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The
ROTHUNDIA

Changing the rap game since 1920



**THE ORIGINS OF
PURE KNOWLEDGE**

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Two construction projects planned

Two designs waiting approval

by Jesse Plichta-Kellar | News Staff | @JesseKellar

"It (academic building) will help with recruitment and retention for students as well as faculty,"

Louise Waller



TAYLOR O'BERRY | THE ROTUNDA

With the completion of Upchurch University Center and Brock Hall Student Success Center nearing, there are two new renovation projects planned and two with designs waiting for approval, according to Louise Waller, the associate vice president of campus planning and construction.

The plans for a new academic building and admissions building are being reviewed by the Bureau of Capital Outlay Management, according to Waller.



TAYLOR O'BERRY | THE ROTUNDA

The three-floor Upchurch University Center is now projected to be complete by September 2018 after numerous delays in construction.

"The admissions building is going to be on High Street," Waller said. "That project is at BCOM, Bureau of Capital Outlay Management, they are our building official. They are reviewing the drawings and they hope to issue a permit this spring. Once they approve the drawings we'll be able to go out to bid."

According to Waller, the goal is to begin construction in late spring. Additionally, a new academic building is being planned.

"The new academic building, which is going to be behind French Hall, on the former Barlow tennis court site," she said. "We're also waiting for BCOM to approve the drawings ... That can go out to bid as well."

According to Waller, the admissions building should take about 14 months to construct and the new academic building about 20 months to construct.

"We're very excited, both will be tremendous additions to campus and we should be underway this summer on both of them," said Waller.

The new admissions building is being built, according to Waller, to improve recruitment.

"We feel that to put our best foot forward, a really nice admissions building and really, visitor center in many ways, is going to be very important," said Waller.

The funding for both buildings will come from state appropriations made by Virginia's general assembly, she said.

The academic building will have collaboration space for students, lab space for health, athletic training, and kinesiology and

a faculty café.

"I think this will help with recruitment and retention for students as well as faculty," said Waller.

Curry Hall and Frazer Hall are slated for renovation, according to Waller.

"They have not had any significant renovation work performed since they were constructed in 1969 and 1970," Waller said. "The building systems are in need or upgrades."

According to Waller, Frazer Hall will be renovated from May 2018 to August 2019, and Curry Hall from May 2019 to August 2020. Together, they will cost about \$60 million. The money was borrowed and will gradually be paid back from housing fees.

"Our two most visible projects that we have right now are Upchurch University Center and Brock Hall Student Success Center," said Waller.

Brock Hall, according to Waller, is nearest to completion.

"The contractor on that project has experienced significant delays due to the weather," said Waller. "The interior of that building is about 98 percent complete. The exterior, there's a lot of site work left."

According to Waller, the hope is that the building will be completed by spring break.

Upchurch University Center is scheduled to open September 2018, according to Waller.

"We're (Campus Planning) trying to figure out a move-in around fall break and opening up right after fall break," said Waller. "There's still a few uncertainties left in the furniture delivery we're still trying to coordinate."

Letter from CAHOOTS

Longwood community -

The Society of CAHOOTS, originally founded in September of 1966 at Longwood College, was unlike any secret society yet to be formed. Bringing together women from every walk of campus life, CAHOOTS sought to redefine their community and encourage their peers through acts of laughter and camaraderie.

Lasting until 1977, the society of CAHOOTS fell silent, as Longwood College became co-educational, integrating people from multiple backgrounds into the fabric of the college's campus. The members of the CAHOOTS who attended Longwood College in the 1960s and 1970s served in multiple leadership roles, and were some of the greatest and most impactful on campus, and remain so some 50 years later as alumni.

Now, forty years later, we the members of CAHOOTS are reborn. Our current membership is composed of a mixture of students from every walk of life. We represent the multiple faces of our campus - we are diverse, we are united, and we are a society of your most dedicated peers, who strive to redefine what community means in the face of adversity, injustice and indifference.

The climate of our campus and campuses across our nation is far different from anything universities have experienced before. This past year has fueled discussions around

multiple political, social and economic stances, and unlike any other time in our nation's history, the democratic process is at the forefront of our minds, facing daily threats from those who fall short of the ideals in our society. As our campus, local communities, state, nation and world lie at a crossroads of what currently is and what could become in the future, CAHOOTS exists to support and develop the bond between students, faculty and staff.

The society of CAHOOTS is here to stand in the gap of something our campus is missing. We are not here to threaten the existence or mission of CHI or Princeps, but rather we are reborn with our own purpose: advancing communities through recognition and support, encouraging individualism, laughter, kindness and respect - the four values we represent. We salute CHI for their continued promotion of the Longwood spirit, 117 years strong, and we applaud Princeps' 25-year-old dedication to strengthening leadership, and moreover, citizen leadership.

We, the members of the society, remain secret because our work is not an effort to showcase any one individual's ability to bring people together, but rather we mask our identities to urge the focus toward our mission: evolving one community and strengthening our fellow man.

For Others, We Give,
CAHOOTS



HALLE PARKER | THE ROTUNDA

An all-female organization originally founded in 1966 known as Cahoots announced their return on Tuesday, Jan. 30.

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LU "paying attention" to tax legislation

529 savings plan seen as biggest change

by Christine Rindfleisch | News Editor | @its_rINDfleisch

After the senate's first sweeping tax legislature in over 30 years passed on Dec. 20, 2017, Longwood University Vice President for Administration and Finance Ken Copeland called the new bill "a long time coming."

The bill passed 51-48 with Vice President Mike Pence casting the deciding vote, according to CNN Politics.

"There's not a lot of bad news," said Copeland. "None of those things that are beneficial to students and their families have been taken away so that's really the big story."

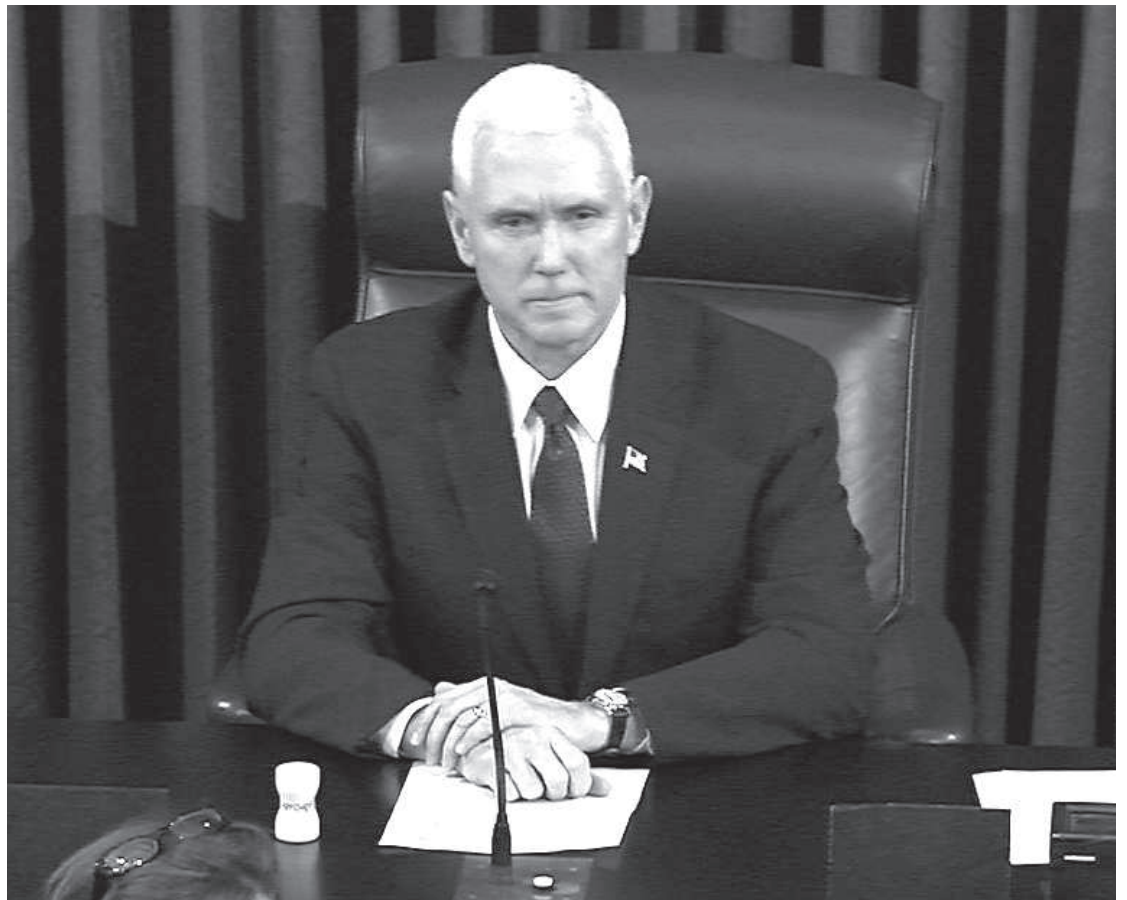
Copeland said the major changes college students and their families could see focused the 529 plan and the tax deductibility of student loan interest, while institutions could see changes with endowments.

The Lifetime Learning Credit, a credit for up to \$2,000 per year for tuition for students if their modified adjusted gross income is \$65,000 or less, and the Hope Scholarship Tax Credit, an education tax benefit allowing taxpayers a credit of up to \$2,500 a year per student if they paid qualified tuition for the first four years of post-secondary education,



COURTESY OF LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY

Vice President for Administration and Finance Ken Copeland discussed the impact of the tax bill.



COURTESY OF CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Vice President Mike Pence present in Senate to preside over the tax bill passed on Dec. 20, 2017

are both still intact with the bill, according to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

A 529 is a tax exempt savings plan "designed to encourage saving for future college costs," according to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

According to Copeland, the bill now allows 529 plans to be used for K-12 education as well as college. Families can use up to \$10,000 a year from the account for kindergarten through high school.

"Not to practice bipartisan politics, there are a lot of people saying that the threshold being increased is giving a greater tax deduction to the wealthy," he said.

According to the Washington Post, families who earn "\$10,000 to \$75,000 over the next decade" will see higher taxes by 2027 as stated by the Joint Committee on Taxation, a nonpartisan committee of congress.

An endowment "allows an institution to make commitments far into the future, knowing that resources to meet those commitments will continue to be available." Institutions with the largest endowments include mainly Ivy League Schools such as Harvard University and Yale University but can extend to state schools like the University of Virginia, according to Copeland.

With the tax bill, endowments exceeding over \$500,000 per student will include a 1.4 percent excise tax, according to Copeland.

According to the Internal Revenue Service, an excise tax is paid when purchases are made on a specific good typically already included in the price of the product.

"You're sending the message to the potential donor, 'Don't give to them because a portion of what you give is going to be pulled out for

income tax.' So there's some fear that with this legislation being passed that it would stop (the) philanthropic process," he said.

The standard deduction increased as a result of the bill to \$12,000 from \$6,350 and for married couples it increased to \$24,000 from \$12,700, according to CNN Money.

"There's a lot of things in the way the legislation is written that are at least, at first blush, they are taxpayer friendly," said Copeland.

Copeland and Cathryn B. Mobley, the associate vice president for administration and finance, consulted the passing of the bill two weeks ago with KPNG, a tax and advisory service to Longwood, to "make sure that we as an institution weren't missing something that we need to do."

Longwood hasn't relayed any information to students but is "paying attention," according to Copeland.

"We have talked about it at the cabinet level, but we really didn't see the need because of the lack of change," he said. "That said, we are always happy to have that conversation."

"None of those things that are beneficial to students and their families have been taken away so that's really the big story."

Ken Copeland



EVA WITTKOSKI | THE ROTUNDA

"Everybody has their own little story"

A feature on FAB bus driver, Ernest Toney

by Rae Mundie | Features Staff | @rjmundie

Ernest Toney has driven for the Farmville Area Bus (FAB) for the last five years after his retirement from a 27-year long stint working in Piedmont Regional Jail. Similar to his current job, Toney worked with were college-aged inmates at the jail and said there were key differences between those he met inside versus the kids he drives now.

"For 27 years I only heard the excuses, the reasons why it was someone else's fault, all the reasons 'why I didn't succeed,'" said Toney. "And I get this job, and I hear all these kids from all different backgrounds with the same common goal, initially it was therapeutic to hear people of this age group with goals and a game plan."

Working in the Piedmont Regional Jail, Toney had several experiences that made him nervous about the future with the current generation giving excuse after excuse. He told one story of when he fought another inmate, after the inmate attacked him.

At this time, Toney was only an officer in the jail and was working transport at the time when coming into the office. He said there was a young man yelling and cursing from within the holding cell at a female officer doing paperwork. When Toney told the young man to stop, he was threatened and told to open up the gate.

"I was young and gung ho, thought he wouldn't do it, so I said, 'Okay buddy,' and I opened

the door when he punched me," admitted Toney.

From there a fight ensued in which Toney ended up getting suspended for a week without pay. Allowed to keep his job, he worked his way up from officer to a major.

Toney said he feels a special sympathy for the students he drives around, studying and moving up through the ranks within the jail meant a lot of sleepless nights.

"It's imperative every college student has a support system," said Toney. "They won't fail, but it will be a lot harder."

Toney and his wife Trish were high school sweethearts, starting as friends first, and later becoming sweethearts after Toney came home from school. She used to tell him during his summer that her brother, Toney's friend, wasn't home. Toney would tell her that he was there for her instead.

"She kissed me, and all of the time I hadn't looked at her in a romantic way it was like the shudder came off," said Toney. "I found myself finding any excuse I could to go and see herself that summer."

Toney and Trish have four sons: Ernest, Brian, Brandon and Trevor. They've been together since 1981 and have been taking care of children for over 30 years. Trish works within the Department of Social Service and has six more years before retirement.

"I always tell students I'm proud of them," said Toney. "I don't even know you and I'm proud of you."



EVA WITTKOSKI | THE ROTUNDA

Ernest Toney, Farmville Area Bus driver, rides through town as he shares his advice and stories with its riders.



DEATH CAFE

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BEYOND SEX & DRUGS

LU junior strives to redefine rap

by Taiya Jarrett | A&E Staff | @ohsootay



HALLE PARKER | THE ROTUNDA

Christaan Oliphant was contracted by Longwood's athletics department to craft his song, "LU Anthem," at university events like men's basketball games.

Harboring a modest student music scene, the university has also managed to obscure another hidden gem, Christaan Oliphant—otherwise known as Pure Knowledge.

Now, it may be no surprise that Farmville showcases a range of artistry from bluegrass to folk to rock to classical, as stated by the town's website. Nevertheless, up-and-coming local artist Oliphant is shaking up Farmville's music scene one rap at a time.

Oliphant wasn't born an aspiring rapper. It wasn't until he was a teenager that his career interests changed.

"Funny story, this is seventh grade, I wanted to be a technology specialist, had no interest in making music ever. I was your common person, I loved listening to music, but I had never wanted to make music," Oliphant stated, aware of the irony.

He added, "By freshman year of high school was when I finally said I can actually do something with this, more so I saw myself as

"Sex sells, drug sells, a lot of negative things are pushed to the faces of the youth, so my goal is to change that."

Christaan Oliphant

Pure Knowledge than Christaan."

A lengthy list of influences have a role in Oliphant's music, ranging from a mixture of hip-hop and R&B artists with the likes of J.Cole, Childish Gambino, Jay Z, Playboi Carti and Lil Uzi.

He said, "The variation of sounds is just inspiring and you can take something from the 90s and bring it back to 2018."

Within the last few years, the invasive sounds of XXXtentacion and Tekashi 69, among other up-and-coming artists, have oversaturated the music industry and transformed the genre of contemporary R&B for good, said Oliphant.

"Lyrical content has changed drastically. We're at a place where people are experimenting more; doing things that are not of the norm. However, the part I disagree with is the promotion of drug use and not treating women correctly. I don't necessarily promote that, although that's reality, I don't want that to oversaturate the masses," he said. "Sex sells, drug sells, a lot of negative things are pushed to the faces of the youth, so my goal is to change that."

It is evident that Oliphant tries to steer away from the expected mentality of the genre and negativity, instead he expresses a goofy, yet serious lyrical demeanor that can be heard throughout his music.

One of his songs seemed to kickstart the artist's success, "LU Anthem." He recently performed the Longwood-themed rap at the men's basketball game on Saturday, Feb. 3. However, aside from basketball games, he's also performed at the university's Oktoberfest, Bandfest and Spring Weekend.

The forthputting, employed and soon-to-be senior balances his time and energy in the music scene with promotional activity on social media, where his music can be streamed. He showcases his music on SoundCloud where he goes by his stage name, Pure Knowledge. As for Twitter, it's TheKidPK.

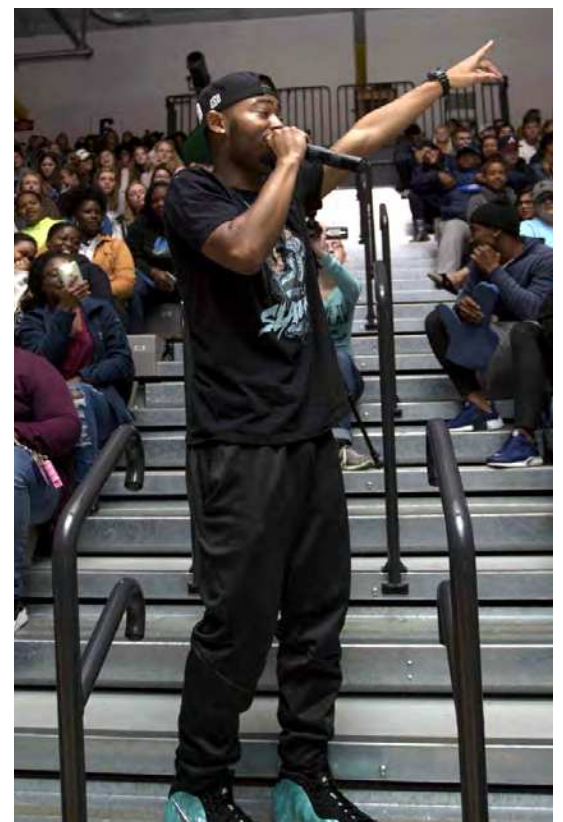
Beginning his musical career at a young age,

and progressing over time, Oliphant had a few words for people interested in pursuing the same direction.

"Stay true to yourself as long as you can, and humble yourself," he said.

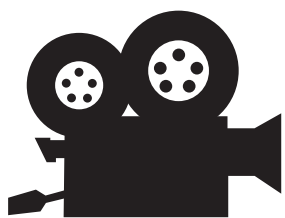
In attempts to branch out as more than a local artist, the next big thing for Oliphant is to "collaborate with more artists, work with people who inspired me to start music" as he works toward putting his songs on streaming services like Spotify and Apple Music.

He said achieving that goal would give him "a sense of fulfillment" and show "that I am an artist who needs to be taken seriously and that I'm here to stay."



COURTESY OF CHRISTAAN OLIPHANT

Christaan Oliphant was contracted by Longwood's athletics department to craft his song, "LU Anthem," at university events like men's basketball games.



THE REEL LIFE

Movie reviews by Jacob DiLandro | A&E Staff | @spongejay1

FIFTY SHADES FREED

In order for a film to have a thriller, it must have certain elements. Suspense, intrigue, a sense of danger and semi-decent pacing. In order for a film to be erotic, it must excite the viewer, either giving them more than they thought they wanted or teasing them with just barely not enough. In order for a film to be considered a film, it has to have acting, chemistry between its actors, a coherent plot and decent direction. "Fifty Shades Freed" is none of the above.

As this is the final installment in the "Fifty Shades" trilogy, the film finds itself beginning to wrap up the plot of Ana, a former literature major who's now a fiction editor, and Christian, the man she interviews in the first film and became smitten with and their new marriage.

Be forewarned however, the film does nothing to explain the previous events of the series. It simply begins as if the audience has all the information it needs. Even with other lengthy series such as "Harry Potter", audiences were still given information to keep them going, even if they'd skipped out on the previous films.

There is some plot, very little of it. Anastasia and Christian are now married and people from their past are still trying to get revenge on them for some reason. The film never



COURTESY OF RACKED



COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES, PERFECT WORLD PICTURES, AND MICHAEL DE LUCA PRODUCTIONS.

attempts to coherently explain why. In the last five minutes, attempts are made to tie up loose ends but end up leaving far more questions than answers.

A subplot with Anastasia questioning the loyalty of Christian's brother to her best friend exist for a total of 10 minutes and is never brought up again. It isn't even resolved.

For a film that seems to market itself as a sexy thriller, it's missing both sex and thrills. These scenes are pedestrian and obviously, break up the pacing and the plot, but they don't give good enough payoff to justify it.

Speaking of moving the plot along, the filmmakers forgot to. By the time the film actually begins to move with a semblance of urgency that the "thriller" tagline on its IMDB page would suggest, there's only 30 minutes left in the film. The previous hour and a half were simply comprised of Ana and Christian bickering like high schoolers, flying to expensive locals, and making use of red leather and low lighting.

Also, Christian is a jerk. Not in the sense of "he grows as the film progresses," he's just a major jerk. He's mean to Ana, he breaks his own safe rules within the red room and he never speaks above a low growl. He and Ana fight like high school sweethearts, yelling at each other whenever a slight disturbance comes into their fairy tale love fest.

That, coupled with the pure stupidity of some of the film's lines ("Hello wife." "Hello husband." "It's boobs in boobland!" "Babies happen when you have sex!") ends up making "Fifty Shades Freed" the funniest movie of the year so far. If this film must be seen in theaters, bring some friends and get ready to make fun of its

seriousness, Mystery Science Theater-style.

"Fifty Shades Freed" also promises to be a thrilling conclusion where you, per the poster, "won't want to miss the climax". Well, there wasn't one. The film ends so quickly and anti-climatically that it feels like there's still more story to be told. Except there isn't. Also, given the speed at which the plot moves in the last 30 minutes, it may be the only time that the phrase "shorter than it was" is used in a negative context.

Dakota Johnson is trying her best, but there simply isn't enough substance in any aspect of this relationship, or this film, to keep anyone invested. Jamie Dornan's American accent sounds like he's speaking with a constant lisp and you could count on two hands the number of times he speaks intelligibly throughout the entire film.

The supporting cast is just as bad. Half the time, the actors just don't seem like their trying. One scene in Ana's office has an elderly man who, the moment he walks in the door, looks as if he's forgotten his lines. He pauses, and then says something unintelligible and continues the scene like normal. Pure hilarity.

Get ready for the blockbuster comedy of the year, "Fifty Shades Freed" has all the substance of a piece of microwaved cheese pizza and all of the sexiness of a blurry Polaroid.

Dumb, irritating, hilarious and overly sexy with its sex scenes (Looking at you, ice cream), "Fifty Shades Freed" is absolutely painful. Not in the way most of its audience wants it to be. But scream your safe word as loud as you want because at least the series is finally over.



1.5/5



DOWN THE TWISTED PATH

The Trump administration's use of division

President Donald Trump held his first state of the union address of his presidency on Jan. 30.

COURTESY OF C-SPAN

by Alex Barker | Contributor | @longwoodrotunda

In a Feb. 5 rally, President Donald Trump referred to Democrats who didn't stand up and clap during his State of the Union Address as "treasonous", according to an article published by CNN.

In a following statement a few days later, Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders stated that the president was "clearly joking" when he made the statement.

"He was making the point that even when good things are happening they are still sitting there angry," she said.

Regardless of whether or not it was intended to be a joke, this statement, as well as the subsequent defense laid out by Sanders, continues a history of divisive statements made by the current president and his administration.

From attacking NFL players for kneeling during the national anthem to creating conflict on Twitter with rappers such as Snoop Dogg and T.I., President Trump has often been unnecessarily and exceedingly hostile.

However, the issue that is more problematic than his aggression, though his aggression is problematic in itself, is his ability to amplify non-issues and draw attention away from actual ones. Trump has been a major part of a cultural shift that has made the political realm more of a spectacle and less of a serious part of our lives.

Take the NFL players kneeling during the national anthem as an example. Whether or not people agree with it, it is the NFL players' constitutional right to do whatever they please during the national anthem. That's one of the defining qualities America was built on: freedom of expression.

Trump had no need to insert himself into such an unnecessary topic of debate. The use of the term "son of a bitch" when referring to the protesting players was especially toxic. Roger Goodell, commissioner of the NFL, even called the rhetoric "divisive" according

to an article published by Sports Illustrated.

It is sad to say that we have seen this kind of rhetoric come out again and again from the Trump administration, from his labeling of African nations as "shithole countries" to his accusation that President Barack Obama wiretapped him.

Personally, I believe that, whether or not they understand it themselves, the Trump administration's primary tactics are division and distraction. The frequency of scandals and divisive issues that come out of this administration have separated us from the aspects of politics that actually matter, which are the policy-making process and the policy itself.

It also allows them to maintain the loyalty of Trump's supporters, who despite the administration's legislative shortcomings, have stayed close to the president's side.

I should make it clear that this is just my personal opinion. At such a time, no information has come out blatantly saying that this is a concise plan of action that the administration is attempting to carry out. However, it is possible the effects are unintentional, as the administration has been on a rough path since its beginning and seems to be struggling to stay organized.

This isn't to say that we should give Trump and his administration a free pass to say whatever they want. Criticism should be given where it's due.

For example, on Feb. 7, Daily Mail broke a story that White House Aide Rob Porter had domestically abused both of his ex-wives and that the FBI and the Trump administration knew about this, but still allowed for him to work in the White House.

The Trump administration should certainly be held accountable its actions, just as Rob Porter, who resigned, should also be held accountable for his action.

However, in addition, we shouldn't lose

focus on the policy-making process or the policy itself. These things have the biggest effect on our lives.

We have seen it with the increased rate at which families are separated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents under the Trump administration. The Trump administration should be held accountable for their actions, which includes the policies that Trump and his colleagues in Congress advocate for.

The course of action that I believe we should take, when it comes to dealing with the Trump administration's intentional or unintentional attempts at division and distraction, is to care less about what Trump says directly and to focus more on actual policies and the inner workings of the current Congress.

We should hold media outlets that focus too heavily on Trump's divisive statements accountable and rely more on news sources that are more focused on actual policy and the policy-making process while maintaining a critical eye on the current administration.

Trump has been a major part of a cultural shift that has made the political realm more of a spectacle and less of a serious part of our lives.

IMMIGRATION IN ACTION

New Brock Experience to send students to the border



The Sonoran desert sets the backdrop for trips to Tucson.

COURTESY OF MARIANNE CAMPBELL

by David Pettyjohn | Features Staff | @PtjDav

Some of the latest changes to Longwood University are not in the physical construction of the campus, but the new potential courses that are being made available to students. The Brock Experiences program was started in 2016 as a way of making traveling courses that will take trips all over the United States, as well as one that will bring students to the Arctic Circle.

One of the first two Brock Experiences courses is the Borderlines class, available for the summer of 2018. The class will focus on immigration, splitting time between Richmond and Tucson, Arizona. In both locations, students will interact with and learn about the local immigrant communities.

Spanish professor Dr. Renee Gutiérrez and criminal justice professor Dr. Connie Koski. Gutiérrez held an information session on the class on Monday, Feb. 5 for any interested potential students. This meeting had a very light attendance, though Gutiérrez said at least 15 students have expressed an interest in the class.

“For the first year, we’d like to try to keep it around there,” said Koski. “It’ll just be easier as we iron out first experiences.”

Gutiérrez has held her position here at Longwood for five years. When she first arrived, she became involved with translating religious texts for a chaplain at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention Center near the university. She then realized what an opportunity this was for her students.

“I was like, ‘Wait a minute, there are hundreds of Spanish speakers two miles from

campus. I could bring my students out here and we could teach English,’” she said.

These experiences with the immigration system sparked an interest in the subject for Gutiérrez. However, it was her colleague, Koski, who gave her a more detailed understanding of the topic. Koski is a former law enforcement professional, and was able to bring in the legalistic aspect to the class. Before retiring from the Ypsilanti Police Department in Ypsilanti, Michigan, she worked as a patrol



COURTESY OF MARIANNE CAMPBELL

In a past faculty-led trip to Tucson, Arizona, students worked with the Humane Borders service.

officer, accident reconstructionist, crime scene investigator and a major crimes detective, among other positions.

Koski said her past work in policing helps to inform her perspectives on both legal and illegal immigration.

“I have had different world experiences, and

so hopefully that also helps with questions students might have, and other perspectives they may have while they explore this controversial issue,” she said.

“I was more interested in the humanitarian aspect,” said Gutiérrez. “Getting my students to know people who didn’t look like them or act like them. Dr. Koski, because of her background, got me thinking about a whole other sort of way of doing it.”

Koski has also helped Gutiérrez with her project at the Farmville Detention Center, bringing her knowledge of the legal system to the table.

“As a result of working on that,” Koski said, “We’ve kind of had this vision along these lines. And then the university put out the call for faculty to apply for the new Brock Fellowship.”

It was then that Longwood offered Gutiérrez and Koski the opportunity to teach a Brock Experiences course in the past spring semester.

Koski has worked on courses that involve traveling before, but not ones that require leaving Virginia. She and Gutiérrez traveled on Longwood’s annual summer trip last year to Yellowstone National Park to learn how the class became a success.

Koski hopes that first year students will find this especially intriguing. Other Brock Experience classes include studying environmental damage in the Chesapeake Bay, traveling to Boston to study urban art and learning about access to water in the Colorado River.

Former Venezuelan tennis star lands in Farmville

Long-time friends lead tennis programs

by Patrick Sanderson | Sports Editor | @psanderson20

Longwood athletics appointed former professional international tennis standout Jhonatan Medina Alvarez as the program's fourth men's head tennis coach in early December, taking the place of former head coach Pierre Tafelski. Tafelski left the head coaching position at Longwood to accept the assistant coaching job at Boise State in October 2017.

Formally a highly-ranked professional tennis player, Medina Alvarez competed in Wimbledon and the U.S. Open as a junior competitor throughout his decorated career. He additionally won eight gold medals and five silver medals at the Venezuela National Games, according to the official Longwood athletics website.

Medina Alvarez said he and Longwood women's tennis head coach Maria Lopez have been best friends with each other since they were 10 years old living in Venezuela. Lopez, who is in her second year as head coach, told Medina Alvarez about the head coaching vacancy for the men's team, and he took the opportunity when it was presented.

"At that time, I had my own tennis academy in Orlando, Florida, but I knew it was time to make a change," said Medina Alvarez. "I wanted to be a part of something that is bigger than myself, and that's when the whole idea came about in coming to Longwood."

Medina Alvarez said coaching the men's team alongside his long-time best friend at the same school is "a dream come true."

"I made a promise to her a long time ago that I wanted to do something together," he said. "When the opportunity came, I thought maybe this was a chance that she and I can run something where we can make a change not only in the community, but as well in tennis."

Medina Alvarez said he started tennis at a young age, and followed his aspirations to travel around the world and play tennis against people from different cultures. He's been to over 25 countries across the globe, including trips to Argentina, Spain and

Japan to understand how different countries play tennis.

This experience, he said, will help form his players into a powerful team if they utilize his knowledge to its fullest extent.

"I'm extremely disciplined and conservative when it comes to systems and choices. I can't play for them; they have to want to perform. I'm bringing them all the tools for them to go that way, and if we're able to do that right, then results will come," said Medina Alvarez.

Additionally, the first-year head coach said the philosophy of the eight-man team is for them all to think alike and make similar choices whether they are competing in a singles or doubles match.

As with all new head coaches, Medina Alvarez understands the difficulty of entering a new chapter of his life and forming bonds between himself and his team.

"I believe that when you come into a new area and have all these players, you need to earn their trust," he said. "It's going to have the ups and downs, but I'm confident at this point that we are becoming that team where they can trust me and I can trust them."

A year removed from the programs' best season in the Division I era, Medina Alvarez takes over a diverse team with plenty of talent, with players like nationally ranked sophomore Amadeo Blasco, junior Julian Farthing and freshman Raisei Sakai.

Medina Alvarez noted each one of his eight players are from different countries, cultures



COURTESY OF LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY

and backgrounds. Although they all have different playing styles depending on where they came from, he said he wants to utilize his professional knowledge as well to help them succeed this season.

"The main thing for me is for my guys to know they are accountable for their decisions, and know that I'm here to provide all the knowledge I gained all these years," he said. "At the same time, I'm asking everything from them, because that's the only way you can achieve greatness."

The Lancers started their season 3-2 after losses against Bluefield State and East Carolina and two victories in the Mary Washington Invitational. The team travels to Wilmington, N.C. on Saturday, Feb. 24 for a match against UNC Wilmington.



COURTESY OF MATCH TENNIS

Men's tennis head coach Jhonatan Medina Alvarez ran his own tennis academy in Florida prior to taking the job at Longwood.

WBB: Consistency key to ending on a high



CARRIE BAILEY | THE ROTUNDA

Sophomore guard Kate Spradlin has been a regular starter for the Lancers, averaging over 26 minutes a game.

by Kurt Martin | Contributor | @lamKurt14

Currently in the midst of a nine-game losing streak, the Longwood women's basketball team sits at ninth in the Big South conference standings with a 3-19 (1-10 Big South) record with only seven games remaining in the regular season.

Longwood's only conference win came against Presbyterian

on Jan. 6, by a score of 66-56. Since then, the Lancers have dropped multiple games where they could've come out with a win, including a heartbreaking loss at Campbell in which they led by 10 at halftime, only for the Camels to outscore them by 22 points in the second half to snatch a win.

Before the season began, the intended plan was for the offense to play a more up-tempo style, while running a full-court press on the defensive side, according to head coach Bill Reinson. However, uncontrollable factors such as injuries hitting the team early caused those plans to be altered.

"The style we were going to play was based on having 13, 14 or even 15 players in the rotation, but with the injuries, it was apparent in the beginning that we weren't going to be able to do that," said Reinson.

In the back half of conference play, Reinson said the Lancers must find a way to achieve more consistency on the offensive end and close out games that are there for the taking.

"We just need to get over that hump. I think once we win one and get to see what it feels like, I feel it will be a snowball effect," said Reinson.

In her final season in a Longwood uniform, senior guard Micaela Ellis said the

team needs to make significant improvements to gain momentum heading into the Big South tournament.

"We have to value every possession, figure out how to close games and limit our mistakes as much as possible," said Ellis. "We're getting there, and we're in games but we're not finishing. We just have to value possessions as much as possible."

Additionally, she stated limiting scoring opportunities for opponents, locking in and getting stops is key to finish out close games.

So far in February, the women's team has played two games and have come out on the short end both times against Charleston Southern and High Point.

"High Point had lost two in a row and they were aggressive from the outset, the last time we played them, we really competed and it was a battle. Unfortunately, we haven't competed consistently over the past three games, we need to find a way to get that edge back," Reinson said on the official Longwood athletics website.

Four out of the last seven games in the regular season take place on the road for the Lancers, with the next against Presbyterian at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 10.



CARRIE BAILEY | THE ROTUNDA

Freshman guard Stephanie Guihon drives down the court; she's one of four women's basketball freshmen.

WEEKLY ROUNDUP

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Saturday, Feb. 3

vs. Liberty L 55-67

Wednesday, Feb. 7

vs. UNC Asheville L 73-78

Saturday, Feb. 10

@ Campbell L 54-88

Thursday, Feb. 15

vs. Charleston Southern 7 p.m.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Saturday, Feb. 3

vs. Charleston Southern L 61-78

Tuesday, Feb. 6

vs. High Point L 39-75

Saturday, Feb. 10

@ Presbyterian W 75-60

Tuesday, Feb. 13

@ Gardner-Webb 11 a.m.

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