TV Glow" is a film like no other. Its wholly original visual style, commentary on the

transgender experience, soundtrack and actors' performances (especially Justice Smith's — I feel bad for dismissing him for so long as "Detective Pikachu guy") are all completely astounding.

If you're transgender or queer, watch this film. If you're a fan of horror, art cinema and the aesthetics of the 1990s, watch this film. I can definitely see this film becoming a "Midsommar"-style cult horror classic in the coming years.

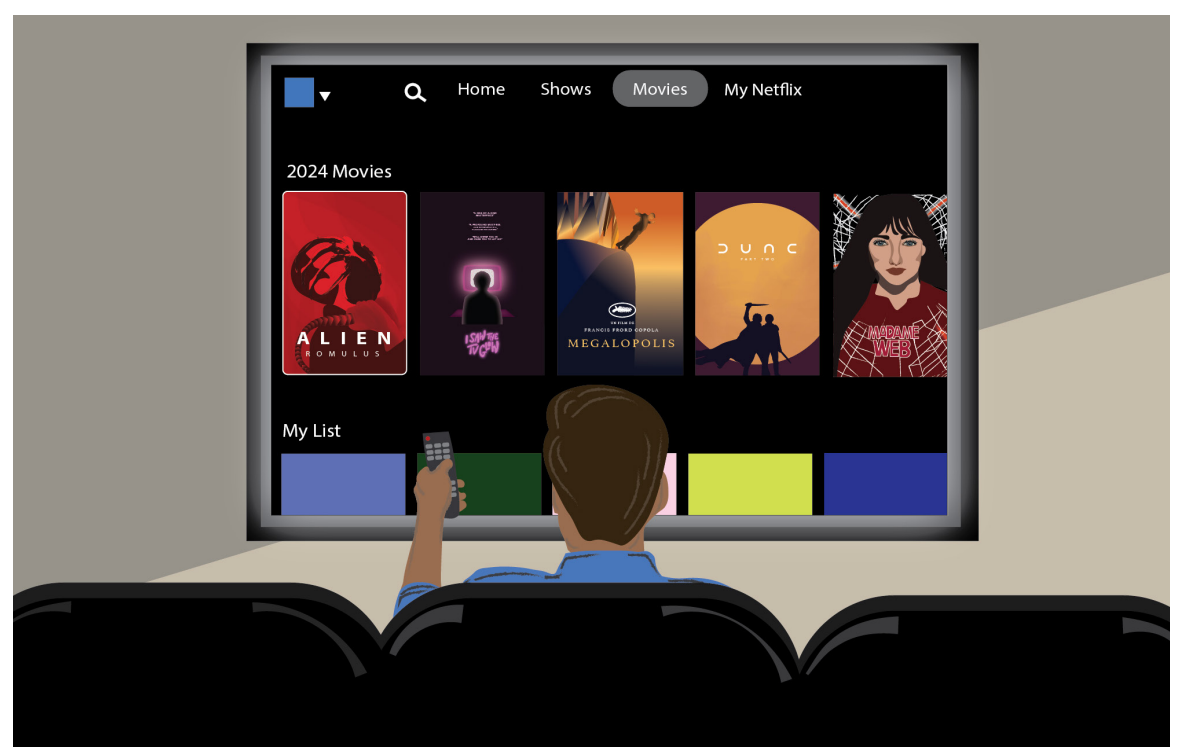
## 'Megalopolis'

Being deadly serious: I cannot overstate how awe-inspiring watching "Megalopolis" on the big screen was. It's not "good," per se, but it is, for lack of a better word, magical. I'm an atheist and I imagine the "Megalopolis" experience is what church is like for true believers. It's awful. It's an awful, awful movie in every single way a movie can be awful. It genuinely has no redeeming qualities. But it's beautiful in its catastrophe.

Some tidbits about "Megalopolis": There is a scene with non-diegetic confetti. It's edited like an Epic Rap Battle of History. They just never explain how the main character can control time. Jon Voight says "boner." It was made by the same man who made "The Godfather" and "Apocalypse Now." "Megalopolis" was one of the finest theatergoing experiences of my entire life. It's out-of-body. If you haven't seen "Megalopolis" yet, you're missing out on both the worst sci-fi film of the year and the best comedy in decades.

## 'Madame Web'

Oh, "Madame Web." "Madame Web" was wholly terrible in every



DTH DESIGN/SARAH FENWICK

way. It's saved from being the worst film of the year only because it came out the same year "Megalopolis" came out. "Madame Web" is the endgame (pun intended) of years of big-screen superhero slop. It's formula incarnate.

And that's not to say I inherently dislike superhero movies! I have hundreds of comic books. I like Spider-Man more than I like most real people. However, the so-called Marvel formula has really worn me down. The cinematic universe model that once was so fresh and expansive has become reductive, convoluted and overplayed. "Madame Web" is like if a producer with no writing experience

took this already-tired formula and shoved into its desecrated corpse a who's-who of so-so actors, racial stereotypes, half-assed CGI and corporate tie-ins. While "Megalopolis" is so bad it's perfect, "Madame Web" is just bad. Don't watch "Madame Web."

## The franchise flicks

Besides the above mentioned high highs and astoundingly low lows, 2024 seemed to be the year of the legacy sequel (or prequel, or spinoff, or something). Movies like "Alien: Romulus," "Deadpool and Wolverine," "Beetlejuice Beetlejuice," "Twisters," and "Kung Fu Panda 4" all added on

to franchises that began 15 or more years ago, some dormant for decades. While some of these films may be alright on their own, this trend speaks to Hollywood's problematic obsession with hawking popular IPs. Though far from the truth, the inundation of the multiplex with big-name sequels has seemed almost wholly dominant this year. The success of 2023's "Saltburn," "Oppenheimer" (though I didn't like it), "Killers of the Flower Moon" and others had given me hope that Hollywood might have been moving away from the franchise film. Now, I'm not so sure.

X: @dthlifestyle





BUSINESS

# Schoolkids Records officially closes Chapel Hill location



DTH FILE/GAGE AUSTIN

UNC sophomore, Adam Dodd, browses music albums at Schoolkids Records in Chapel Hill, N.C. on Sunday, Feb. 25.



DTH/HAYDON BODE

Owner of Schoolkids Records, Stephen Judge, sits amongst his closing store on Tuesday, Nov. 26.

The vinyl shop served the community for 50 years

By Erin Mun  
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On Saturday, the Chapel Hill community was forced to say its final goodbye to the local record store favorite, Schoolkids Records. Schoolkids announced it would be closing in August due to financial constraints, and since then, the community has slowly grieved the former shop.

The exact date of Schoolkids Records' opening is uncertain, but current owner Stephen Judge estimated that both the Chapel Hill and Raleigh locations opened around 1974.

Although Judge is originally from Rocky Mount, he said that he would regularly attend UNC basketball games during his childhood, and would visit Schoolkids Records in Chapel Hill on these occasions. Later, Judge started working at Schoolkids' Raleigh location in 1990 while attending N.C. State University.

This is not the first year that the Chapel Hill Schoolkids Records store has closed down; in 2008, the previous owner closed the store, which at that time was located on East Franklin Street where Bank of America is now located.

Judge had talked to the previous owner about buying the store when it closed in 2008, but decided not to take the risk, especially given the ongoing recession at the time. In

2012, he decided to buy Schoolkids in Chapel Hill and subsequently bought Schoolkids Records' Raleigh location in 2016.

"I always kept my eye on coming back to Chapel Hill, because it meant a lot to me personally," Judge said.

Throughout its storied history, the record store, which is also a record label, has been a vital part of Chapel Hill's music scene.

Before closing, the record label updated the website weekly with the latest record pieces and held regular concert ticket giveaways.

While vinyl records are still loved by avid collectors and individual artists' fanbases, the small percentage of people still purchasing vinyls makes it challenging for analog music shops, like Schoolkids, to compete in an environment filled with major labels selling expensive records.

"I'm really bummed out because they're the closest store, and I have access to that only, and because it's gone now, I don't know where to get the records now," Jiyeon Moon, a sophomore majoring in data science and economics who also collects vinyls, said. "But I didn't know that they were closing, so I guess I should visit them before winter break."

Franklin Street has gone through many changes over the past few years, with multiple local stores shutting down, replaced by franchised businesses, such as Raising Cane's and Starbucks. Eun-Suh Jo, a sophomore majoring in public policy and advertisement and public relations, said she was sad to see places being closed after years of operating.

"The same thing happened to Ye Olde Waffle House, which was a

really big waffle place that me and my family went to," Jo said. "And all these areas in Franklin that I grew up experiencing are now leaving and Schoolkids records was kind of the place that I discovered in college and now it's leaving as well, right when I feel like I just started."

The Triangle area has been growing with the increase in real estate rates due to inflation and post pandemic economies, leading to everyone spending more money but making less, said Judge.

Judge also said vinyl record prices have gone up \$10 in the last year. The prices were already budget breaking before the climb and are now far over the bearable price.

"To maintain a small business in a small town, you rely on too many other resources to sort of keep it going, but the community is there," Judge said. "It's just, the financial aspects of it don't make sense."

Schoolkids Records provided a space for Chapel Hill students to strengthen relationships with peers who have the same passion for records. Jo does not collect vinyl records but said that she enjoys the time she spends at Schoolkids with her friends that did visit the store often.

Record lovers can continue to support Schoolkids Records at the Raleigh location, which will continue to operate.

X: @dthlifestyle

LITERATURE

## Bookstagram community reflects on reading trends

Readers emphasize opportunity to create empathy through stories

By Jaya Nadella  
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Bookstagram, a portmanteau of "book Instagram," refers to a tightly-knit online sphere of avid readers and book influencers who share their ever-evolving ideas around new literary works.

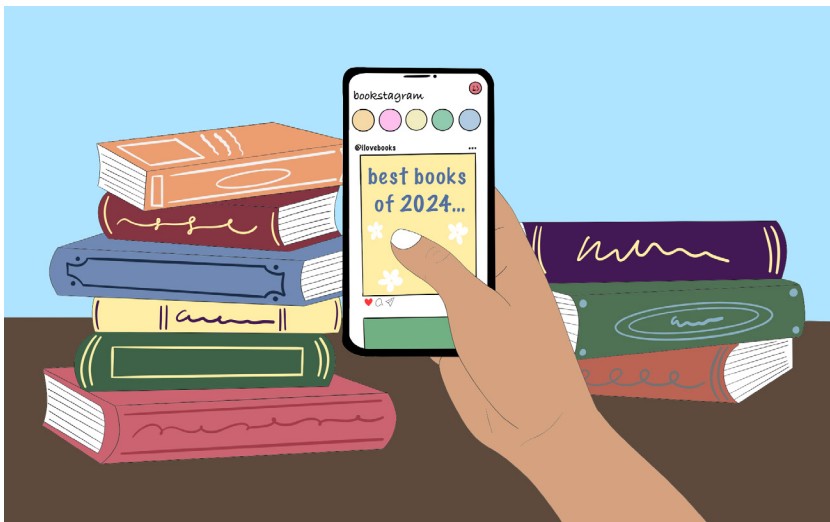
Similar to years past, in 2024 bookstagram came with no shortage of releases that sparked strong opinions within the community. Among UNC students specifically, there were a few notable trends relating to books that were widely loved and acclaimed, along with ones that fell short of expectations.

UNC's Difficult Women Book Club is a group of students on campus who read and analyze primarily female-authored novels. In terms of content diversity, Natalie Pena-Galvis, head of the DWBC, has seen a trend of messy female protagonists who do not always fit the stereotypical mold of who women should be.

"I feel like in literature and in the media in general, women are so very rarely offered space to just be a person, because people are not always perfect," Pena-Galvis said.

An example of one of these books, which she cited as a favorite read this year, is "Violeta" by Isabel Allende, which the DWBC read during the fall semester. The story follows a Latin-American woman whose life spans 100 years, telling an account of the social strife that occurred in her home country, Chile.

Max Howell, a first-year newcomer to the club and a media and journalism major, also noted a large resurgence of romance and fiction books. Especially since the 2020 pandemic, they believe that a lot of people have chosen to spend time with the stories that make



DTH DESIGN/ANNABELLE HENDERSON

them feel hope as a way to temporarily block out aspects of reality.

"I think definitely people are more into more of an escapist reading experience, if that makes sense, I think that also may be why memoirs and essays are falling out. Because people don't want to read about all the bad stuff that's happening," Howell said.

Although important strides have been made this year in uplifting diverse, real-life perspectives, there is still substantial progress to be made in telling more of these stories. Pena-Galvis said that she would like to see more stories centered around marginalized people where their identity is only a small part of their story, and not their whole character arc.

Deeya Majeed, a first-year biology major, is in the midst of building her own bookstagram page named @mediacriticdeeya. Her top reads of 2024 include "Fahrenheit 451" by Ray Bradbury, "And The Mountains Echoed" by Khaled Hosseini and "All the Lonely People" by Mike Gayle. Although she tends to lean toward realistic fiction, bookstagram has widely expanded the types of books she can access, be it comedic stories or more emotional novels.

Like many readers, Majeed foresees continued popularity around romance

books on social media. Specifically, she referenced Adam Silvera's "They Both Die at the End" and its prequel "The First to Die at the End," both of which were popular novels that amplified LGBTQ+ voices in the media.

"I do really appreciate how a lot of bookstagram content creators have and are pushing for more access to diverse voices, which is really important, especially in such a wide array of books," she said. "I feel like we constantly see this white male narrative, and it's a really nice thing to see a lot more voices."

Looking to 2025 and beyond, readers and creators alike have the opportunity to amplify stories that create further empathy and understanding of different perspectives.

"I feel like we're entering an era where people are going to want to really work for themselves, as opposed to helping their community," Howell said. "And I hope that in spite of that, people want to learn about marginalized groups. They want to learn about other people's stories, and they want to learn how to help people based on that. And I hope people kind of find that outlet through reading stories about people different from themselves."

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# JANUARY

Former Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz stepped down from UNC to become President of Michigan State University, with his last day being Jan. 12. UNC System President Peter Hans named former N.C. Budget Director Lee Roberts as interim chancellor on Dec. 15, taking over after Guskiewicz's last day.



# MARCH

After entering the NCAA tournament as a No. 1 seed, UNC men's basketball fell to Alabama, 89-87, in the Sweet 16 on March 29.



# MAY

The UNC System Board of Governors voted to remove requirements for diversity, equity and inclusion services on May 23, with budget changes released for each school on Sept. 11.



# AUGUST

Lee Roberts was elected by the BOG as UNC-Chapel Hill's next chancellor on Aug. 9.



# JULY

After President Joe Biden dropped out of the presidential race and Vice President Kamala Harris became the presumed Democratic nominee, Gov. Roy Cooper appeared on Harris' short list for Vice President. While this generated excitement across the state, he withdrew from consideration in late July.

# SEPTEMBER

On Sept. 27, the N.C. Court of Appeals unanimously ruled that the UNC mobile One Card is not a valid form of voter identification.

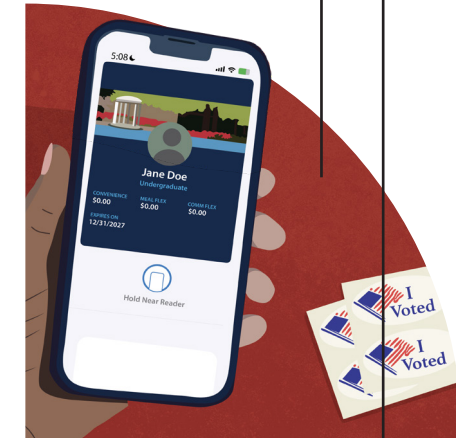
# SEPTEMBER

The group Pints for Patriots raised over \$500,000 for fraternity members who held up the American flag on April 30 for a party deemed "Flagstock" on Sept. 2, attracting around 400 attendees.



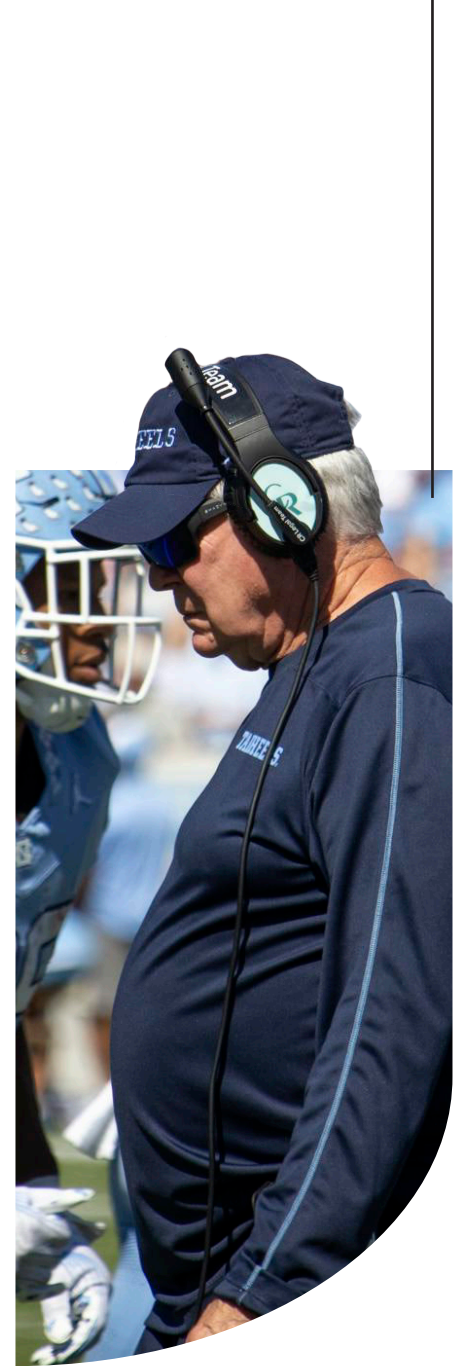
# NOVEMBER

Democratic Attorney General Josh Stein was elected as the next North Carolina governor on Nov. 5.



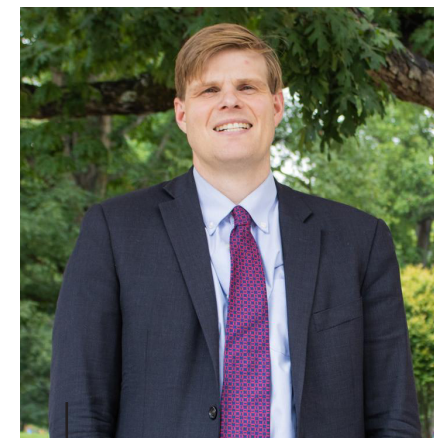
# NOVEMBER

Four days before the final regular season game against N.C. State, UNC fired football head coach Mack Brown on Nov. 26, ending his second stint after six seasons.



# JANUARY

On Jan. 18, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education voted not to comply with parts of S.B. 49, known as the Parents' Bill of Rights. The bill requires public schools to notify parents of official changes in students' legal names or pronouns.



# APRIL

The Triangle Gaza Solidarity Encampment took place on Polk Place, starting April 26, with police sweeping the event the morning of April 30, arresting six and detaining 36. That afternoon, UNC System police clashed with demonstrators using force and pepper spray after some removed the American flag from the flagpole.

# APRIL

On April 8, community members gathered around campus to watch the partial solar eclipse, which covered 93 percent of the sun at 2:43 p.m.

# JUNE

On June 8, the UNC baseball team defeated West Virginia, 2-1, to sweep the Super Regional in Chapel Hill and advance to the College World Series in Omaha — the first trip since 2018 for the Tar Heels and first under head coach Scott Forbes.

UNC announced on July 17 that they were moving from a student to professional staff-led honor system after over 100 years, now using a conduct-board model.

# JULY

# AUGUST

Legendary UNC women's soccer coach Anson Dorrance announced his retirement on Aug. 11 following a 47-year career at North Carolina culminating in 22 national titles.



# SEPTEMBER

Hurricane Helene devastated much of western North Carolina in late September with flooding and heavy rain.

# A Year in Review

Looking at the major events of 2024

# Opinion

## The Daily Tar Heel

EDITORIAL

### The Editorial Board reflects on its 2024 coverage

By The Editorial Board

opinion@dailytarheel.com

Last semester's Editorial Board predicted what issues we'd be covering in 2024 as well as how they should be covered. With the year coming to a close, we reflect on our coverage — what we did well and what we can improve on moving forward.

#### The 2024 election

As election season began, The Editorial Board interviewed local candidates to create a list of endorsements for the races relevant to Orange County. Many of the races themselves were marred with controversy, including the seat for our governorship.

CNN's report on former GOP candidate Mark Robinson's lewd and violent rhetoric paved the way for a solid win for Josh Stein, who we endorsed. Several of our other endorsements were also voted into their respective offices.

We anticipated significant coverage on the attempted removal of Donald Trump's name from ballots across the country, as well as efforts from institutions like the New North Carolina Project to flip the state in the presidential election. Neither of these came to pass, owing to a Supreme Court ruling and Trump's dominant success in all seven swing states.



DTH DESIGN/GRACE DAVIDSON

Though the Editorial Board ourselves did not endorse a presidential candidate, we did discuss the widely controversial decision from the Washington Post to withhold a presidential endorsement. Noting Jeff Bezos as the kingpin of this debacle, we highlighted our fears as student journalists about the future of trustworthy and neutral news platforms.

#### Affirmative Action

While we predicted more coverage about affirmative action, we pivoted to a closely related matter impacting

equity — the dismantling of diversity, equity and inclusion on campus. The Editorial Board covered the UNC Board of Governors' attack on DEI from their initial motion in the spring to their elimination of DEI positions in the fall, stressing the fundamental role that DEI plays in fostering an inclusive environment for all students.

In this semester's DEI Special Edition, we covered the effects of the removal on the University, signaling the breadth and importance of the program. As we move into 2025, we will continue to reckon with the state of the University in a post-affirmative action and post-DEI age.

#### Foreign wars and tensions close to home

We promised to closely monitor UNC's facilitation of dialogue regarding the war and monumental loss of life in Gaza. The Editorial Board spent time discussing the scale of protests on our campus and whether, as Chancellor Lee Roberts indicated, disruption and vandalism were at odds with Carolina's traditions of free speech and protest.

We opined that effective protest is often inherently disruptive at UNC and elsewhere. The administration's refusal to listen to the concerns of the student body as well as the University's thuggish handling of student protesters points to a profound disconnect between UNC's championship of free expression and its execution of it.

#### Campus leadership

We predicted that Roberts would be unable to deliver the change our study body hoped to see. We can now unequivocally declare this as true. Since Roberts began as interim chancellor in January, his administration has been steeped in controversy and criticized by the University community — perhaps most notably for his role in the violence UNC System police inflicted upon pro-Palestine demonstrators on April 30.

We cited this as one reason we do not approve of Roberts as chancellor,

along with to his low approval ratings, lack of qualifications and the exclusion of University community voices in the permanent chancellor search and election process.

Additionally, after 100 years of student leadership upholding the high standards of the University's honor court, the current administration has supplanted tradition, the very thing they claim to love. The honor court is being replaced by a faculty-staffed conduct board, endangering UNC's unique place among universities that strive for strong self-governance among their student bodies. Amid the administration's callous handling of the spring encampment, the future of a free student body is slim.

This decision joins a laundry list of others, from the elimination of DEI to the establishment of the School of Civic Life and Leadership, that systematically strips UNC students of autonomy. Our "University of the people" seems to be increasingly governed by an overzealous and ultra-conservative Board of Governors and Board of Trustees rather than the very people it seeks to serve. We remain wary of attempts to influence the diversity of our community, to harness control of our intellects and ideologies, and to poach our academic sovereignty.

X: @dthopinion

COLUMN

## Hold onto timelessness at a changing UNC

By Esha Singaraju

Columnist

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College is a constant state of change. Just a few weeks ago, I was in rooms full of people dressed as their favorite Halloween characters — Star Wars Jedis, Minions, even Troye Sivan. In a few more weeks, I'll be sitting in another room, this time surrounded by my family, dressed in our best holiday clothes.

This year especially has been marked by change. A new chancellor was officially elected and on a larger scale, so was our new U.S. president. In Chapel Hill, we've seen loads of renovations, fences around Polk Place and a new Meantime location. Even amid all this change, there's something about UNC that feels constant, grounding and timeless.

I was reminded of this when I was fundraising in the Pit for Samaa. An alumna from the 1980s stopped to buy a chai. "Not much has changed here,"

she said, laughing. "Everything looks just about as it did when I was here, but the people — the people are different."

Her words stuck with me. She was right. UNC is a living, evolving place, yet its essence remains the same. The bricks of the Pit, the towering trees along the quads, the Wilson Library steps — they've all been here for decades, witnessing generations of students as they laugh, grow and leave their marks. The faces change, the challenges shift, but UNC's soul persists.

There's something comforting about walking the same pathways that hundreds of thousands of others have walked before you. In the fall, the leaves turn the walkways into a canvas of yellows, reds and oranges, and it's hard not to feel a sense of gratitude for the simple beauty.

Of course, those same leaves also make the brick pathways absurdly slippery, but even that has a kind of charm. It's one of those small, enduring experiences that connects us, year after year.

If the landmarks and traditions keep us grounded, the people are what make this place transformative. Since 1967, suites in Hinton James and beyond have brought students together, forming bonds that last a lifetime.

It's impossible to describe the feeling of those early days — playing "We're Not Really Strangers," running up and down HoJo stairs during real-life Among Us and the unspoken understanding that we were all figuring this out together.

And then there are little moments that remind me of how special this place is. One afternoon, my friends and I were eating lunch outside Lenoir. Two of them, in a songwriting class, whipped out a guitar and started practicing for their final. It wasn't planned, but it didn't need to be. Slowly, more and more of our friends happened to walk by, drawn in by the music and the unexpected scene. They stopped, laughed and joined us, turning an ordinary lunch into something so wholesome — one of those moments that felt like it belonged to a bigger story, one that's been unfolding long before we arrived and will continue long after we've gone.

UNC isn't perfect. It has its flaws, and there's always work to be done. But that's part of what makes it special. This community is committed to pushing forward, to making this place better for the next generation. I'm grateful for the traditions that connect us to the past and the people who shape our present. I'm thankful for the vibrant fall leaves, the friendships forged in dorm rooms and the countless little moments that make this place feel like home.

UNC is constantly changing, just like us. But through it all, it remains UNC — a place of growth, connection and timelessness. And for that, I'll always be thankful.



DTH DESIGN/SAVANNAH BISHOP

Photos courtesy of Adobe Stock.

X: @dthopinion

## Tar Heel Verses

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

### Final

After Laura Cronk

By Emma Monroe

I stare up at the tiled ceiling static  
while the monitor hums beside me.  
The room smells of fresh tangerines  
and the sting of alcohol,  
my thumbs stained orange.  
It's all I can stomach lately.

I once pictured a warm hand over mine  
and cards propped on the nightstand-  
spines worn, a vase of flowers.  
I imagined a bright quilt over my legs,  
the armchair in the corner  
sunken and warm.

Instead, there's only the memory  
of peeling oranges by the fireplace-  
my father's hand rubbing circles  
on my small back.  
I'm not ready to go yet.

Emma Monroe is a senior majoring in English and comparative literature. She is from Carolina Beach, North Carolina, and is a member of the UNC Phi Alpha Delta pre-law fraternity.

COLUMN

# The University's egregious changes this year shouldn't come as a shock

By Davina Boison  
Columnist  
opinion@dailytarheel.com

Three years ago, I had immense faith in UNC. I somehow viewed the school as the beacon of diversity and commitment to one's own people. I wanted to trust that the university meant exactly what it said in its promises. But now, as I prepare to leave, I can only describe my journey here as one of initial shock, and later revelation — realizing the patterns of this administration, unchanged and unchallenged, are merely extensions of the university's historical stance.

For many, both the subtle and out-loud shifts this year feel abrupt and surprising. For me, they confirm what I've noticed over the past few years — UNC was not built for change.

I've learned that there are institutional forces driving UNC. These forces are mindsets, attitudes and, most importantly, necessary blind spots that keep the social hierarchy and political order of our school intact. UNC's administration, the Board of Trustees and various unseen entities of influence abide by an unspoken set of rules stemming from a system rooted in youthful and tolerable discrimination and marked by a pattern of forever living in the blind spot.

The Board of Trustees' 2021 tenure denial of Nikole Hannah-Jones is a significant point in the timeline of UNC. Hannah-Jones' work is founded in the simple truth of America — it was built on the back of the Black body and sustained through generational degradation. The UNC administration's choice to deny Hannah-Jones tenure for an esteemed position which typically demands tenure communicated that political attitudes ignoring such a truth take precedence in the governance and subsequent framework of our school.

DEI initiatives are widely debated and honestly functionally flawed. Whether or not they work

merits objective conversation, but their representative value is important to recognize. Their space in our environment demonstrates some vested interest in addressing proven inequities.

In late July of this year, news broke that the UNC Board of Governors had eliminated a system-wide set of positions related to diversity, equity and inclusion. Roles spared from the cuts were nicely repackaged to support other more generalized committees and offices.

Members of the BOG backed the choice, citing DEI's lack of return on investment and its component of indoctrination. The administration's choice was explained under the guise of fairness and unity. However, it more accurately reflects an unchecked power to dismiss what is not understood.

Though unrelated, both DEI cuts and Hannah-Jones' tenure denial serve as examples for an administration unwilling to reckon with its deep-seated biases. It's easy to think of these two as unrelated standalone anecdotes, but doing

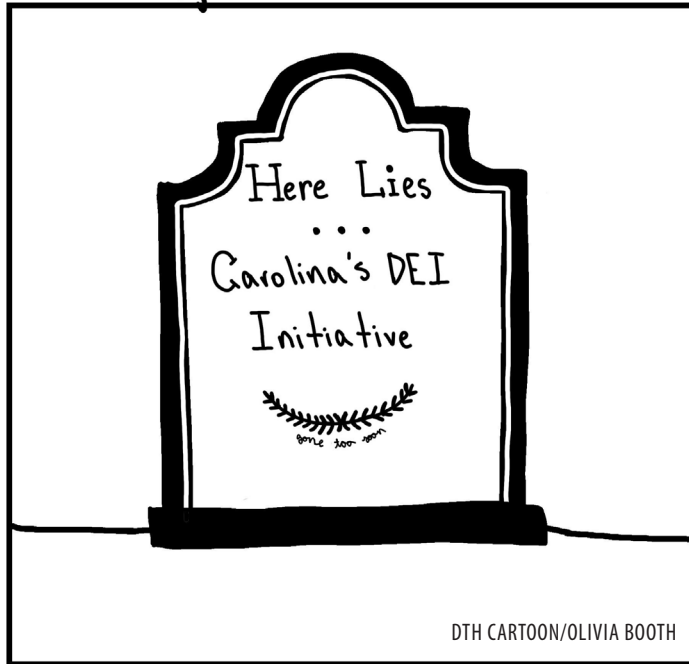
so ignores the symbolic nature of people hurt time and time again by the university they so earnestly put all their hopes into.

When I came in with the University's largest Black freshman class in 2021 — at 12 percent of incoming students — what I believed was a turning point for upward movement turned out to be just the opposite. Three years later, the 2024 freshman class' percentage of Black students has fallen to 7.8 percent. Numbers like these call on students to acknowledge the precarious importance of representation and how it works as a cherished value when needed.

Faces in UNC governance change but the behavior is continuous. The priorities of our leadership remain the same. The forces that denied tenure to a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist then are the same ones erasing DEI today.

X: @dthopinion

## Racial Injustice Prevails (R.I.P)



COLUMN

# The UNC housing crisis is still an issue

By Cooper Hall  
Columnist  
opinion@dailytarheel.com

Housing at UNC is practically Survivor. Every player (student) fends for themselves, splitting alliances (roommate groups) and switching votes (housing selections) at the last minute to make sure they have a better shot at winning a million dollars (a roof over their head). Some lose votes (housing timeslot) and are left waiting to see if they'll be voted off the island (campus).

The Survivor-esque housing process isn't new for UNC. Last year around 1,000 students were on the waitlist for on-campus housing, which was the tightest fit Carolina Housing had ever dealt with. Every student got off the waitlist, but some had to wait as late as July to find out if they would be placed in an on-campus dorm. Late this November, 1,347 students were on the housing waitlist.

Carolina Housing had plenty of time to solve the trainwreck that was the housing process for the 2024-25 school year. Despite attempted improvements, the housing process for the 2025-26 school year was, somehow, worse.

More than just the lengthy waitlist, many students who did get housing this year were separated from their roommate groups. Being forced to pick a random dorm with a random roommate was practically the only way to ensure having a bed on campus next year. That's not to say Carolina Housing didn't somewhat try to make the housing process this year smoother and a little less like Survivor. Their efforts, however, were insufficient at best and harmful at worst.

For the current year, Carolina Housing moved up cancellation deadlines, increased cancellation fees, designated additional sophomore-specific dorms and changed the room selection time slot process to a lottery for all except current and rising seniors. The changes were meant to discourage students from signing up for on-campus housing when they had other housing plans and to ease the disadvantage sophomores faced in housing selection.

The improvements to even the

playing field for freshmen did work — if you count making the process equally bad for sophomores and juniors as a success.

It's hard to say if increased fees and cancellation deadlines happening sooner changed much about the housing process. It is clear, however, that a \$500 cancellation fee to get out of living in a dorm you didn't want with a person you don't know, or to remove yourself from an endless waitlist is anything but helpful. An expensive cancellation fee can force students to stay on campus and separate from their friends, increasing stress and unhappiness with Carolina Housing.

Lots of students get off the waitlist in January after RA application results are released and future RAs are moved into rooms reserved for them. To lower to the increasing number of students on the waitlist every year, the RA application could be moved up or the housing selection time could be pushed back. To help more students get housing with their friends, students entering the housing portal individually could be required to fill gaps in partially full rooms or suites, instead of picking an empty space and taking that area away from a full suite group or roommate pair.

At its core, housing is about community. It's disappointing to get used to navigating campus and spend time gathering people you want to live with, only for the opportunity to live with them, or on campus at all, to be torn away.

After the housing disaster that occurred last year, a columnist discussed this same issue, calling out how bad the previous year's housing process had been, noting the lack of improvement and imploring Carolina Housing to step up its game for the following year.

It's up to Carolina Housing to find real solutions and implement real changes to create a straightforward, accessible and painless housing selection process, allowing students to truly pick where they want to live and who they want to live with. If not, we'll all be fighting for our lives to get housing and reading the newest version of this column next year.

X: @dthopinion

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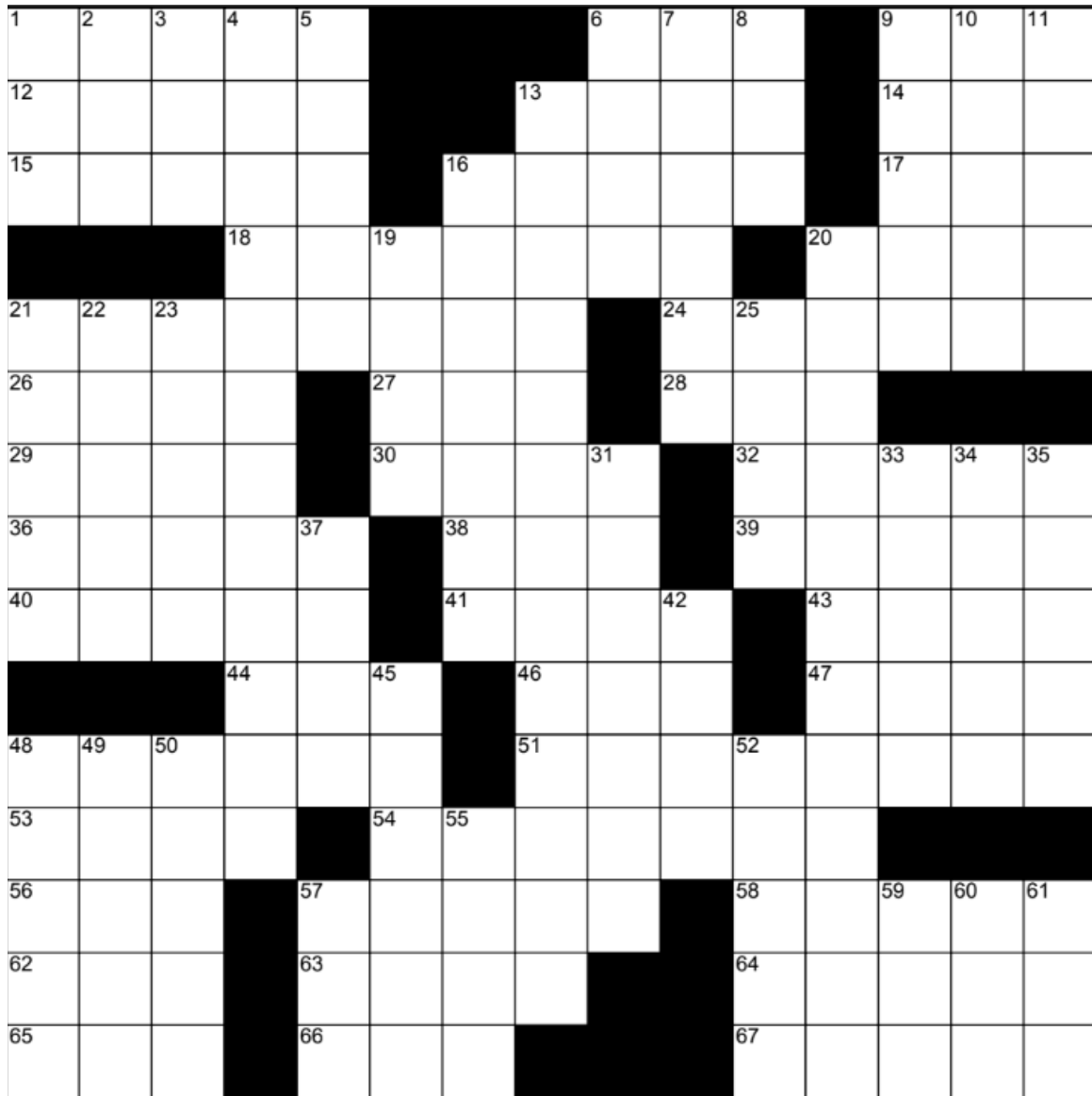


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“Slang Down Under”

This week’s crossword was created by Liam Furlong. Liam is a UNC senior studying literature and Hispanic cultures. He is from Wilmington, Del.

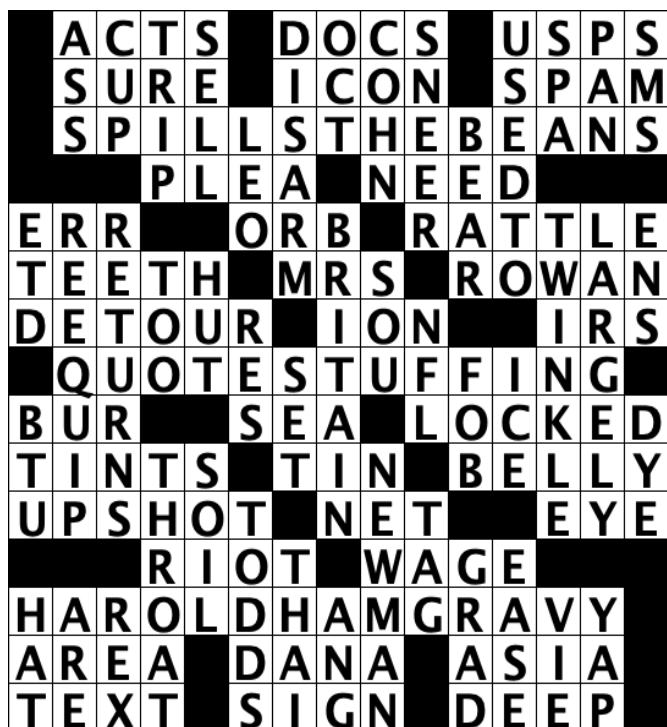
Across

- 1 Hefty, like a turkey
- 6 B-School degree
- 9 Used to be
- 12 Reef material
- 13 Mr. “Piano Man”
- 14 New \_\_\_ technology
- 15 Peppy German jam
- 16 Brings the plane in
- 17 British beverage that’ll send you to the 2-down
- 18 Moral, fair
- 20 Superman’s alias and Lane’s romancer
- 21 Long-legged Eurasian bird
- 24 Carolina crime warnings
- 26 Greek goddess of love? Oh, no... of strife
- 27 Fishing snare
- 28 Part of the hr.
- 29 General idea
- 30 “The Witches” author
- 32 Bungles completely

- 36 Ghana’s capital
- 38 “Oh, shucks!”
- 39 Turn out
- 40 Eye-opening procedure?
- 41 Phases of Taylor Swift’s career
- 43 Snake eyes, for example
- 44 Offend on the track
- 46 “Portlandia” channel
- 47 Springsteen’s “\_\_\_ to Run”
- 48 Most recent
- 51 Appeased someone angry
- 53 “I’m all \_\_\_\_\_. Start talking”
- 54 Kingly penguin species
- 56 “\_\_\_ you hearing this?”
- 57 Extend a welcome
- 58 Like most humans in “WALL-E”
- 62 Dan, to Eugene Levy
- 63 2025: \_\_\_ of the Snake
- 64 Friendly competitor
- 65 Wile E. Coyote’s favorite weapon
- 66 Jamaican word for when the

- Sun. goes down?
  - 67 Appears so
- Down**
- 1 Angel dust, shortly
  - 2 London bathroom
  - 3 Web address, abbr.
  - 4 Improves, perhaps in designing pants?
  - 5 Greenwood’s author? Does that ring a bell (jar)?
  - 6 Leonardo’s Lisa
  - 7 State of uproar
  - 8 Green and Bundy, together
  - 9 “Urinetown” scarcity
  - 10 Word after “secret” and “talent”
  - 11 Spots at the bar
  - 13 Serial killer who was hardly fantastic
  - 16 Family tree subject
  - 19 Cradle rocker
  - 20 Man of the (Dream) house with his grill?
  - 21 Majestic, queenly
  - 22 “Barbie” voice actress Lindbeck
  - 23 Blu-ray items
  - 25 A game that’s not fair?
  - 31 Brochure, packet
  - 33 Simpleton
  - 34 Moolah, dough
  - 35 What you do with moolah
  - 37 World War II alliance
  - 42 Mufasa’s slayer in “The Lion King”
  - 45 Boombox
  - 48 Smallest amount
  - 49 Rodgers of the Jets
  - 50 “\_\_\_\_\_ Crimm: The Independent” (“Ted Lasso” epithet)
  - 52 Beer to light up the banquet?
  - 55 Regina George descriptor
  - 57 Word before “bro” or “rat”
  - 59 She raised Cain
  - 60 UNC alumnus Howell
  - 61 Chicago railways

Answers to “Thanksgiving Sides”



Classifieds

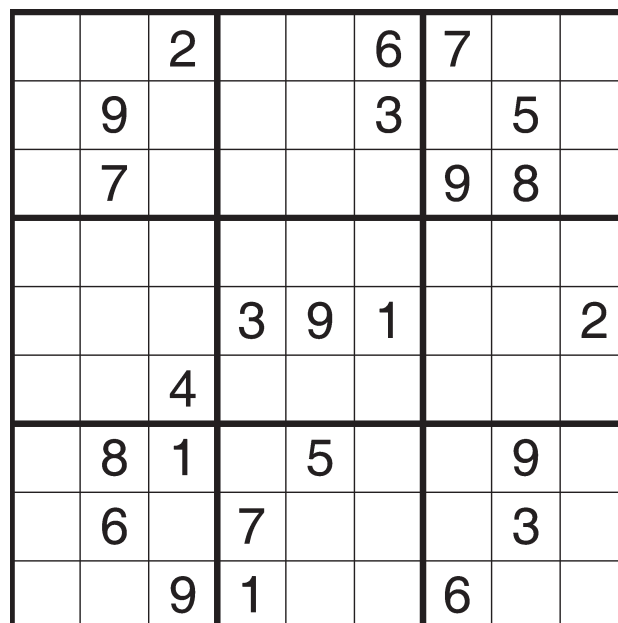
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END OF AN ERA

## Mack Brown's final game results in loss to N.C. State

The head coach will not return following a tumultuous 6-6 season

By Emma Moon

Assistant Sports Editor  
sports@dailytarheel.com

Mack Brown entered his new Texas office to an uncomfortable sight 27 years ago.

The recently hired head coach saw John Mackovic, the newly released and former Longhorns coach, cleaning out his desk. Safe to say it was awkward. Brown thought about the interaction this entire week.

So, even with 16 years of history at UNC split between two stints, Brown refused to let the same thing happen to him. After being fired on Monday by athletic director Bubba Cunningham, Brown packed up his office, turned over his work phone and handed in his keys within four days.

It's an unceremonious exit after an unceremonious end. It's a quick transition in what has been a messy divorce.

"I'm not foolish," Brown said. "I knew [I] probably wouldn't be there at the end."

On Saturday, the UNC football team fell, 35-30, to the N.C. State Wolfpack for the fourth consecutive year in Brown's final game at Kenan Stadium. The rivalry matchup was everything it always is with six lead changes and two ties in the second half. But it also represented everything North Carolina football has done wrong under the head coach. After leading by one with less than two minutes remaining, the Wolfpack found the end zone in a minute and a half to steal the game.

Even with a masterclass performance by junior running back Omarion Hampton, who recorded 263 total yards, UNC's defense collapsed. The Tar Heels couldn't finish.

In the minutes following the game, the "One More Win for Mack" tour quickly turned into a full-scale brawl featuring both squads. They fought



DTH/SAMANTHA LEWIS

Head coach Mack Brown celebrates senior day with UNC senior kicker Noah Burnette (98) in Kenan Stadium on Nov. 30.

underneath a billboard thanking the Brown family for their time at UNC. Brown was not honored beyond that.

He was the winningest active head coach in college football before Saturday. Brown has a 113-79-1 record through his time at UNC and a 44-33 record in his second stint.

But the loss caps off a tumultuous season.

"I've always said for God to tell me when it's time to go," Brown said. "And, oh my gosh, this year I've gotten a bunch of answers, and tonight just piled on."

Starting quarterback Max Johnson broke his leg in the season-opener at Minnesota. After sophomore quarterback Conner Harrell struggled, the Tar Heels landed on third-string graduate quarterback Jacoby Criswell to lead the offense. Then, UNC lost to JMU, 70-50, tying the most points ever given up in program history and resulting in an emotional Brown asking his team if they still trusted

him as a leader. Four straight losses piled up. Above all else, players dealt with the emotional turmoil of former wide receiver Tylee Craft's death after a battle with cancer.

Still, there was some hope for the program. UNC collected wins against Virginia, Florida State and Wake Forest. The team became bowl eligible. But then came an ugly 41-21 loss to Boston College where the Tar Heels recorded the fewest number of yards since 2017.

Finally, where all roads led: Brown was fired.

When Brown returned in 2018, his task was to get UNC back to 10-win seasons and national recognition. But he didn't. Top-10 early season rankings turned into falling out of the top-25 altogether. He continued to hold onto the program in an effort to change more lives. He was forced out.

On Tuesday, Brown gathered his players and told them. The

information was released to the media on the same day.

"Wow, you just didn't expect it to happen that sudden," graduate rush Kaimon Rucker said. "And it's just one of those things where it was just a typical Tuesday practice and he brought us up. He let us know that he got released. And none of us were expecting that type of news, especially that early in the week."

Players tried to figure out the timeline. Ending Brown's career four days before a rivalry game didn't make sense.

And while it might have been hard for the team to grasp, the reasoning made sense to Brown.

The 73-year-old changed the face of recruiting at Texas, eventually leading the Longhorns to a national championship in 2005. He won 158 games there. His 225 wins from 1990 to 2013 between his time at UNC and Texas were the most nationally. He's the seventh winningest college

football coach ever. But now recruiting looks different with the transfer portal and NIL.

"I think it's a great time for me to get out," Brown said. "This isn't the game I signed up for. It has changed so much since I've been here in six years."

Eventually, the whole team lined up at that Tuesday practice single file. They hugged Brown. They thanked him for trying to do what he did 30 years ago at UNC.

Following the game, Brown gave his final remarks.

He entered the press conference with a folded sheet of paper littered with the chicken scratch he makes jokes about being unable to read. The paper always contains points he wants to hit during his meetings with the media. He drank from a plastic water bottle before speaking like usual. He offered a smile. And he started like always.

"Is everybody ready?"

He spoke for 15 minutes about his love for North Carolina and being proud of what he's done over the last six years. He agreed the program needed to move on with someone new. Brown made light-hearted jokes. He emphasized he wasn't mad or angry. He only offered his disappointment with the way he was fired. He thanked select people.

At the end of his speech, he refused to answer questions. Maybe to avoid the same awkwardness he felt 27 years ago in that office and to go out on his word. Or because he didn't have an obligation anymore. Or to maintain some confidentiality after days of rampant rumors.

"It wouldn't be fair to the administration for me to answer questions without them sitting here to answer them as well," Brown said. "So love you. Appreciate you. Don't call me. You won't be able to find me. I'll be somewhere playing golf or fishing."

And just like that, he walked back through the doors of the Kenan Football Center for the last time.

X: @emmahmoon

COLUMN

## Sports editors pick 2024's athletes of the year

Amongst a collection of ACC championships and lofty achievements this year, there are select individuals that earned their flowers during the 2024 seasons.

To cap off coverage of UNC athletics in 2024, The Daily Tar Heel's sports editing staff selected their contenders for 2024 Athlete of the Year.

By Caroline Wills

Sports Editor  
sports@dailytarheel.com

Charly Bruder

UNC field hockey's Ryleigh Heck tends to receive the attention, accumulating honors as the reigning National Player of the Year and 2024's ACC Offensive Player of the Year. But sophomore forward Charly Bruder shouldered much of UNC's offensive efforts in 2024.

As a top team in drawing penalty corners, averaging 9.29 per game, Bruder was the backbone of UNC's corner unit, taking most of the shots for the Tar Heels.

Her "wind-up rocket" — a difficult-to-defend shot cranked by a powerful swing — scored UNC 27 goals this season. She averaged over one goal a game, leading the nation.

In the ACC tournament, she led all players with five goals in three games, tied for second-most all-time.

When North Carolina's season came to a close after a 2-1 loss to St. Joseph's in the Final Four of the NCAA tournament, it was Bruder who scored the lone goal — on a penalty corner, no less.

Throughout a dominant run in the regular season and ACC tournament, UNC turned to Bruder for finding the back of the cage. And more often than not, she delivered.

and Matthew Maynard

Assistant Sports Editor

RJ Davis

After missing the 2022 NCAA tournament, all eyes fell on how men's basketball would bounce back.

Most found comfort in the fact that Armando Bacot returned for his fifth year and would likely be UNC's spine. But someone else captured the spotlight: RJ Davis.

Davis had one of the best UNC seasons in college basketball history. He was a consensus first team All-American, the first North Carolina guard to do so since Joseph Forte in 2001. Furthermore, Davis became just the fifth UNC guard to win

ACC Player of the Year, joining elite company like Michael Jordan and Phil Ford. Davis also added the Jerry West Award, given to the best shooting guard in the country — the first Tar Heel to do so.

And while it's easy to point out his abysmal shooting performance against Alabama in last year's NCAA Sweet 16, the Tar Heels never would have been in that position without him.

Despite a slow start to this season for the preseason first team All-American, it's still Davis' team, and it's not a slump that will last the whole season.

and Emma Moon

Assistant Sports Editor

Vance Honeycutt

Some people are born with the clutch gene and Vance Honeycutt has it.

Drafted in the first round of the MLB Draft by the Orioles in 2024, the center fielder led the Tar Heels to their first College World Series appearance since 2018.

To get there, UNC's all-time home run leader hit two moon shots against LSU in game three of the Chapel Hill Regional. He hit a walk-



DTH DESIGN/CARLY EVANS

Photos courtesy of Lara Crochik and Sophie Liu.

off homer against West Virginia in the Super Regional. And during North Carolina's first game of the CWS, he ended the game against Virginia in similar fashion.

Outside of those game-winning moments, Honeycutt was the only player in the Power 4 conferences to finish his time at UNC with more than 60 home runs and 70 stolen bases. His 65 career home runs are the fourth most in ACC history. He

was the first Tar Heel to receive the Rawlings Gold Glove Award. He was named ACC Defensive Player of the Year in 2023 and 2024.

Last year, he led the ACC in runs scored, tied the conference lead for home runs and ranked third for stolen bases.

So, it's safe to say this to summarize it all: He has aura.

X: @dthsports

## TRANSITION

## Damon Nahas leads UNC women's soccer to College Cup

## Interim head coach finds rhythm in first season

By Harry Crowther

Senior Writer  
sports@dailytarheel.com

Last Friday, Damon Nahas laced up his cleats for one of the biggest matches of his life.

With less than 20 minutes until kickoff, he walked to the top of the penalty box and turned his back to goal. From there, he could look up and see the banners posted above the far end of the field. To Nahas' right and left was Carolina Blue signage that read "Dorrance Field," named for the man who won all those national championships.

But he didn't look up. The interim head coach was focused on playing quick one-twos with his players, who would receive the ball back, run in behind and fire shots on goal. Every warmup of every game this season has ended the same way — with Nahas doing a little thing to help his players succeed.

"It's not about being the head coach or anything like that," Nahas said. "You just try to grow and connect with players through the ups and downs and hope that you build a trust that they follow you. And I follow them. This is as much me following them as them following me."

Hours after the final warmup shot, the Tar Heels secured a 2-1 victory in the NCAA tournament quarterfinals over Penn State. Nahas and his team have followed each other all the way to the College Cup, where UNC will face No. 1 seed Duke on Friday in Cary.

"We're not here without him," junior forward Kate Faasse said. "We're not us without him."



DTH/DYLAN THIESSEN

Interim head coach Damon Nahas talks with the team after the second round of the NCAA tournament against Santa Clara on Nov. 22.

Former head coach Anson Dorrance retired on Aug. 11 after 47 years with UNC athletics, only four days before the start of the 2024 season. He coached the women's soccer team for 45 years to a 934-88-53 record, reaching the College Cup 31 times and winning 22 national titles. Nahas was immediately named interim head coach. Through the challenges of taking over for Dorrance and managing a changing roster, he has led UNC to its 30th 20-win season and now has a chance to win the program's first national championship since 2012.

"Damon Nahas is the best coach I've ever seen," Dorrance said in his retirement press conference. "I think he's the best soccer coach in the country."

A native of East Northport, N.Y., Nahas played soccer at N.C. State from 1992-96 before playing professionally. In the

early 2000s, Nahas founded Next Level Academy, which played an important role in his development as a coach. In 2011, U.S. Soccer hired him as the head coach of the 15U Girls' National Team.

Nahas is now in his ninth year at UNC since joining the program as an assistant in 2015. He was promoted to associate head coach in 2021, and played an important role in training and tactics during Dorrance's final seasons. Nahas said he has learned lessons from Dorrance that have prepared him for this year.

"It's so hard for us to [lose] a coach that's been around for 47 years," Faasse said. "I think Damon's the one and only that can step up and do that because he is the only person that knows this program by the back of his hand like Anson. Nobody else has coached us before."

Nahas' roster is young and new. Twenty one players from

the 2023 team left the program, including top scorers Ally Sentnor and Avery Patterson. The starting lineup against Penn State featured a 17-year-old defender, a first-year defender converted from a forward, two Ivy League grad transfers and a first-year forward.

For most of the campaign, Nahas was without his full squad.

"He's done a really great job of keeping us together," senior midfielder Bella Sember said. "Keeping us motivated, keeping us positive."

Junior forward Maddie Dahlien missed more than a month away on international duty. Less than a week after Dahlien returned, first-year defender Trinity Armstrong left to play for a national team. Sophomores Evelyn Shores and Olivia Thomas missed significant time due to injuries.

Through it all, Nahas has found ways to win. And now with everyone back, UNC is peaking at the right time.

"All the little things, all the film, all the tactics," junior defender Tessa Dellarose said. "He's making sure he's putting us in the best position every time we step on the field to go win the game. He'll do whatever that takes for us."

The Tar Heels have complete trust in their coach. Faasse said she gives all her credit to Nahas for making her a better player.

"Damon is probably the best coach I've ever been coached by," Faasse said. "He believes in every single one of us and makes sure we know that."

Nahas is always available for his team. He loves working with his players on the training ground, and they have embraced his process.

After every match, Nahas makes a point to talk to them individually

as they stretch. Win or lose, he gives them a hug or an encouraging pat on the back.

"I know it's sometimes hard on some teams where people feel like players before they're just people," Faasse said. "He is very adamant on letting us know that we are people before we are players and our feelings, our emotions, everything matters."

His players gave the love back to him following a victory over Virginia Tech in the first round of the ACC tournament.

They called him, "D-Money." They chanted his name.

"Damon! Damon! Damon!"

After Faasse scored the winning goal in extra time of the NCAA tournament quarterfinal, a poster that read "#REMOVE THE INTERIM TAG" made its way onto the field. The Tar Heels all signed it. They lifted it up along with a trophy and a ticket to the College Cup.

"If he isn't my coach next year," Faasse said, "I don't know what's going on."

Nahas told his players in the post-match huddle his purpose is not to remove his interim title.

"Regardless of what happens, I won in the big picture of things," Nahas said. "If that's the last, I'll have that for the rest of my life. Anyone else that's a part of this will know that. So for me, connection with your players, connection with your staff, the belief and the joy together to accomplish things that a lot of people never thought that you could accomplish in the manner in which we did — we won a long time ago. Let's enjoy this ride. And whatever happens, I'm just going to be proud."

X: @dthsports

## SEMIFINALS

## UNC field hockey snaps two-year national championship streak

## The team's tournament run ends with 2-1 loss in Final Four

By Caroline Wills

Sports Editor  
sports@dailytarheel.com

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — After the harsh sound of the final buzzer of the NCAA semifinal match faded, head coach Erin Matson took her seat at the post-game press conference. She wiped away the tears flowing down her cheeks.

She started to find the words for her opening statement but paused. Her voice trailed off.

She took a deep breath. Then she tried again.

"I'll just leave it at [this] — I'm the one in the position consoling everyone and making sure everyone's OK and in good spirits," Matson said. "The first thing I hear is Ciana Riccardo walking off the field saying, 'You can't win them all.'"

It's the truth, of course. But the expectation for an 11-time national title-winning field hockey program is to always win them all.

The Tar Heels have taken home the NCAA championship trophy five times in the last six years. They've won it more than any other school. They clinched the trophy with a 23-year-old head coach in her first year — only a year removed from her last season as a player for the team. They've appeared in the final match seven out of the last nine years. And as the No. 1 seed and only remaining undefeated team in this year's tournament, they looked poised to defend their title for the third year in a row.

Then came Saint Joseph's. On Friday afternoon at Michigan's Phyllis Ocker Field and one win away from advancing to the championship game, UNC came up short against No. 4 seed SJU, 2-1, in the Final Four, marking North Carolina's first loss of the season. The lone score came from sophomore forward Charly Bruder in the 45th minute. Too little, too late.

"I think it's a testament to the standards that this program has, that losing in a semifinal match feels like it's the end of the world, when most programs would dream to be in this position," Matson said.

UNC was in unfamiliar territory, facing a lot of firsts. First time falling into a deficit this season. First time trailing in the NCAA tournament since 2022.

But 20 wins led North Carolina to this moment. An ACC regular season title. A conference championship trophy for the eighth year in a row.

"They like the pressure," Matson said. "You come to Carolina to play in games like this and moments like this."

Two years ago when North Carolina fell behind in a tournament game, the Tar Heels roared back to life, winning 5-1 against Delaware in the opening round.

It's difficult to replicate the emotions of being down in a win-or-go-home game for a team that has yet to fall behind all year, but Matson said the Tar Heels had practiced playing a goal down. On Friday, they didn't panic. They didn't start thinking about a losing outcome.

Down 2-0, Bruder unleashed a shot off a last-second penalty corner in the third quarter. For a moment, a comeback looked possible. Until it didn't.

The firsts compounded. First time being held to only one goal all season.



DTH/OLIVIA PAUL

UNC senior midfielder Jasmina Smolenaars (22) hugs head coach Erin Matson after the loss against St. Joseph's in the NCAA Championship Semifinal game on Friday, Nov. 22 at Phyllis Ocker Field in Ann Arbor, Michigan. UNC fell 2-1.

First time losing in the semifinal since 2017. First time not appearing in the championship game since 2021. First loss of the 2024 season.

"This one hurts because of how hard this team worked, how elite this team played and how much this team loves each other," Matson said.

Junior forward Ryleigh Heck has known nothing but national championships before this year.

She knocked down the winning shot in last year's title match. She scored UNC's first goal in the championship game the year before.

But on Friday, there was nothing she could do to change the momentum.

Her six shots — five on goal — never saw the back of the cage.

As the Saint Joseph's bench stormed the field, screaming and cheering, Heck stood alone on the turf for a while, face red and eyes misty. Bruder ran straight into the arms of senior forward Kennedy Cliggett, burying her face into her teammate's shoulder. Senior goalkeeper Abigail Taylor sobbed in Matson's embrace.

It won't be this pain that Matson will remember. She'll think about the team dinners and the bus rides. She'll recall the minutes leading up to a film session when the players would sing karaoke.

She'll hold onto the sounds of "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour" blasting from the office and the sight of her team standing on the furniture to sing along.

More than that, she'll remember the "hell of a time" the team — many of them her former teammates — had playing together.

And as the head coach wiped her tears once more, she had one message:

"Just because we don't win every single national championship does not mean that this season is any less [than] any other and that this team was any less [than] any other."

X: @carolinewills03

BASKETBALL | REPORT CARDS

# Women's basketball off to hot start in 2024-25

By Megan Smith  
Senior Writer  
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The No. 16 North Carolina women's basketball team has opened up the season 7-1 and is set to begin ACC play on Dec. 15 against Georgia Tech.

UNC started the year with wins over Charleston Southern, UNC Wilmington and North Carolina A&T by an average margin of over 25 points before dropping to No. 2 UConn, 69-58. North Carolina won the Battle 4 Atlantis title after handling Ball State, Villanova and Indiana in the Bahamas. Then, the Tar Heels trounced North Carolina Central in their last game before the ACC/SEC Challenge.

Here's a grading of how UNC has performed through its first eight games:

**Offense: B+**

North Carolina is shooting a solid 43 percent from the field and 33 percent from beyond the arc. However, the Tar Heels are committing an average of 12 turnovers per contest.

UNC exploded for its greatest offensive display in the Courtney Banghart era with 119 points against N.C. Central, but in the

loss to UConn the reliable veteran trio collapsed. Graduate forward Alyssa Ustby, graduate guard Lexi Donarski and senior center Maria Gakdeng only combined for 10 points in the game, shooting a combined 3-13 from the field.

**Defense: A**

The Tar Heels are ranked No. 1 in defense in the ACC and No. 6 in the country, holding their opponents to 48.6 points per game. En route to claiming the Battle 4 Atlantis title, North Carolina held Villanova to just 36 points and Indiana to 39.

Junior guard Indya Nivar leads North Carolina in steals with 16, while first-year center Blanca Thomas has collected 11 blocks on the season. UNC is holding opponents to only 33 percent shooting from the floor and 24 percent from 3-point range.

**Frontcourt: B+**

While Ustby faced difficulty finding the bottom of the mesh to open the year, the graduate forward amassed a season-high 24 points against N.C. Central to go along with 10 boards. She ranks fifth in the ACC in rebounds with 10.1 per game.

In the same contest against N.C.

Central, Gakdeng earned her first double-double of the season and redshirt first-year forward Ciera Toomey tied her career best of 10 points. The addition of the 6-foot-5 Thomas has also shaken rim-finishers on opposing teams.

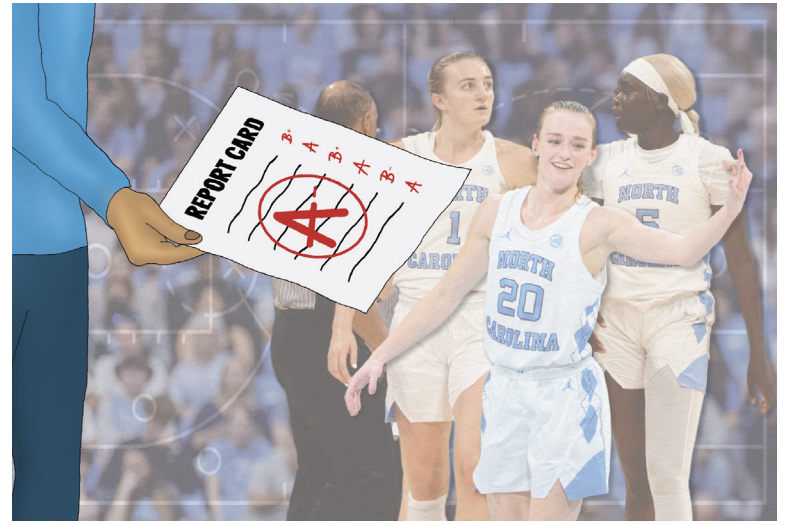
**Backcourt: A**

On the backcourt side of things, graduate guard Grace Townsend has stepped into the point guard role for UNC. She's a pass-first player who runs a quick offense for North Carolina.

Another new addition, first-year guard Lanie Grant, recorded a new career-high of 15 points against Ball State in the Battle 4 Atlantis. Trayanna Crisp has proved to be a beneficial off-season pickup for UNC, as the junior guard from Arizona State ranks third for UNC in total points. In front of her is Donarski, who is North Carolina's most lethal 3-point shooter, converting on 34 percent from the perimeter.

**Starters: B-**

The starters have shown signs of weakness this season. In North Carolina's first true test of the season against UConn, four out of five starters sat on the sidelines to open the fourth quarter. The bench brought what was



DTH DESIGN/LIZA SMITH

Photos courtesy of Nate Skvoretz and Vijaya Soukthavone.

once a 21-point deficit back to single digits as the starting unit struggled.

However, the starters had their best showing most recently in the blowout over N.C. Central, with Ustby, Gakdeng, Donarski and Nivar all scoring in double digits.

**Bench: A**

The secondary unit has provided great depth for a team that was once plagued with injury last season. The

UNC bench — led mostly by Grant and Toomey — is averaging 31 points per game, which falls at No. 31 nationally.

In clinching the Battle 4 Atlantis, North Carolina's bench outplayed the starters and scored 35 points against Indiana. The bench contribution has tied or exceeded the margin of victory in five of UNC's seven wins this season.

**Overall: A-**

X: @meganosmithh

# Men's basketball balances strengths and weaknesses

By Brian D'Aguanno  
Staff Writer  
sports@dailytarheel.com

Through seven games, the UNC men's basketball team is off to its worst start since the 2010-11 season.

With a revamped roster following the departure of three starters, the Tar Heels find themselves with a 4-3 record about one month into the season.

Here are letter grades for each component of the team so far:

**Offense: A-**

It is clear Carolina was built to be an offensive juggernaut. The offense has not disappointed, ranking 23rd in the nation in overall efficiency, giving UNC one of the most potent scoring attacks in the country. As the team continues to build chemistry, expect the offense to build upon its early season dominance.

**Defense: C-**

Defense was a question mark coming into the season after UNC was unable to land a big man in the transfer portal and has proven to be the team's



DTH DESIGN/ERICA LOPEZ

Photos courtesy of Lara Crochik, Cassidy Toy Reynolds and Dylan Thiessen.

Achilles' heel. Carolina has allowed over 80 points per game, the second most in the country amongst Power Five teams.

And when the defense collapses around the post player, it opens up the perimeter. UNC allows opposing teams to shoot over 34 percent from beyond the arc, ranking 238th in the nation.

**Frontcourt: C**

The departures of Armando Bacot and Harrison Ingram left big shoes to fill, and the Tar Heels are still searching for answers. Junior starting center Jalen Washington has not been an adequate replacement for the former All-ACC defender Bacot.

Graduate forward Jae'Lyn Withers has been a bright spot for the frontcourt, shooting over 42 percent from 3-point range. While the frontcourt has been able to produce on the offensive end, the lack of paint presence limits their effectiveness.

**Backcourt: B+**

It's no secret that Carolina boasts one of the best backcourts in the country. Both sophomore guard Elliot Cadeau and junior guard Seth Trimble are having breakout seasons, leading the way for UNC's offense. Graduate guard RJ Davis was poised to be one of the best players in the nation, but early season struggles have hindered the overall effectiveness of the backcourt.

If Davis can return to his level of play, Carolina's backcourt could meet expectations to be the best in the nation.

**Starters: B**

The starting lineup has stayed consistent throughout the first seven games with Davis, Cadeau, Trimble, Withers and Washington. But early

deficits in the last games have called into question the lineup's effectiveness.

Head coach Hubert Davis must make a change, as relying on second half comebacks is not a recipe for success. Making adjustments to the starting combination may bring a much needed spark to a team that finds itself on a losing skid.

**Bench: B+**

First-year phenom forward Drake Powell and guard Ian Jackson have been explosive coming off the bench. In the recent loss to Michigan State, they combined for 32 points on over 70 percent shooting.

Combined with the productive play of junior transfer forward Ven-Allen Lubin — who is averaging over six points on 75 percent shooting — the Tar Heels boast a solid eight man rotation. Don't be surprised if Powell and Lubin play their way into a struggling UNC starting lineup.

**Overall: B-**

X: @dthsports

TROPHIES

# A look at UNC's team and individual championships in 2024

By Sofia Szostczuk  
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sports@dailytarheel.com

"UNCommon" is a slogan most often used by UNC football. The first three letters are usually capitalized, in bold or a different color. This play on words with UNC and the word "uncommon," is in many ways, true.

The Tar Heels are uncommon and not just in football. It is uncommon to have six championship titles achieved across six sports in one year. It is uncommon to have an Olympian walking through campus. It is uncommon to have a 24-year-old head coach.

Looking back on 2024, both team and individual championships are celebrated across field hockey, women's tennis, men's track and field, men's fencing, men's golf and individual women's diving.

**Field Hockey**

On Nov. 8, No. 1 seed UNC Field Hockey defeated No. 3 seed Boston College, 4-1, to earn the team's eighth consecutive and 27th overall ACC Championship title.

During the game, four different scorers found the back of the net, including forwards Charly Bruder, Sanne Hak, Ryleigh Heck and back Ciana Riccardo. Earning the ACC title was the beginning of a deep run in the NCAA tournament.

After making it to the Final Four, the Tar Heels fell to St. Joseph's, 2-1, in Ann Arbor, Mich., ending their season.

**Women's Tennis**

In April, No. 1-seeded North Carolina defeated No. 2-seeded Virginia, 4-1, to secure its 12th ACC women's tennis title and the first since 2021.

To earn the win, UNC experienced a dogfight with then-senior Elizabeth Scotty at the forefront. Scotty was later named ACC Championship MVP after taking her sets 0-6, 6-1, 6-2 and giving the Tar Heels their second team point.

After an automatic bid into the NCAA tournament, UNC's postseason run ended at the hands of No. 13 Texas A&M, 4-1, in the third round. The Aggies went on to win the NCAA Championship.

**Men's Fencing**

UNC brought home a fencing ACC Championship title in 2024, breaking a 44-year drought. This is the program's ninth ACC title in history. The Tar Heels went 3-0 at the ACC tournament, defeating Boston College, top-ranked Notre Dame and Duke. North Carolina beat the Blue Devils, 19-8, to earn the win.

**Men's Golf**

At the end of April, UNC defeated Florida State, 3-1, at the Charlotte Country Club to secure its first ACC Championship title since 2006.

To get to the championship, the Tar Heels defeated Wake Forest, 3-2, in the semifinals.

Games won by then-senior Peter Fountain, then-junior David Ford and then-graduate student Austin Greaser propelled the Tar Heels past the Seminoles for the title win.

One month later, North Carolina later fell to Florida State, 3-1, in the quarterfinals of the NCAA tournament.

**Parker Wolfe - Track & Field**

Parker Wolfe is a force for UNC Cross Country and Track & Field. The then-junior took the 2024 outdoor track season by storm, bringing home two ACC titles and

a national championship — the first men's individual title since 2007.

Wolfe showcased his talent by winning the NCAA 5,000-meter race with a time of 13:54.43 at Hayward Field in Eugene, Ore. He became the first Tar Heel to win a 5,000m National Championship in NCAA Men's Outdoor Track and Field.

**Aranza Vazquez Montaño - Swimming & Diving**

Vazquez took home two NCAA Championships in March: her first in the 1-meter springboard and her second, in the 3-meter.

The La Paz, Mexico native spent her time competing in the Paris Olympics for Team Mexico this summer. She finished 16th in the 3-meter springboard during her second Olympic Games appearance.

X: @sofiaszostczuk



# Special Projects *The Daily Tar Heel*

## RACIALIZED VIOLENCE

# The long history of lynching in North Carolina

Many scholars draw connections between the act and modern systems

By **Dania Al Hadeethi**

Special Projects Writer  
enterprise@dailytarheel.com

*Content Warning: This article contains descriptions of racial violence and some mentions of sexual assault.*

Javion Magee, a 21-year-old truck driver from the Chicago area, was found dead in Henderson, N.C. on Sept. 11. His back lay flat against a tree, and a rope tied around his neck was connected to a branch.

The Magee family spokesperson, Candice Matthews, said the entire family is completely mortified and hurt.

"They have a lot of questions and they just want to know what happened to their loved one," she said.

Vance County Sheriff Curtis R. Brame said there were no initial signs of foul play.

In his statement to the press, he said since the rope was wrapped around Magee's neck without a knot in it, it was not a noose. Therefore, Brame said Magee's death was not a lynching.

The history of lynching in North Carolina, and across the United States, is both long and difficult to define due to a lack of reporting on Black history for much of the 20th century. Many

contemporary activists and scholars draw connections between the history of the violent act and modern systems, like the death penalty and its disproportionate use on Black people.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People defines lynching as the public killing of an individual who has not received any due process.

Erik Gellman, a history professor at UNC, said after the Civil War and through the early 20th century, lynching and other forms of racialized violence became a form of intimidation amongst white Southerners, particularly to enforce and justify Jim Crow laws.

### Historical context

From 1882 to 1968, 4,743 lynchings occurred in America, but historians believe the true number is underreported due to a lack of formal tracking.

The documented history of lynching in North Carolina dates back to 1805, when a Black woman was burned alive in Wayne County. State law enforcement also partook in mob lynchings, such as when Chatham County officers lynched 16-year-old Eugene Daniel in 1921, who was memorialized a century after his death.

In 1906, Nease Gillespie, John Gillespie, and Jack Dillingham were lynched in Salisbury, N.C. One of the perpetrators was arrested

and prosecuted for his role in the mob executions. The case went to the North Carolina Supreme Court, which sentenced him to 15 years, one of the first convictions in N.C. and in American history.

The public killings of Black people does not remain an act of the 19th-20th centuries. In Texas in 1998, James Byrd Jr. was beaten and chained to a truck by three white men, who dragged him to his death. In 2020 in Georgia, Ahmaud Arbery was chased down and fatally shot while jogging through a neighborhood.

That same year, George Floyd was killed by a police officer who knelt on his neck for over nine minutes.

Lynching was not federally outlawed until 2022, when the Senate passed the Emmet Till Antilynching Act. The bill passed over a hundred years after Rep. George Henry White of North Carolina, the only Black member of Congress at the time, introduced the first bill to outlaw lynchings.

### Lynching in the justice system

From 1910, when North Carolina created a centralized capital punishment system, to 1961, the state executed 361 people. Of the people executed, 80 percent were Black.

Gellman said throughout the 1930s and 40s, Black-led organizations saw the connection between lynching and what they called "legalized lynching": racial

terror through police violence and the death penalty.

"That clearly wasn't justice, so there was that link that people made then, and now, about the connection between extralegal racialized violence and racialized violence that came through the actual channels of the legal system," Gellman said.

Nick Courmon, the community engagement coordinator for the North Carolina Coalition for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, said there is an inextricable link between today's death penalty and the history of racial terror.

"It's all rooted in this dehumanization of, quite frankly, Black bodies and people of color," Courmon said.

Courmon also said that many executions happen in the same places with lengthy histories of lynching.

Noel Nickle, the director of the NCCADP, said that bias in the N.C. justice system is not unique to the state.

"It's consistent that the death penalty is built on systemic racism and is a direct descendant of historic racial terror lynching," she said.

### Legal opposition

In 1925, 17-year-old Alvin Mansell went on trial for the alleged rape of a white woman in Asheville. He was sentenced to death even though there was considerable evidence of his innocence. Four thousand people,

including the victim of the alleged attack signed a petition to save his life. Gov. Angus McLean then granted Mansell a reduced sentence, and after five years in a prison labor camp, he was pardoned and released.

This September, Marcellus Williams was executed in Missouri after serving for nearly 24 years, despite mounting legal and public opposition. DNA evidence did not tie Williams to the murder he was accused of, and the execution was opposed by both the prosecution and the victim's family.

Nickle said that the Racial Justice Act is also at risk of losing its legislative power. The RJA was adopted in North Carolina in 2009, and allowed people on death row to use statistics and broad patterns of discrimination to prove that race contributed to their death sentences.

"That's one of the reasons we haven't had executions in 18 years, is because of that litigation, but we anticipate that it will fall away, given the makeup of our state Supreme Court," she said.

Nickle said that signing the NCCADP petition calling Gov. Roy Cooper to commute all death sentences to prison terms is one way students can make their voices heard.

"We read about these situations and they seem so big. Well, how can we make a difference? Adding your name to this petition makes a difference," Nickle said.

X: @dailytarheel

## NOTICE FOR PUBLIC HEARING PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION REGARDING APPROVAL OF AN AIR PERMIT APPLICATION FOR The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has applied to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Air Quality for modification of its current Title V air permit to allow for the combustion of an engineered pelletized fuel in the facility's coal/natural gas-fired boilers at: **575 West Cameron Avenue, CB# 1858 Chapel Hill, NC 27599 Orange County.**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's application was reviewed by the Division of Air Quality, Raleigh Central Office to determine compliance with the requirements of the North Carolina Environment Management Commission air pollution regulations. The results of that review led to the preliminary determination that the project could be approved, and the Division of Air Quality permit could be issued, if certain permit conditions are met.

This notice serves as a Notice of Public Hearing and Opportunity for Public Comment for this proposal. The Public hearing will be held at 7:00 pm (doors open at 6:30 pm) on January 16, 2025, at Orange High School located at 500 Orange High School Road in Hillsborough, NC 27278. In the event the hearing needs to be postponed, either January 21 or 23, 2025 will serve as the backup date.

A copy of all data and the application submitted by The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and other material used by the Division of Air Quality in making this preliminary determination are available for public inspection during normal business hours at the following locations: **NC DEQ, Division of Air Quality, Air Permits Section 217 West Jones Street, Suite 4000 Raleigh, NC 27603** or **Raleigh Regional Office, 3800 Barrett Drive Raleigh, NC 27609.**

Information on the permit application and staff review are available by writing or calling: **Mark J. Cuilla, EIT, CPM or Russell Braswell NC DEQ Division of Air Quality 1641 Mail Service Center Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1641. Telephone: 919-707-8400.**

Interested persons are invited to review these materials and submit written comments to Russell Braswell at the above address or to present oral or written comments at the Public Hearing. Persons wishing to present oral comments at the hearing should prepare their presentation to be three minutes or less. For those who are unable to attend, comments can also be submitted by email to [daq.publiccomments@deq.nc.gov](mailto:daq.publiccomments@deq.nc.gov) with the subject line "UNC.24A". You may also leave a voicemail comment at 919-707-8448.

Comments will be accepted until January 17, 2025 (January 24 if the original hearing date is postponed).

Mark J. Cuilla, EIT, CPM, Chief, Permitting Section  
Division of Air Quality, NCDEQ



STUDENT GOVERNMENT

# GPSG calls for dismissal of UNC Police officer

Rahsheem Holland criticized for treatment of student protesters

By Aisha Baiocchi

Special Projects Editor  
enterprise@dailytarheel.com

On Nov. 12, the Graduate and Professional Student Government passed a resolution calling for the dismissal of UNC Police Captain Rahsheem Holland citing Holland's repeated violent conduct as a threat to student safety.

Video and photo of Holland on April 30, when UNC Police officers followed Chancellor Lee Roberts into a crowd of protesters, has garnered significant media attention. Holland was seen pushing a barricade on a student in a wheelchair, grabbing a student by the ponytail and throwing another student on the ground. Additionally, Holland was accused with punching a student protester in the face in 2021, during the protests about Nikole Hannah-Jones.

A statement from UNC Media Relations said that the University is unable to comment on incidents concerning specific officers due to state public records law.

"Student safety is the University's top priority," the statement said. "UNC-Chapel Hill reviews complaints and allegations and determines findings based on applicable policies and North Carolina statutes."

The statement also said that Roberts, Provost Chris Clemens, chief of UNC Police Brian James and Holland were not available to comment on the resolution.

"I don't think there's any way that you can look at this resolution as an administrator and disagree with it," said Alonna Despain, a graduate student senator and one of the co-authors of the bill. "Because



DTH FILE/GRACE RICHARDS

UNC Police officer Rahsheem Holland pulls protesters to the ground at Polk Place on Tuesday, April 30.

if you do that, you are effectively saying, 'I am okay if the students at my university experience physical and psychological harm.'"

### GPSG calls for student safety

The GPSG resolution is not the first call for Holland's removal. The Black Student Movement and UNC National Association for the Advancement of Colored People put out statements in 2021 declaring his presence a threat to Black students. More recently, the student advocacy group TransparUNCy, has issued a statement demanding Holland be fired.

The resolution passed the full GPSG Senate on Nov. 12 with a vote of 38 to 4.

Nyssa Tucker, a graduate student senator and co-author of the resolution, said she doesn't expect the administration to respond directly, but she hopes it sends a message.

"This message is less for the police, less for administration — they already know how we feel," she said. "This is for the community beyond UNC. This is for everyone to know that there are people willing to who are doing this."

Because it passed, copies of the resolution were delivered to a list of University administrators along with GPSG President Katie Heath. Heath did not respond to request for comment by the time of publication.

Despain and Tucker both said they think the GPSG has a responsibility to take action to

make the campus safer for student activists because of inaction from other branches of student government. Tucker specifically mentioned a "conservative takeover" of Undergraduate Senate that she thinks needs to be addressed.

In early October, the GPSG passed no-confidence resolutions against Roberts and Clemens, which were then converted to joint governance bills that failed due to the lack of support in Undergraduate Senate. In a November Board of Trustees meeting, Trustee Marty Kotis praised the Undergraduate for their "political savvy and poise."

"I just think that we definitely need to make that body more representative than it is," Despain said. "I don't think that it currently embodies what the UNC undergraduate campus body value as a whole. And it seems to have been a couple very small circles who are able to express their thoughts and opinions on that."

Matthew Tweden, the speaker of the Undergraduate Senate, provided an email statement in response to the GPSG resolution:

"The GPS Senate is free to pass messaging statements that alienate key institutional partners. Our record speaks for itself: the very first position adopted in the 106th Senate affirmed our commitment to free speech and open discourse."

In his statement, Tweden also wrote that the Undergraduate Senate is planning to pass legislation to support a permanent program for accessible feminine hygiene products, which he said resulted from differing views on what student government is supposed to deliver to the student body. Tweden did not directly respond to claims of a "conservative takeover."

### Policing on campus

Christina, a student who was thrown to the ground by Holland on April 30, says she hasn't felt safe on campus since the altercation. She sought medical attention in mid-May, and was diagnosed with symptoms of a concussion.

A statement from Media Relations said that the University is unable to comment on formal complaints against individuals due to the North Carolina Human Resources Act.

"The Chief of Police consults with University Human Resources regarding appropriate disciplinary action if a violation of policy has been determined," the statement said.

She said police presence on campus has only made her feel more unsafe this semester, mentioning the increased security around activism by Students for Justice in Palestine, including a vigil the group organized on Oct. 7.

"People were grieving, people were sobbing," she said. "And to have cop cars outside watching us, on top of them purposely bringing in fencing around the time of the vigil — it was a signal to us that you are not allowed to mourn, that we are not allowed to grieve."

Student and activist Laura Saavedra also alleges UNC Police officers pushed her out of her wheelchair in late September in pursuit of a warrant relating to vandalism committed at a Sept. 19 protest. A statement from James in September confirmed that the student did fall during the interaction after "a struggle" ensued between the student and the officers.

"It's been very clear in the administration's decision making that activists and students of color are not very prioritized in terms of safety," Christina said.

She said she appreciates the resolution, and hopes Holland is fired to ensure some amount of accountability. There also needs to be something else done to address the culture within the police department, she said.

"I want to see something happen within UNCPD," she said. "When I leave campus my senior year, I want to know that students will no longer feel that they are being [under] surveillance unequally, to know that they are safe at a protest, that they won't be attacked by a police officer, and that they won't have to go to a hospital to get checked for a head injury or any type of bodily injury."

The statement from Media Relations directed complaints to the formal UNCPD reporting system.

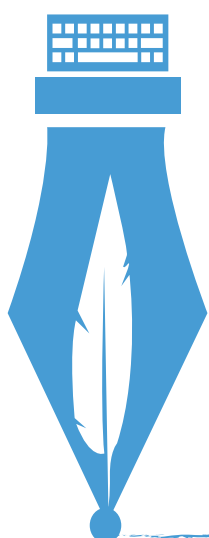
"The UNC Police Commendation and Complaint Procedures webpage outlines the investigative process for allegations and complaints of misconduct. Individuals should report complaints through the Concerns and Commendations Form," the statement said.



DTH FILE/GRACE RICHARDS

People mourn during a vigil for Palestine on Oct. 7 in front of the Old Well.

X: @aishabee\_



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# 2024 Phillips Ambassadors



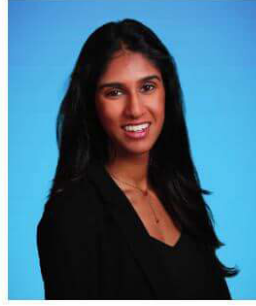
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National University of Singapore



**John Cole McGee**  
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UNC Institute for the Environment  
Thailand Field Site



**Ava Moss**  
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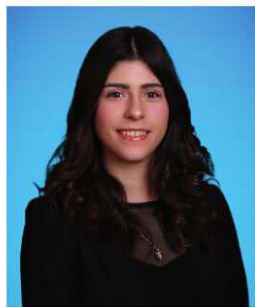
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