

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TO PLAY TULSA WEDNESDAY

Turn to A7



The East Carolinian

YOUR CAMPUS NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1925

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Chancellor-Elect Philip Rogers is set to take his role as chancellor and replaces current Interim Chancellor Ron Mitchelson, on March 15.

Rogers chosen to lead ship Mitchelson to step down as interim chancellor in March

Emily Peek
TEC STAFF

Chancellor-Elect Philip Rogers was chosen to be East Carolina University's next chancellor on Dec. 17, 2020, and as his role is set to officially begin on March 15, Interim Chancellor Ron Mitchelson will step down to continue to teach introductory geography at the university before his retirement.

Mitchelson said the upcoming leadership transition is a positive for the university, and he looks forward to Rogers' usefulness.

"I'm really excited about his creativity and innovativeness, he's going to bring that to the table," Mitchelson said. "He's a great human being and very warm and engaging, so I'm comfortable. I'm not sure I would be as comfortable with anybody else."

Mitchelson said a chancellor transition in the middle of a semester is unusual, though he does not view it as a difficulty.

As for the current status of the transition, Mitchelson said Rogers is kept informed on all current events about the university and has been at

scheduled briefings organized around topics to ready him for the position. After the transition, Mitchelson said he will be accessible to Rogers for any guidance or help he may need.

"When he's got to make a decision he's going to want to discuss it, especially early on," Mitchelson said. "I'm in place to assist him with information, intelligence, wisdom, whatever you want to call it, between March 15, when he takes authority and June 30, when I retire."

Mitchelson said once he has retired, Rogers will have a plethora of experienced people on campus who he can call upon if needed. After the transition, Mitchelson will continue to teach an introduction to geography course until he officially retires in June.

In an email statement, Rogers said he is currently in the review process of materials and is engaged in structured learning experiences to ensure he has a clear and robust understanding of the current state of the university at the time of the transition.

"The transition process is like drinking from a fire hose every day

and involves the intense consumption of information in a short amount of time," Rogers said. "I feel quite fortunate to be ahead of the curve during the transition given my previous experience on campus at ECU."

Rogers said ECU has thoughtfully organized the work of the transition in a way which will ensure a smooth entry into the position.

Along with the university community, Rogers said Mitchelson has welcomed him with open arms and has gone above and beyond, so he feels fully up-to-speed on the most issues.

"It's been especially comforting to have such a strong ally in Ron Mitchelson during the transition," Rogers said. "Dr. Mitchelson and I have had a trusted friendship for many years and I certainly intend to continue tapping his knowledge and expertise after the transition."

As Rogers grew up in Greenville, North Carolina, and is a former policy analyst for ECU, he said it has been enjoyable to reconnect with familiar faces, as well as establish new rela-

> LEADER page A2

ECU faculty welcomes spring term

Sarah Porter
TEC STAFF

With another COVID-19 impacted semester underway, East Carolina University officials welcome back students, faculty and staff, while they hold high hopes for the spring semester during this unprecedented time.

Interim Chancellor Ron Mitchelson said various changes have been made in order to safely welcome students back to campus this semester.

Mitchelson said approximately 1,900 students have returned to the residence halls, all in single-occupancy residence hall rooms. He said 32% of undergraduate course offerings will be face-to-face.

"The density of online (classes) is more than we'd want, but in the presence of what we learned last fall, and in the presence of an ongoing community spread, it's wise," Mitchelson said. "I'm glad that we can have at least one-third of our offerings face-to-face."

In addition to class adjustments, Mitchelson said two residence halls have been left vacant for COVID-19 isolation and quarantine spaces. He said at least three of the occupied residence halls have extra capacity for students to quarantine should they need more space.

Students who returned to Campus Living were required to have a negative COVID-19 test, according to Mitchelson. He said within a five day period, Student Health Services tested 950 students and only 15 tested positive.

"While we know that a proportion of students will return with exposure, or perhaps with the virus, and an infection, it'll be a much smaller percentage than the general population," Mitchelson said. "That's a source of confidence for me."

There will be an emphasis on compliance this semester, and students must follow campus rules and wear their masks, as well as adhere to North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper's orders, Mitchelson said.

In terms of on-campus transmission, Mitchelson said he feels classrooms and laboratories are set up safely in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. He said the main concern is off-campus transmission.

"We know we can handle this, and I think we're very well-planned," Mitchelson said. "We're going to welcome back students to a campus that's (much more organized), but our expectations will be a little higher on the compliance side."

Mitchelson said he encourages students to stay

> SPRING page A2

ECU SoM, SoTD begin hybrid sessions

Performance-based courses will hold both flexible in-person and online instruction

Yasmine Curmon-Ward
TEC STAFF

The East Carolina University School of Theatre and Dance (SoTD) and School of Music (SoM) continue to prepare to welcome students back to campus for the spring semester with socially distanced hybrid classes in hopes to safely educate students amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

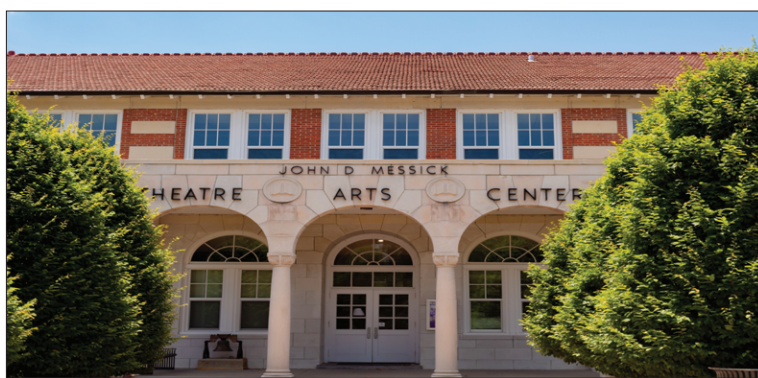
William Dartt, ECU School of Music assistant director of marketing and media relations, said dance and ensemble classes will be held in-person, but will be socially distanced. He said scheduled performances will not have audience members at this time. He said more information will be provided to students as the semester continues.

"The College of Fine Arts and Communication is currently plan-

ning to hold performative activities in much the same manner as the fall. At all times CFAC will follow industry standards as well as CDC, state and university guidelines," Dartt said in an email statement.

Damaris Tooley, senior professional acting major, said she learned a lot through the transition from in-person, socially distanced classes to fully online classes last semester. She said it was challenging to learn and practice her performances while at home.

Tooley said she knows her tap dancing class plans to operate as a hybrid class, and the dance buildings will open to students, although professors teach through online instruction. She said she has a positive attitude about the spring semester because she is a



ECU dance buildings will be open to students, including the John D. Messick building.

senior and wants to learn as much as she can before she graduates. She said she is stronger for having persevered through the challenges of last semester.

"I think (last semester) was a very educational experience and after going through it, it's a lot easier on the other side. Now, I feel more well-rounded that I've

worked through the problems," Tooley said.

The rehearsal schedule was the same for theatre and dance students, according to Tooley. She said they had to rehearse every-day except for Saturdays. Tooley said she feels that she continues to learn what she needs from her classes despite the obstacles she

faced last semester.

Tooley said to have classes strictly online for the SoTD is a challenge. She said this semester she plans to take a makeup course and this is the first time the class will be taught virtually. Tooley said she is unsure of how the transition will go, but is optimistic for the semester.

"I am only getting what I need because I am making myself get what I need from my classes. I am trying to take the classes as seriously as I can and get everything out of them (classes). I have for the most part," Tooley said.

> HYBRID page A6

ONLINE

»NEWS: Campus Living and Dining both adapt to spring protocols.

»Check out our website for articles, photo galleries and more.

SOCIAL MEDIA

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BRIEFS

ECU to start in-person and online classes

Today, East Carolina University's academic classes are set to begin for all undergraduate students. With COVID-19 still present, most classes at the university will be held online in order to ensure students are staying safe and healthy. Face-to-face classes are offered in limited capacities.

CLCE to host stream of Inauguration

Tomorrow, East Carolina University's Pirate Vote team and the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement (CLCE) will host a viewing of the Presidential Inauguration on the lawn of the Main Campus Student Center from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The inauguration coverage will be streamed on Pirate Vision.

'Gender to a Tea' to speak virtually

Tomorrow, from noon to 1 p.m., Dr. Blakely Brooks will speak virtually on women's perceptions of stress as she uses faculty-student collaborative research. "Gender to a Tea," which is sponsored by the Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, Gender Studies Program and Gender Studies Executive Board, is a series where speakers help gender-focused researchers with their current work. The WebEx link and password can be found on ECU's Events Calendar website.

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

If you feel there are any factual errors in this newspaper, please contact Chloe Easton at editor@theeastcarolinian.com.



HALIE MILLER | THE EAST CAROLINIAN

Student Health Services will continue to conduct mass surveillance testing for on-campus students throughout the spring 2021 semester.

ECU to offer free saliva tests

BSOM works to provide students with a new form of COVID-19 detection

Cayla Menges
TEC STAFF

Brody School of Medicine and East Carolina University's School of Dental Medicine has developed a saliva test to detect COVID-19, which will be used by the university's Student Health Center as a way to perform surveillance testing on ECU's population throughout the spring 2021 semester.

Associate Professor in the department of microbiology and immunology Rachel Roper said herself alongside Dr. Ramiro Murata at the School of Dental Medicine began performing PCR (polymerase chain reaction) for COVID-19 detection in June of 2020. She said in December of 2020 they received a grant from the University of North Carolina system for a "Saliva-Antibody and Virus Early Detection (SAVED) project."

The use of a saliva test to detect COVID-19 solves multiple problems healthcare workers were facing, according to Roper. She said saliva is a better sample because it does not require trained healthcare workers to administer the test, it is more comfortable and eliminates the use of swabs which were in short supply.

"Saliva is a much easier, much better sample

to take especially if you're going to be repeatedly testing people," Roper said.

The use of a saliva test to detect COVID-19 is still in the research phase and is not the official diagnostic way of testing, however it can detect super sensitive, low levels of COVID-19, according to Roper. She said there are a number of published papers out from other labs that say the saliva test is just as good and in several cases better and more representative of a real infection.

Roper said the repeated use of a nasopharyngeal swab test for COVID-19 can cause damage to the nose and even serious injuries. She said if the virus is in your throat and in your nasal pharyngeal path it will be in your saliva as well.

Director of Student Health Services (SHS) LaNika Wright said the university will offer free saliva tests for COVID-19 for students who are asymptomatic or need surveillance tests. She said the university will continue to offer COVID-19 tests to students through appointments and mass testing events such as Testing Thursday's.

"We will have saliva testing, not only are we making it free and more readily available, we're trying to make it more comfortable for testing

as well," Wright said.

Set to begin the week of Feb. 15, all students who live in residence halls will begin to undergo regular weekly testing, according to an ECU News Services press release. The article said this will include approximately 25% of the spring 2021 housing population per week for one month.

Specific student populations, such as student-athletes, may be subject to more specific and frequent testing protocols, the press release said. It said clinics, days and times will be communicated to campus.

"Testing will be available to all students, faculty, and staff throughout the semester on both campuses,"

the press release said.

Dean of the Brody School of Medicine (BSOM) Mark Stacy said the medical school received \$15 million in federal funds through North Carolina's state legislature to study COVID-19 in the eastern North Carolina area. Stacy said a portion of the funds were used to study a new way to test for COVID-19.

This writer can be contacted at news@theeastcarolinian.com.

ONLINE | FULL STORY

LEADER continued from A1

tionships at the university.

Jamie Smith, deputy director of ECU News Services, said the chancellor transition process is straightforward as it is based upon the needs of the university.

"From the time of the announcement of Dr. Rogers as our new chancellor, Dec. 17, until his first official day, March 15, he is referred to as chancellor-elect. Beginning March 15, Dr. Rogers will be referred to as chancellor and Dr. Mitchelson will no longer hold the title interim chancellor," Smith said.

Vern Davenport, ECU's chair of the Board of Trustees and chair of the chancellor search committee, said the university formed a transition committee led by Scott Shook, Board of Trustees member, to form

a transition plan.

Mitchelson will be available to the transition committee throughout the second half of the semester and will facilitate the chancellor-elect's needs, Davenport said.



Vern Davenport

"Ron's not leaving us. He's available to us in any form or fashion which has been wonderful about Chancellor Mitchelson," Davenport said. "He's given me, as both board chair and chair of the search committee, the time necessary to do the search the right way and to find the right candidate."

This writer can be contacted at news@theeastcarolinian.com.

SPRING continued from A1

engaged and continue to focus on their academics as they navigate this unusual semester. He said his hope is to have an in-person commencement this spring, so he urges students to keep that in mind and make good choices.

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Virginia Hardy said she looks forward to students being back on-campus and an atmosphere of excitement. She said students who live on-campus will be required to participate in mass surveillance COVID-19 saliva testing during the first week of February.

"After that, every week 25% of the students in the residence halls will be called in for saliva testing," Hardy said.

The saliva testing is open to every ECU student, whether they live on or off-campus, according to Hardy. She said she encourages every student to do the saliva testing because it is free and non-invasive.

Hardy said there will be less emphasis on COVID-19 warnings and education this semester, and more emphasis on enforcement.

"If students are not complying, then whatever sanction or consequence that follows that

noncompliance will be put in place," Hardy said. "This could mean that if someone was having a large gathering that exceeds the (protocol), that they may get a citation potentially from ECU Police Department and/or sanctioning from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities."

Hardy said ECU's enrollment for the spring has increased slightly, and the retention rate from fall 2020 to spring 2021 has not decreased. She said this is great news.

Student Government Association (SGA) President Tucker Robbins said in an email statement that his hope for this spring would be to ensure a safe and sustainable semester.

"The pivot to remote learning last fall wasn't fun and a major disruption to many students," Robbins said. "My hope is that we can prevent that from happening this spring. I believe we have the infrastructure in place to be successful, (and) my hope is that we can execute the plans safely and effectively."

Robbins said he thinks the university learned many lessons from last semester and looks forward to how it will be handled.

This writer can be contacted at news@theeastcarolinian.com.

ONLINE | FULL STORY

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OUR VIEW

Pirates take on spring semester

Welcome back to campus, Pirates. As classes start today virtually and in-person, it's important for students to take time to prepare for a successful semester.

It is essential to remember the three W's (Wear, Wait and Wash) to prevent the spread of COVID-19. As cases continue to rise around the state, it is necessary that students and faculty members take precaution on and off-campus to protect themselves and others. Wash your hands, social distance and wear your mask on-campus and in public areas.

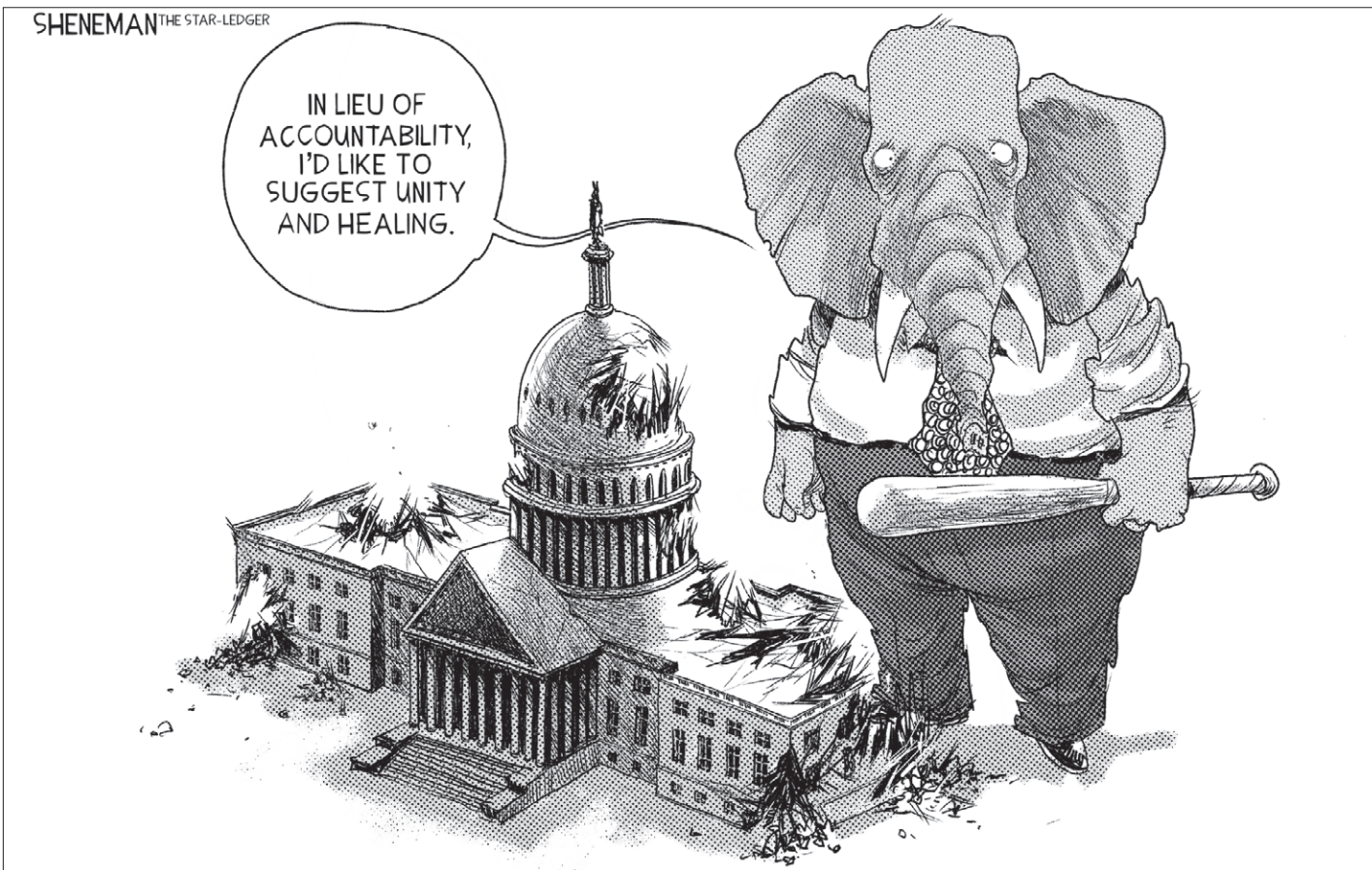
With 32% of courses being instructed in-person, students and faculty members are being asked to adhere to the university's COVID-19 policies as well as North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper's statewide orders.

As for students who are living on-campus, they will be required to partake in mass surveillance COVID-19 saliva testing during the first week of February. After that, 25% of students living in residence halls will be called in each week for additional testing.

Students who choose not to comply with the university's COVID-19 policies and Cooper's orders, such as hosting a large gathering, will be at risk of facing consequences issued by ECU.

We, the editorial staff of The East Carolinian, want to remind students to stay safe on and off-campus this semester and take their classes seriously. With cases rising around Pitt County, it's important to follow ECU's COVID-19 guidelines as well as Cooper's orders to ensure personal safety and the safety of others.

While this semester may look different than normal, it's important for students to continue to work hard and prioritize their classes, whether it be online or in-person. One resource students can utilize is Joyner Library and the University Writing Center.



Rogers plans for future

Chancellor-elect looks to steer Pirate Nation ahead



Philip Rogers
GUEST COLUMNIST

Welcome Back to Campus Fellow Pirates,

In December, I was honored to be selected by the University of North Carolina (UNC) Board of Governors

and President Peter Hans to be the 12th chancellor of this great university, and I look forward to joining you on campus in mid-March.

The new year and the new semester present new opportunities for us to continue our focus on the mission of East Carolina University — our commitment to student success, public service and regional transformation. As a native North Carolinian and as someone who worked previously at ECU, I have a passionate sense of pride in the role ECU plays in the life of our state. I'm excited about the future of our university, and I'm excited about working with all of you.

You have all had to face the challenges presented by COVID-19 and I've been inspired by your resiliency and dedication. One of the first phone calls I placed after my appointment as Chancellor was to an ECU student from a rural North Carolina town. The student began his freshman year this past fall and proudly shared with me that he is the first person in his family to pursue a postsecondary degree. While the global health crisis altered his initial college experience, he spoke with great passion about becoming a Pirate and reminded me that ECU remains steadfast in delivering on its mission despite



Chancellor-elect Philip Rogers, who plans to take over his position in March, and his wife Rebekah Rogers.

the pandemic conditions. Like many of you, he has returned to campus and I'm confident that we are ready for the spring semester. I know that the faculty, staff and administrators have been working hard to prepare for the start of classes this week.

For the past seven years, I've worked at the American Council on Education, which focuses on how the higher education community can best serve its students, institutions, and the public good. One of the great joys of my work was visiting university campuses across the country and I can genuinely say that I've yet to find another university that does more for its region than ECU. No one does it better than the Pirates, and that is at the heart of what led me home.

As I prepare to begin my tenure as ECU's chancellor, I've been thinking

about all of the people who are critical to our future success. I look forward to forging genuine and meaningful partnerships with our talented faculty, staff, students, our loyal alumni, and many others who care so much about our university.

As we move forward together, I'm eager to embrace and champion ECU's valued assets, such as our dedication to academic excellence, our passionate athletics program, our commitment to advancing rural healthcare, and our role as a driver of regional economic development — all of which will sustain and grow the university's profile and impact in the days ahead.

Stay safe and healthy, and Go Pirates!

Philip Rogers is the Chancellor-elect at ECU and a TEC columnist. To contact her/him, email opinion@theeastcarolinian.com.

ONLINE | FULL STORY

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Mitchelson gives his final welcome



Ron Mitchelson
GUEST COLUMNIST

Welcome Pirates,

Permit me a moment to welcome returning students and about 700 new students (first year and transfer) starting in the spring. We certainly have been on a wild

ride since COVID-19 showed up on our doorsteps last March. In addition to the disappointments and disruptions associated with COVID-19, we have coped with social and political unrest.

I want you to know that this University, your University, cares deeply and is here to serve you. Support services, ranging from the Pirate Academic Success Center to our Student Health Center, are with you in-person and online. Please take advantage of the support provided by our caring ECU faculty, staff, and fellow students. You are not alone regardless of the need to stay six feet apart, to wear masks, and to your wash hands often.

I am hopeful that by the time April and May arrive that COVID-19 conditions have improved greatly. In fact, I am hopeful that we begin to see normalcy. This campus was built for people, it craves people, and it deserves the excitement it was built for. The vaccine has begun arriv-

"I know we can do this if you will commit to our ECU community expectations. Wear the mask, stay six feet apart, and wash those hands."

-Ron Mitchelson

ing on our Health Sciences Campus and we are following a plan to vaccinate our entire ECU community. You will be hearing more about that plan as the semester unfolds.

While I am confident that we will move towards campus normalcy over the next few months, I am also certain that we have a few very difficult weeks ahead of us in January and February. Make no mistake, ECU will have COVID-19 cases. Given current conditions, new cases are unavoidable. But, we need to do our very best to limit that growth of cases. I know we can do this if you will commit to our ECU community expectations. Wear the mask, stay six feet apart, and wash those hands. We will have ample capacity for frequent COVID-19 testing — it will be accessible and it will employ less intrusive saliva tests. Don't wait around for symptoms to get tested.

Let me remind you that the opening

surge of student COVID-19 cases last fall overran our capacity for isolation/quarantine and we were forced to pivot to remote instructional activities. We simply cannot repeat that history. We have to do better and you have a key role to play. You must be careful, especially during the first few weeks. Don't let your guard down — protect yourself and others with the 3Ws and get tested. You get my point, if we are to see the return to campus normalcy that we all desire, you have a personal responsibility in achieving that goal. So, wear the mask even when you don't want to, stay six feet apart as best you can, wash up frequently, and get tested.

Thank you in advance for being great Pirates and helping to secure a great spring semester. Go Pirates!

Ron Mitchelson is the Interim Chancellor at ECU and a TEC columnist. To contact her/him, email opinion@theeastcarolinian.com.

CLASSIFIEDS

Did someone say FREE?

Looking for a roommate or a sublease? Got something for sale? ECU students can submit a classified for **FREE!** Contact smaa@ecu.edu for more information.



HOROSCOPES

Aries (March 21-April 19) — Today is an 8 — Enter an innovative social period. Team efforts and projects are favored this month with the Sun in Aquarius. Schedule carefully. Collaborate with friends.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22) — Today is an 8 — Rely on each other. Partnership grows and flowers over the next month with the Sun in Aquarius. Collaborate, compromise and negotiate win-win deals.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — Today is a 9 — Communications thrive, and words come easily. Write your masterpiece this month with the Sun in Aquarius. Learn and retain complex material. Creative expression thrives.

Taurus (April 20-May 20) — Today is an 8 — Accept a professional challenge this month with the Sun in Aquarius. Focus on career opportunities. Your status and influence are on the rise.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Today is an 8 — Balance work with physical health with the Aquarius Sun this month. Mental creativity is at maximum. Raise the level of your performance with practice.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Today is a 9 — Domestic comforts soothe and relax you. Extra profits are available this month with the Sun in Aquarius. Balance expenses with income. Work from home.

Gemini (May 21-June 20) — Today is an 8 — Exploration and adventure beckon this month under the Aquarius Sun. Use technology for new reach and access. Leap boundaries, push limitations and discover.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) — Today is an 8 — Enter a highly creative period. Converse with your muses this month with the Sun in Aquarius. Practice your arts, sports and talents. Share the love.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) — Today is a 9 — Use your growing personal power and talent for good. You have the advantage this month, with the Sun in your sign. Pursue a passion.

Cancer (June 21-July 22) — Today is an 8 — Sort, file and organize. Prioritize family finances over the next month with the Aquarius Sun. Discuss long-term goals, potential and possibilities. Collaborate together.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) — Today is a 7 — Home and family center you this month with the Aquarius Sun. Nurture your creativity in comfortable surroundings. Manage household responsibilities and upgrade your space.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20) — Today is a 7 — Savor peaceful productivity. Finish old projects this month with the Aquarius Sun. Enjoy private introspection. Rest and meditate. Envision dreams, plans and possibilities.

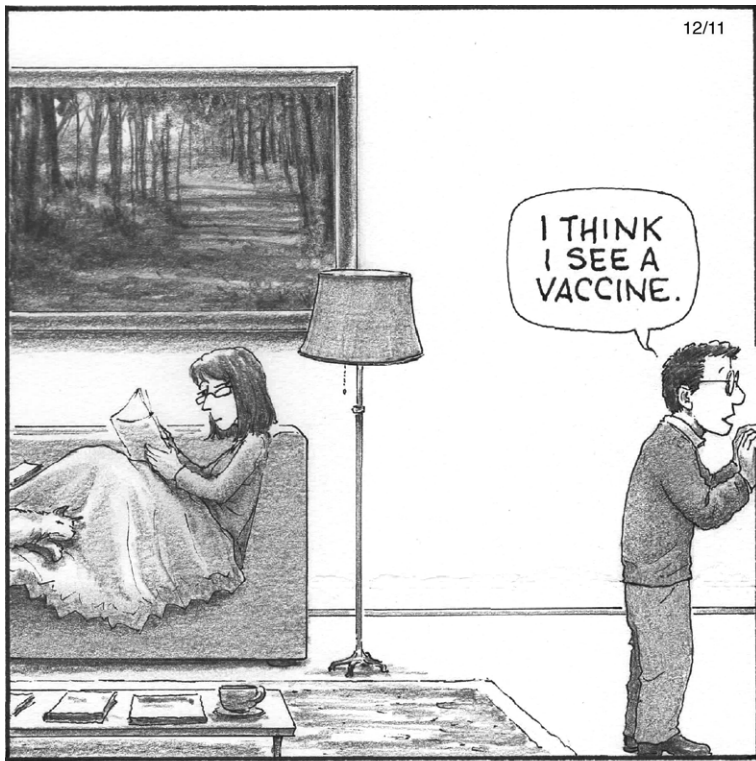
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COMICS

BREWSTER ROCKIT



BLISS

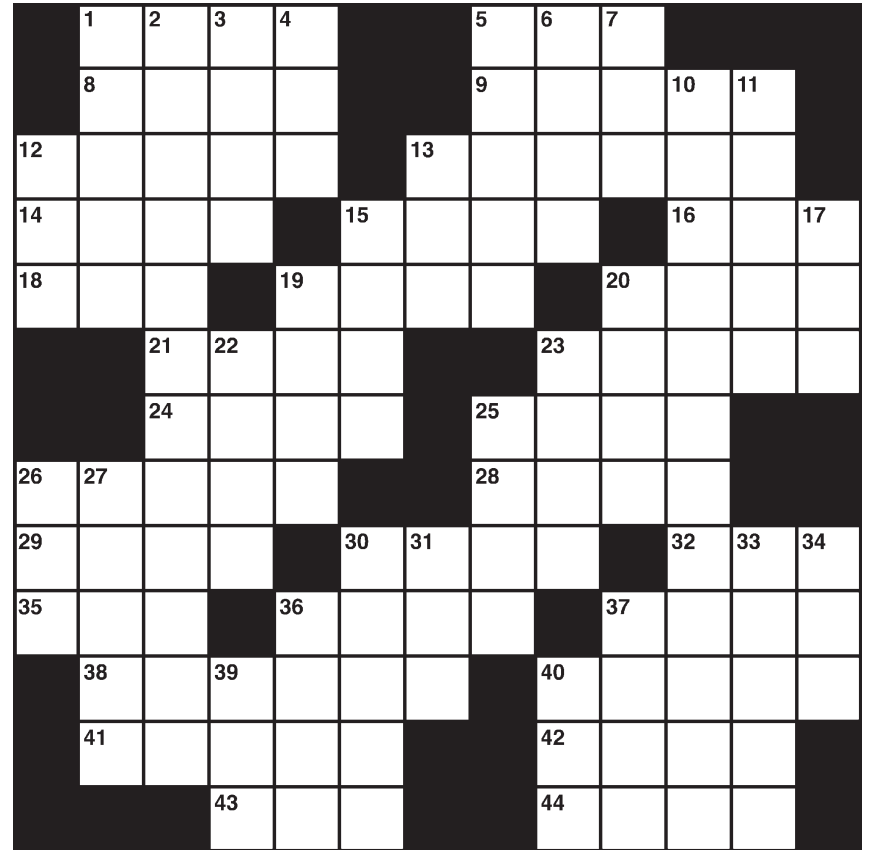


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CROSSWORD

THE TV CROSSWORD

by Jacqueline E. Mathews



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

- ACROSS**
- 1 “___ Wonderful Life”
 - 5 Conway or Allen
 - 8 Ian ___ of “Fresh Off the Boat”
 - 9 “Murphy ___”
 - 12 Actress Sally
 - 13 Religion practiced in Haiti
 - 14 Swenson of “Benson”
 - 15 Actor Rex
 - 16 “The Adventures of ___ Tin Tin”
 - 18 Sense of self-esteem
 - 19 Fran ___; role on “The Nanny”
 - 20 Lioness in “Born Free”
 - 21 Ken of “Thirtysomething”
 - 23 “Law & ___”
 - 24 Critical
 - 25 The Bee Gees, for one
 - 26 Syrup flavor
 - 28 “Donovan’s ___”; John Wayne film
 - 29 Actress Sheedy
 - 30 “Family ___”; Michael J. Fox sitcom
 - 32 “American ___!”
 - 35 Long or Peebles
- DOWN**
- 1 Cake topping
 - 2 Series for Ted Danson
 - 3 Actress Ward
 - 4 “Parks ___ Recreation”
 - 5 Steak choice
 - 6 “___ Man”; Robert Downey Jr. film
 - 7 “The ___ Squad”
 - 10 Competition series for Jennifer Lopez
 - 11 Clamor
 - 12 Old-fashioned word of disgust
 - 13 ___ Diesel
 - 15 “Whose ___ Is It Anyway?”
 - 17 VP Rockefeller’s monogram
 - 19 “Chicago ___”
 - 20 One of five Great Lakes
 - 22 Herman Munster’s wife
 - 23 Raw minerals
 - 25 “One ___ Hill”
 - 26 “Last ___ Standing”
 - 27 Alf or E.T.
 - 30 One of ___ days; eventually
 - 31 Suffix for cook or book
 - 33 South American range
 - 34 Susan of “L.A. Law”
 - 36 Commotion
 - 37 ___ Marie Hupp
 - 39 Skirt edge
 - 40 Series for Allison Janney

Solution from 11/11

T	O	M	F	R	E	D	S	S	H	E
H	I	E	R	E	L	E	T	P	E	A
A	L	L	I	D	L	E	R	L	A	C
R	E	B	A	S	E	D	I	T	H	
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			I	L	E					
A	S	K	S	T	E	W	S			
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A	G	O	N	Y		I	D	I	O	T
D	O	N	R	I	G	H	T	A	R	E
Z	O	E	E	R	A	S	E	R	N	S
E	D	S	S	A	L	T	S	S	A	T

SUDOKU

SUDOKU

THE SAMURAI OF PUZZLES By The Mepham Group

Level
1 2
3 4

8	9							1
	1			7				8
		2		3	9			
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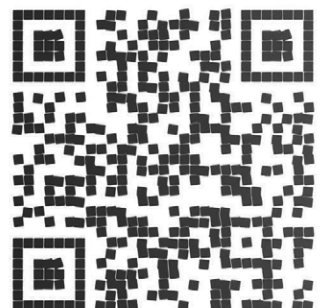
Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, please visit sudoku.org.uk

Solution from 11/11

7	2	3	6	8	4	1	9	5
4	9	8	1	5	2	7	3	6
5	6	1	9	3	7	4	8	2
2	8	5	7	1	9	6	4	3
1	3	6	4	2	8	5	7	9
9	4	7	5	6	3	8	2	1
3	1	9	8	7	5	2	6	4
6	7	4	2	9	1	3	5	8
8	5	2	3	4	6	9	1	7

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EVENTS

TODAY

Open Mic Night

Christy's Euro Pub
301 S. Jarvis Street
8 to 11:30 p.m.
252-758-2774

Tabletop Tuesday

Pitt Street Brewing Company
630 S. Pitt Street
6:30 to 9:30 p.m.
252-227-4151

Intro to Painting, Drawing and Mixed Media

Emerge Gallery and Art Center
404 S. Evans Street
1 to 3 p.m.
252-551-6947

TOMORROW

Open Mic Night

The Blackened Kraken
123 E. Fifth Street
8 to 11:30 p.m.
252-215-8822

Karaoke Night

5th St. Distillery and Annex
120 E. Fifth Street
10 to 11:30 p.m.
252-757-3034

Open Mic Comedy

Pitt Street Brewing Company
630 S. Pitt Street
7:30 to 10 p.m.
252-227-4151

THURSDAY

Tapas and Jazz

Starlight Cafe
104 W. Fifth Street
5:30 to 10 p.m.
252-707-9033

Comic Book Club

Smashed Waffles
718 Dickinson Avenue
7 to 9 p.m.
252-364-2872

College Night at Stumpy's

Stumpy's Hatchet House
816 Dickinson Avenue
5 to 8 p.m.
252-751-0300



CHLOE EASTON | THE EAST CAROLINIAN

Artist Scott Eagle completed his mural as a part of the Greenville Mural Project, entitled "Forbidden Love," located at The Art Lab, at 729 Dickinson Ave.

Mural project continues in 2021

Local artists collaborate to bring new art to Greenville

Kyle Arnoe
TEC STAFF

Uptown Greenville has seen the addition of numerous works of public art organized by the Greenville Mural Project, with features such as vinyl wraps, murals, micro-murals and additional works by local artists.

Sierra Jones, director of communications and marketing for Visit Greenville, North Carolina, said in an email statement the Greenville Mural Project was founded in August 2019 as a collaboration between founding organizations, creators and supporters. The organization included the Pitt County Arts Council (PCAC), Uptown Greenville and Visit Greenville, North Carolina.

Jones said the Greenville Mural Project's effort has been slowed by COVID-19, but the first phase of projects has been completed. The Mural Project group will reconvene in the near future to discuss projects.

"Our goal is to make our destination even more vibrant and attractive to local residents and visitors by creating those place-making Instagram photo-op locations, while also supporting and showcasing local artists and businesses," Jones said.



Sierra Jones

Sarah Lazure, marketing coordinator of the PCAC at EmERGE, said in an email statement the mural project has been in progress for over a year.

The PCAC received dozens of applications, Lazure said. The PCAC Civic Arts Committee selected the three works by Dee Dee Oliver of Wilson, Carlos Romero of Greenville and Ramiro Davaro-Comas of New York for the vinyl wrapped utility boxes project, Lazure said.

"EmERGE Gallery, the home of the Pitt County Arts Council, facilitated the request for proposals for the control box artwork. The RFP (request for proposal) was released in the fall of 2019 but was delayed in its installation because of COVID-19," Lazure said.

The newest addition to the public art works is a vinyl graphic wrap covering from Dee Dee Oliver. Oliver said it has been almost a year since she began to work on the project, following a call for public art in February 2020.

Oliver said the vinyl graphic wrapped utility box at Five Points Plaza is called Amalgam, a combination of work the abstract artist put together. After she worked with a graphic designer for multiple months, and ensured via email with a representative at Uptown Greenville that the wrap was right side up, she said it was "amazing" to see her work come to fruition.

"I think public art is so important, especially right now when a lot of the museums are closed, you know, just to be able to see something walking down the street that maybe makes you smile or could be uplifting or inspiring, we need that. We need that now more than ever," Oliver said.



Dee Dee Oliver

Artist and ECU Associate Professor of painting and drawing and first year courses Scott Eagle said he is a member of the Greenville Mural Project group, and is the artist of "Forbidden Love" featured at The Art Lab, located at 729 Dickinson Ave. Eagle said he will use his first-hand knowledge of mural creation to facilitate planning future murals.

According to Eagle, the vinyl wraps are a useful way to beautify public space. He said relative to painted murals, the wraps are easy to install, relying on digital files rather than physical brushes. Eagle said an artist can send a file to a graphic designer who then proportions the work, and prints it according to specifications of the project.

"One of the things we're trying to do, and we can't do it right now with COVID-19, but we're simply trying to raise money and awareness about how

murals and public art can bring people to a place and increase the foot traffic for business and quality of life in general," Eagle said.

Eagle spent roughly 170 hours on his mural titled "Forbidden Love." He said he documented the creation process on his Facebook page. He said additional untracked time also went into the process.

Eagle said he had the idea for "Forbidden Love" long before work on the mural started. The idea was in the form of a story about the love of a flying fish and a barn swallow, two opposites that could not be together.

"The main theme of my work is that I'm a visual problem solver, and that's what I believe that everyone in our building (The School of Art and Design) shares, that's what all our degrees share, and so whether you're solving problems for a client like a graphic designer or photographer or illustrator, or you're like me, a painter solving my own problems, we're doing similar kinds of things," Eagle said.



Scott Eagle

This writer can be contacted at arts@theeastcarolinian.com.

ECU SoAD prepares for spring semester

Harold Bloomfield
TEC STAFF

Hannah Bolick
TEC STAFF



East Carolina University's School of Art and Design (SoAD) is prepared to transition from fully virtual classes to now partial face-to-face instruction with open studio sessions this semester.

Daniel Kariko, assistant director of ECU's SoAD, said as the assistant director of The School of Art and Design he is the backbone of the organization. He said his goal is to be able to provide his students with the best possible education even amidst a pandemic.

"There were many challenges, just like with everybody else in education. Our main concern, of course being the safety of our students and our community, but also figuring out the best way to not disrupt their education, the biggest challenge is kind of balancing those two," Kariko said.

By utilizing all of its resources, SoAD believes it will give students the best possible education while they remain safe, Kariko said. He said, like most other departments, the SoAD was forced to switch to online-only courses in the fall of 2020.

Kariko said everyone in education had to re-learn their jobs last fall. He said they had to work two jobs in a way because they had to prepare to teach and figure out the best way to teach their specific class, which may include courses such as sculpting or metal with online work.

"I think that over the last year we have tested out some (ways of learning for art students) that are working, I feel like I personally will try to go back to the classrooms and hopefully keeping everything safe by splitting the classes to once a week in person and once a week online as long as there are students that are willing and comfortable with that," Kariko said.

Sophomore art major Annika Chabra said COVID-19 caused her a lot of stress as an art student because of the different projects she has worked on. She said the lack of studio time and materials may have usually been provided in class made learning difficult.

Time management is essential to pursue art classes online, according to Chabra. She said because of the last semester and the option to go in and use the studio for different projects she feels more confident with classes this semester.

"It was definitely a challenge in a lot of ways, but overall, we had to accommodate it in any way we could and it was very frustrating. It's hard to do art online," Chabra said.

Tra Mi Do, sophomore art major, said her classes for this semester will likely be all online. She said originally, some of her classes were supposed to be in-person or in a hybrid format, but very recently were moved to all online. She said one of her classes may still be in-person, but she



Annika Chabra



KATE FRANCIS | THE EAST CAROLINIAN

The SoAD plans to hold hybrid classes and will have open studio time for students to work.

Virtual learning is hard for art students, Do said. Work is often completed in a digital format unless students wish to find and pay for materials themselves, especially if they are not near enough to campus to access the Jenkins Fine Arts Center at all, she said. As COVID-19 continues to create challenges for students, finding the motivation to continue working has become more and more difficult, Do said.

"You have to motivate yourself. As I said before, you can get drained, you're motivation

can get drained twice as fast during this pandemic, so I think that's what makes art class hard, you have to be on time, you have to have your own time management and also you have to like meet the expectations of teachers at times, you have to be able to communicate your idea in the art precisely," Do said.

Students who wish to use the studio will be able to by scheduling appointments through the SoAD website.

This writer can be contacted at arts@theeastcarolinian.com.

Club hopes to meet in-person this spring ECU freshmen form rock painting club to bring students together again

Hannah Bolick
TEC STAFF

A new club, the East Carolina University Rock Painting Club (ECU RPC), will become an official organization this semester and is open to all ECU students as the club aims to hold a variety of events in hopes to make connections among students on-campus amidst the stressors of a pandemic.

The ECU RPC will hold an interest meeting on Jan. 23 at 2 p.m. on the second floor of the Main Campus Student Center in front of the Dr. Jesse R. Peel LGBTQ Center. Students interested in joining can direct message its Instagram account for a link to the club's page on Engage. The club began in November last year, according to president and freshman political science major Logan Harrison.

Harrison said they had to wait until the spring 2021 semester to go through the process of becoming officially recognized by the Student Activities Organization (SAO). Harrison said he started the club as a way to meet and interact with other students on campus. He said due to COVID-19, he and many other freshmen felt isolated and disconnected from other students during fall 2020 and he wanted a way to connect that would appeal to a wide variety of people.

"ECU tried their best but in the end people left, people weren't getting out of their rooms, people weren't connecting with each other (and) there really wasn't a freshman experience on campus," Harrison said. "I tried to think of something very simple yet effective enough to get people out and get people together and doing something productive."

The club will host a variety of activities relating to rock painting so members don't have to be artists to join, Harrison said. Some of the ideas Harrison said he had for the club were positivity rocks and pet rocks. He had ideas for events such as rock painting date-night, a rock scavenger hunt and a "socks and rocks" event in which members would bring in a set of socks to be donated to a homeless shelter in



Co-founder and president of ECU Rock Painting Club, Logan Harrison, hopes to help students socialize more.

exchange for a rock. Harrison said the club's main mission is to "promote community and positivity through creativity." He said the club will meet in-person, and he does not plan to move to a virtual format. He said members will take precautions against the spread of COVID-19 with masks and hand sanitizer, but people are free to make their own decisions about their level of comfort meeting in-person.

"I think ECU did a great job of saying 'you don't need to be on-campus if you're a freshman and if you don't want to be on-campus then you shouldn't be on-campus, if you feel you're not safe to be on campus then you shouldn't be on campus,'" Harrison said.



Logan Harrison

I think everyone is up to their own personal self to make their own risk assessments," Harrison said.

man biology and chemistry double major, said she hangs out with Harrison often as they both have a desire to keep busy. She said she and Harrison decided to start the Rock Painting Club because they realize there aren't many in-person activities happening on-campus right now because of COVID-19.

The ECU RPC's Instagram page has grown to almost 400 followers since the first post in November 2020. Johnson said she attributes the fast growth to the fact it is one of the only organizations on campus planning to meet in-person this spring.

"We just wanted to create our own in-person thing to make connections with people since our freshman class, as you know, is probably one of the most distant college classes coming in right now because we don't really know anybody," Johnson said. "We wanted to make this club in order to make meaningful connections in doing a task as simple as painting rocks."

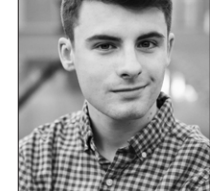
Regarding COVID-19 precautions, John-

son said the club plans to hold events outside if possible, enforce social distancing and try to make sure everyone has their own paint supplies. She said as the pandemic makes many students feel isolated, her goal with ECU RPC is to connect with others and to try to live life as a college student as normally as possible.

Johnson said she wants the Rock Painting Club to be a way for students to step away from the stress of college and all of the academic organizations one may be involved in. She said the ECU RPC is meant to be an opportunity to get students out and about on campus, have meaningful conversations with one another and have fun.

"I feel like we should take something for ourselves right now especially in this stressful time, and if we can just set apart one part of our week for ourselves and our mental health to just make connections and have fun with college students, I feel like we should really do that," Johnson said.

Freshman exercise physiology major Daniel Morgan is a current member of the ECU RPC. Morgan said in an email statement he looks forward to what the club will accomplish in the spring semester and noted how important connections with peers are during "this time of loneliness and separation."



Daniel Morgan

Morgan said he was drawn to the club through his connection with Harrison. Morgan said he knows Harrison is a driven person who will lead the club well. Morgan described the purpose of the club as a way to fight against the lack of communication amongst peers that COVID-19 has caused. More information regarding ECU Rock Painting club can be found on its social media or Engage page.

This writer can be contacted at arts@theeastcarolinian.com.



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HYBRID continued from A1

Emma Kiriloff is a freshman music therapy major who said she lived on campus for the first two weeks of the fall 2020 semester before the transition to online instruction for undergraduate courses. She said she enjoyed being on campus, but the transition to online instruction was difficult, and she found it hard to balance her work for her classes and her home life.

Kiriloff said the SoTD and her professors did a great job with the transition given the circumstances they were under. She said her professors were very understanding because everyone was adjusting to the new mode of instruction at once. She said she is excited to be back on campus for her private flute lessons with flute professor Christine Gustafson, who she said does a great job of taking safety precautions.

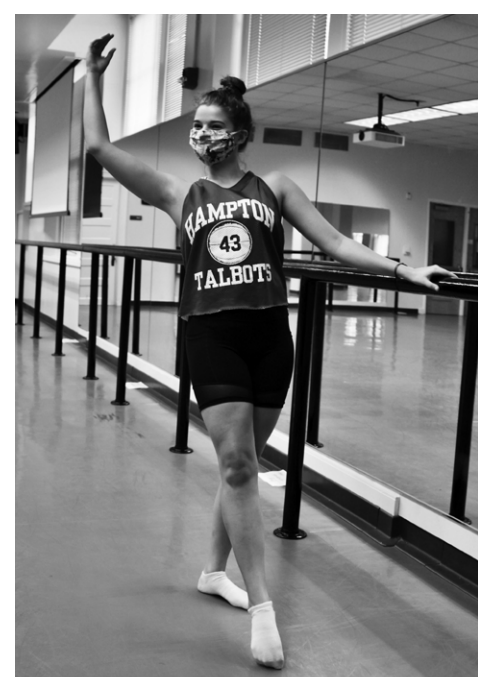
"I think the School of Music definitely prioritized our health, it really made me comfortable going into the music building," Kiriloff said.

The School of Music will continue to enforce more COVID-19 testing than they were last semester, according to Kiriloff. She said she received an email from the School of Music which said they will test students throughout the semester.

Kiriloff said she thinks there needs to be more COVID-19 testing awareness to make the semester run smoothly. She said last semester it felt like COVID-19 testing was more optional for students instead of mandatory after exposure. Kiriloff said she hopes they will be able to hold a concert this semester to show off their hard work, since they were unable to do so last semester.

"I am really excited to get back to ensembles, there I can have some sense of normalcy. Even though we will be spread out in a larger room with six feet in between each chair," Kiriloff said. "However, I can still interact and play the music I love but still feel safe at the same time."

Samuel Doresty, a freshman jazz and classical performance major, said he lived on campus the entire fall 2020 semester. He said he felt isolated living on campus when he was not practicing with friends. He said there were not a lot of places to go, and he had to sign up for a room in the Fletcher building to practice there.



Morgan Gillespie rehearses alone during pandemic.

In-person classes will make this semester smoother for music majors according to Doresty, who said learning piano was difficult for him last semester because he had to teach himself. Doresty said for his music theory course he had to learn from a book and by completing assignments, but he currently takes private lessons through Facetime.

"I feel like it's (spring semester) going to be the same as last time but we know what's coming and we can be a little more prepared. Now, we have a headstart on what to prepare for and what to study," Doresty said.



Samuel Doresty

Last semester, ensembles were not able to play together face-to-face which made practices difficult according to Doresty. He said ensembles had to record their music separately without a conductor and then combine all of their parts of the music together later in production.

Doresty said the only class he has face-to-face this semester is music lab. He said he hopes this semester, he will be able to meet more music majors and that he will be able to practice more often in-person.

"I am excited to learn new stuff, try to meet new people and get better practice and learn about my instrument and music in general," Doresty said.

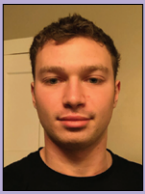
This writer can be contacted at arts@theeastcarolinian.com.

TEC 'sports

The East Carolinian Sports experts predict this week's athletic contests

Jess Sabin

Men's basketball reporter
@jess_sabin

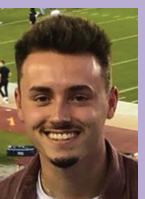


Men's Basketball ECU vs Memphis at Williams arena at Minges Coliseum on Jan. 24

Who wins? ECU beats Memphis 64-58. **Why?** The Tigers have four players who average double digit points so far this season and one more averaging 9.7, but the Tigers don't have a single player who shoots at least 40% from three. The Pirates should be able to pull this one out.

Cade Carlson

Women's basketball reporter



ECU Women's Basketball vs. Tulsa on Jan. 20

Who wins? ECU defeats Tulsa 63-58. **Why?** The all-time series between ECU and USF is deadlocked at 12-12, but the Pirates have momentum since they won last year's meeting. In addition, ECU has averaged 59.6 points per game this season, while Tulsa averages 54.4. ECU's non-conference schedule has prepared them for conference play.

Maceo Donald

Baseball reporter

@MaceoDonald



ECU Women's Basketball vs USF on Jan. 23

Who wins? USF beats ECU 60-45. **Why?** The ECU women's basketball team has already faced-off against No. 16 USF one time this season and the Pirates lost that game 71-58. The Bulls have played two ranked opponents this season. The Pirates won't have enough to stop the Bulls.

Stephen Babich

Track and field reporter

@stephenbabich1



Men's and women's Track and Field at Liberty Elite Invitational on Jan. 21 to 23

Who wins? ECU's Niejel Wilkins will win the triple jump this year. **Why?** At the Darius Dixon Memorial invitational last year, Wilkins came in second with a jump of 14.52 meters. Wilkins had a jump of 15.31 meters in the AAC indoor championship last year, which is the fourth longest jump in program history. He also took third place with that jump.



Sophomore guard Tanyah Thompson looks to pass the ball in the Pirates' women's basketball game against Virginia Commonwealth University.

Pirates to face off against Tulsa

ECU women's basketball team prepares for Golden Hurricane

Cade Carlson
TEC STAFF

The East Carolina University women's basketball team (5-7, 3-4 American Athletic Conference) will face off against the University of Tulsa Golden Hurricane (3-5, 2-5 AAC) on Jan. 20 at 7 p.m. in the Donald W. Reynolds Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma and can be seen on ESPN+.

The Pirates currently sit at No. 6 in the AAC ranks, and Tulsa sits at No. 7. In ECU's last game, the Pirates suffered a 66-56 loss at the hands of the University of Houston Cougars (7-4, 4-3 AAC). Sophomore guard Tanyah Thompson led the Pirates in points scored in that game, as she finished with 15 total to go along with four rebounds.

After the Houston loss, head coach Kim McNeill said she is happy with how her team has been moving the ball on offense as of late.

"We've been preaching all year to play selfless basketball and to really give up a good shot to create a great shot for people," McNeill said.

Tulsa recently suffered a 65-54 loss against the Tulane University Green Wave (8-4, 4-3 AAC) on Jan. 16. In that game, junior guard Maya Mayberry led Tulsa in points scored as she had 21 and she shot 33.3% from the three point line in the game for the Golden Hurricane, according to the Tulsa Hurricane website.

As a team this season, Tulsa has man-

aged to hold its opponents under 64.0 points per game. In addition, the Golden Hurricane shoots 32.5% from the three point line and they average 6.6 three pointers made per contest. Tulsa cleans up the glass as they grab 31.6 rebounds per game on average. The most notable stat for the Golden Hurricane is their positive turnover margin which is 5.9.

McNeill said that although the team is on a streak of losses, she knows her team has the capability to be successful this season.

"I told the kids in the locker room, I know they can do it," McNeill said. "When we were on that four game winning streak, we were really clicking together."

Thus far, ECU has been able to establish a defensive identity in AAC play. The Pirates force 20.5 turnovers a game on average, according to The American. In addition, ECU averages 11.4 steals per game as a team up to this point in the season. On the offensive side of the ball, the Pirates score 58.6 points per game and they shoot 36.3% from the field. ECU protects the paint and cleans up the glass as the team averages 2.7 blocks per game and grabs 33.2 rebounds per game.

Tulsa has two players who average double figures in points scored in junior guard Maya Mayberry and her sister, freshman guard Wyvette Mayberry. The sibling duo averages a combined 26.5 points per game, as Maya Mayberry leads the team with 14.1 points scored on average and Wyvette Mayberry averages 12.4 per contest. The Mayberry family branch at Tulsa extends even further, as the oldest sister

Taleya Mayberry is an assistant coach for the Golden Hurricane.

Junior forward Maddie Moore said that in order for the Pirates to have success against Tulsa and the University of South Florida Bulls (10-1, 7-0 AAC) on Jan. 23, they need to get back to the basics on both sides of the ball.

"There are two big games coming up so we just need to lock in on defense and execute offensively," Moore said.

The matchup history between the Golden Hurricane and the Pirates is deadlocked at 12-12 in the all-time series. Since both teams joined the AAC, they have also been tied at 7-7 in conference matchups against one another. In last season's matchup, the Pirates were able to pick up a 59-42 victory on Feb. 19 at Williams Arena in Greenville, North Carolina.

For the Pirates, three of their players up to this point in the season have averaged double figures in points scored per game. Monk leads the way for ECU as she averages 14.8 points per game and shoots 81.5% from the free throw line. Sophomore guard Tanyah Thompson is second in points for the Pirates as she has scored 11.9 points per contest. Graduate guard Sierra DaCosta has also contributed this season with 11.4 points per game.

This writer can be contacted at sports@theeastcarolinian.com.



Kim McNeill



Maddie Moore

Track and field to begin at Liberty

Stephen Babich
TEC STAFF

The East Carolina University track and field team will attend the Liberty Elite Invitational, which is the first scheduled meet of the season, set to begin on Jan. 21 and end Jan. 23 at Liberty University.

The meet will start on Jan. 21 with pentathlon and heptathlon events. On Jan. 22, field events will start with men's and women's long jump, pole vault and weight throw. Running events will begin on Jan. 22 with the 60 meter hurdles, 1,000 meter run, 200 meter dash, 4 x 800 and the 5,000 meter run. The remaining events which will be held on Jan. 23 are listed at LibertyFlames.com.

Sophomore Niejel Wilkins came in second in triple jump at last year's Darius Dixon Memorial Invitational, held at Liberty University. He currently is No. 4 all time in program history for triple jump. Wilkins will be competing in the triple jump at the meet.

The men's and women's 4x400m will be on Jan. 23. At

the Darius Dixon Memorial Invitational last year, the Liberty men's 4x400m won the event.

In August 2020, track and field assistant Brie Berkowitz was nominated to be a mentor in the United States Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA) female coaches mentorship program for the third straight year.

"It is truly an honor to again be selected as one of the mentors for the USTFCCCA Female Coaches Mentorship program," Berkowitz said.

According to ECU Pirates.com, the Pirates were only able to attend seven out of the 19 scheduled meets last season, due to the COVID-19 outbreak in March. They did participate in the Darius Dixon Invitational at Liberty University last year from Feb. 14 to Feb. 15.

Last year's Liberty Invita-

tional was described as "another successful weekend" by Curt Kraft, director of men's and women's track and field and cross country, according to ECU Pirates.com. This meet was scheduled before the indoor American Athletic Conference championships.

"We had another great meet to close out the regular season competition schedule," Curt Kraft

Kraft said last season. "Now, we have to turn our attention to the indoor conference championships. Going four weekends in a row has been very tough on the kids' bodies. We have to rest up over the next couple weeks both physically and mentally. Both teams feel really good about going into the meet with rest."

Senior thrower Ryan Davis had a toss of 20.79 meters on the weight throw, which made him victorious in the event and it set a Liberty Invitational record.

On the women's team, then-freshman Melicia Mouz-zon finished in second on the 60 meter dash with a time of 7.49 seconds. Then-junior Shellbi Chapman finished the 500 meter dash with a time of 1:16:27, earning her second place in the event. Senior Nuria Tillo-Prats finished the 1000 run with the second best time in school history at 2:52.30 and finished second in the race.

According to LibertyFlames.com, the Liberty men's 4x4 team took first place with a time of 3:12.28. The women's 4x4 team took first place as well.

Furthermore, on the men's team, Jovaine Atkinson took first place in the 60 meter hurdles, with a time of 7.78 seconds. Kyle Mitchel won the shot put event with a put of 60-8.75.

On the women's team, Anna Hostetter won the 3k with a time of 9:49.65. Calli Parlier took first place on the mile with a time of 4:51.71. Abby Thorpe won the high jump with a height of 5'-8"

This writer can be contacted at sports@theeastcarolinian.com.

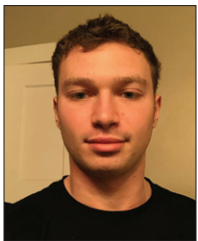


Head football coach Mike Houston addresses the media at his virtual end of season press conference. Since being hired, Houston's recruitment classes have gradually improved year over year. COURTESY OF HOUSTON MCCULLOUGH | ECUPIRATES

» ANALYSIS

ECU football recruitment takes shape

2020-2021 football recruitment class looks to be another mid-tier group



Jess Sabin
TEC STAFF

The East Carolina University football team (3-6, 3-5 American Athletic Conference) took some good steps forward this year compared to the previous season as it looks to improve further in the next year, and the first step to improve in college football is to have a strong recruiting class.

Recruiting classes are graded on a scale of 0.0000-1.0000, and ECU's currently sits at a 0.8352, or an average of three-star recruits. So far, this is an improvement on last year's class which finished with a rating of 0.8239, though there is still time to get more commitments or have players back out.

According to 24/7 Sports, ECU has 13

players who have signed letters of intent, one who is a hard commit and one who has transferred from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. By the end of recruiting season in 2020, ECU had 29 enrollees and seven transfer students, which will be a tough number to match.

ECU currently has three players coming in from Florida, two from Alabama, Ohio and Virginia and one each from Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas. A majority of the current commits are defensive backs, with five of the 15 total players who play in the secondary.

The second largest group is offensive linemen with three, and then special teams which currently has two commits. ECU has signed one linebacker, quarterback, running back and receiver.

Right now, ECU is on pace for a very

similar positional breakdown to last year's recruiting class. The main difference is that last year the Pirates brought in nine defensive linemen, which put the defensive back position at the number two spot with seven recruits. The number of receivers, running backs, quarterbacks, linemen and special teams are all on pace to have a very similar number of recruits by the time team recruiting is over on July 24.

The Pirates have made plenty of offers but most of the higher-ranked players they have targeted have chosen other schools to play for. However, the Pirates are still in contention and are even favored for a couple middle-to-higher tier prospects.

Of ECU's 27 starters on offense, defense and special teams, 24 are expected to return for the 2021-2022 season, according to 24/7 Sports.

Junior wide receiver Blake Proehl and senior kicker Jake Verity have both declared for the NFL draft, and graduate student defensive end Chris Willis is expected to move on. Overall, the Pirates will have to turn to its established and incoming young depth pieces to replace the few holes in its starting lineup.

The Pirates are on pace for another mid-tier recruiting class. In the past few years since head coach Mike Houston came to ECU, the Pirates have had classes ranked No. 89 in the country, No. 79 in the country and No. 74 in the country, according to 24/7 Sports. ECU's continuation of the trend of slowly climbing the recruiting ranks remains to be seen as there is still plenty of time for new developments in this year's class.

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