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Rotunda - Vol 97, no. 17 - Feb 18, 2019

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ASKING FOR COMMUNICATION

FEBRUARY 18, 2019

VOL 97. ISSUE 16

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Haleigh Pannell, junior class president, organized the event after she felt unsatisfied with how LUPD and Longwood Communications has been handling students' feelings and concerns.

SGA holds Town Hall on campus safety

Students discuss incident at Longwood Village and communication issues

by Jesse Plichta-Kellar | News Editor | @JesseKellar

About 200 people gathered in Blackwell Ballroom on Feb. 13 to discuss campus safety in light of recent events at a Student Government Association (SGA) Town Hall, according to Josh Darst, SGA president. Over the course of the Town Hall, about 50 students asked questions in regard to transparency with communication, security cameras, security funding, campus alerts and community trust.

The panel consisted of Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Tim Pierson, Longwood University Police Department (LUPD) Chief of Police Col. Robert Beach, Assistant Vice President of Communications Matt McWilliams and Associate Dean of Conduct and Integrity Jen Fraley, with Darst moderating.

"I want you to know we're going to do everything we can to listen and learn and take things from here tonight and (we're) trying to do better," Pierson said.

After introductory remarks by Darst and panelist introductions, attendees

formed lines to ask questions. Campus safety and related issues were the focus of the night, but an incident that occurred in Longwood Village was the main topic of the event.

On Jan. 27, an armed man who was later identified as Malcolm Deon Leviege was reported at Longwood Village by an off-duty desk aide. LUPD arrived at the scene within four minutes but Leviege was gone, according to Beach. Students were notified of a "person of interest" in the area over 24 hours later, in an email from McWilliams.

"The failure and what we have come here to tell you that we understand was the (issue) here was (that) a more timely set of information of an event that occurred but was controlled and taken care of and that information could have been drafted and given to you in a way that, that would have maybe intercepted some of the fear and the speculation that that started to boil up over the next 48 hours," Beach said.

Beach emphasized that "there was

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no imminent threat to campus safety" since Leveige had already fled the Longwood Village by the time LUPD arrived and said that is the reason no alert went out to students.

Many students expressed concern and dissatisfaction that students were not alerted at the time of the incident. One resident and staff member at Longwood Village, Christopher R. Wells, junior business administration major, said that he was discouraged from telling other students about the incident.

"I was concerned after this happened because I had prior knowledge to it and going on and I want to know why people in the village including myself (have) been encouraged to keep quiet rather than come out," said Wells.

When asked who told him to refrain from spreading information about the incident, Wells said it was Beach.

"All the information that you had put it in the paragraph that you whatever that was and all the bad information (sic)," Beach said.

Wells said he had made an error, but it was in reference to a separate incident in Cumberland County. Wells and Beach referenced a prior conversation but were asked to "keep the conversation detail-based" by Darst and the Town Hall continued with the next student asking questions.



Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Tim Pierson tells the community they are holding the town hall meeting to learn what they could do better.

Wells later clarified to The Rotunda that he had sent an email and made errors regarding a police shooting in Cumberland, but that his information about the incident on Jan. 27 in the village had been "100 percent factual information".

According to Wells, he was discouraged from

talking about the Jan. 27 incident on social media or in person.

"My main objective was trying to get the people I know to know they aren't in danger anymore after the village incident," Wells said. "(Beach) also told me how I shouldn't be sending things like that because he had received phone calls from concerned parents."

Regarding the conversation at the town hall, Wells said he "felt attacked for speaking out again, and that my concerns and the concerns of students were not met with intent to rectify current situations."

During the Town Hall, other students objected to the wording of the email and how it did not mention that the person of interest had a gun. "A lot of people in (the Longwood) Village may not have known about the gun until after he left," Chris Alexander, a business sophomore said.

Other students agreed with Alexander, saying Leveige being armed should have been included in the email.

McWilliams said, "Police determined that there wasn't an ongoing imminent threat to safety and that's why it didn't trigger the campus alert."

Another student concern was a rumor saying Leveige had been released. Beach confirmed Leveige has been released on bond and students asked follow-up questions regarding the preventative measures that will be taken to make sure Leveige does not return to campus.

Jalyn Jones, an SGA senator, asked if Leveige had a previous altercation in the area prior to the recent incident. Beach said that Leveige had been involved in domestic incidents before with someone in the community back in November.

Many students voiced a need for an increased security camera presence and an increased number of blue light phones around campus, particularly at the Longwood Village.

Pierson, McWilliams and Beach all agreed with students that more cameras would be an improvement in security. Per Beach, funding for security cameras is lacking and until seven years ago there were barely any cameras on Longwood's campus.

Community trust was another topic of discussion.



Assistant Vice President of Communications Matt McWilliams acknowledged the students' concerns at the end of the night, saying, "we need to remain vigilant in finding ways to improve communication and giving students what they need to feel secure."

"I want to create a confidence in you that you can trust the decisions that we made at the police department level and the efforts that we do to protect you," Beach said.

Many students expressed difficulty trusting the police and Longwood to communicate effectively.

"It hasn't worked and I'm getting tired of hearing the same things over and over again. Overall, I just want to see change. I don't want to hear what you want to change. I want to see change," said Cecil Hayes, a senior.

Both Pierson and McWilliams agreed communication needs to improve as a result of the Town Hall.

"I think that's the big takeaway is that they said we need to remain vigilant in finding ways to improve communication and giving students what they need to feel secure," said McWilliams.



Christopher Wells, a resident and staff member at the Longwood Village, expressed concern that residents of the village were "encouraged to keep quiet rather than come out."



Tyler Bagbey shares his acoustics with the audience to capture hearts.



Sebastian Lacoss wears a costume head, gloves and tail while showing off his dance skills.

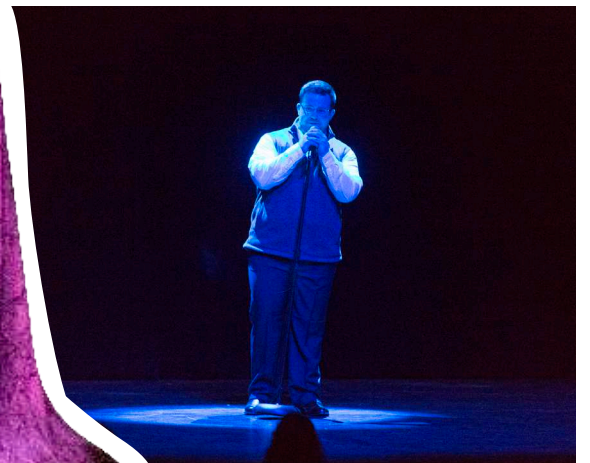


Dante Bowles, Mr. Longwood 2018, embraces Aaron Barksdale as he is officially named Mr. Longwood 2019 for his rap

The new king of Longwood 2019

by Brandon Cheung | Photo Staff | @longwoodrotunda

This year's second annual Mr. Longwood, hosted by Resident and Commuter Life (RCL), was full of fun and dancing. The eight contestants were judged by four individuals of the Longwood community, while the crowd was the extra bonus that helped crown Mr. Longwood.



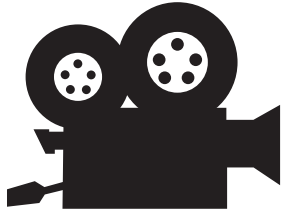
Alex Dowell leaves his heart on the stage with a romantic song.



Dylan Mc Kercher and his crew take to the stage with vocals and dance.



Aaron Barksdale is accompanied by Christaan Oliphant as they perform a rap duet.



THE REEL LIFE

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

ALITA BATTLE ANGEL



PHOTO COURTESY OF 20TH CENTURY FOX, LIGHTSTORM ENTERTAINMENT, TROUBLEMAKER STUDIOS AND TSG ENTERTAINMENT.

After multiple release date delays with multiple directorial changes, “Alita: Battle Angel” has finally made its way into theaters. An adaptation of the classic manga series and a passion project for director Robert Rodriguez (“From Dusk Till Dawn,” “Sin City”) and co-writer/producer James Cameron (“Titanic,” “Avatar”), does “Battle Angel” live up to its long and impressive pedigree?

It would be hard to summarize the basic plot of “Alita,” but not for an expected reason. While the first act feels incredibly truncated, the rest of the movie feels overly long.

As it stands, there’s a very standard story of revenge, independence and love with a sports subplot thrown in for good measure. There’s a lack of explanation for this world, and while it doesn’t require a textbook’s worth of information, it definitely needs more world building than the few short scenes given here.

While it might not be explained well, the world looks incredibly gorgeous. Practical effects and sets blend almost seamlessly with the computer-generated ones while bright sunlight streams through sequences that radiate with color and neon screens. The sequences during a sport called “MotorBall” are especially impressive and wildly entertaining.

Alita herself, a full computer-generated character, manages to

straddle the line between too real and not real enough. From the intricate carvings on her arms to her rubberized skin that gleams with sweat during fights, the realism is staggering.

Visuals can only go so far though, so it’s a good thing Alita has an actress as talented as Rosa Salazar (“Bird Box,” “The Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials”). She is the film’s highlight, imbuing Alita with a wonderful optimism and a kick-ass attitude that draws audiences in almost immediately. Her acting range also means in the smaller moments, where Alita reflects on who she is, there is no tonal shift. You may not see her real face, but Salazar still commands the screen.

The supporting cast, however, is a mixed bag. Christoph Waltz (“Inglorious Bastards,” “Django Unchained”) does about as well as he can with an underwritten father figure for Alita and his wife, played by Jennifer Connelly (“Labyrinth,” “Requiem for a Dream”) just seems like the writers forgot about her halfway through production. Mahershala Ali

(“Moonlight,” “Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse”) fairs just barely better than Connelly, as the bland villain Vector. Keanu Johnson, (“The Fosters,” “Nashville”) meanwhile, does a relatively fine job as Alita’s love interest Hugo, even though the film completely betrays his character arc by the end.

Out of everyone though, Ed Skrein (“Deadpool,” “Game of Thrones”) is clearly having the best time. While his villainous Zapan isn’t the most interesting character in the film, Skrein completely delivers a cheesy, over the top committed bad guy who’s just fun to watch be bonkers.

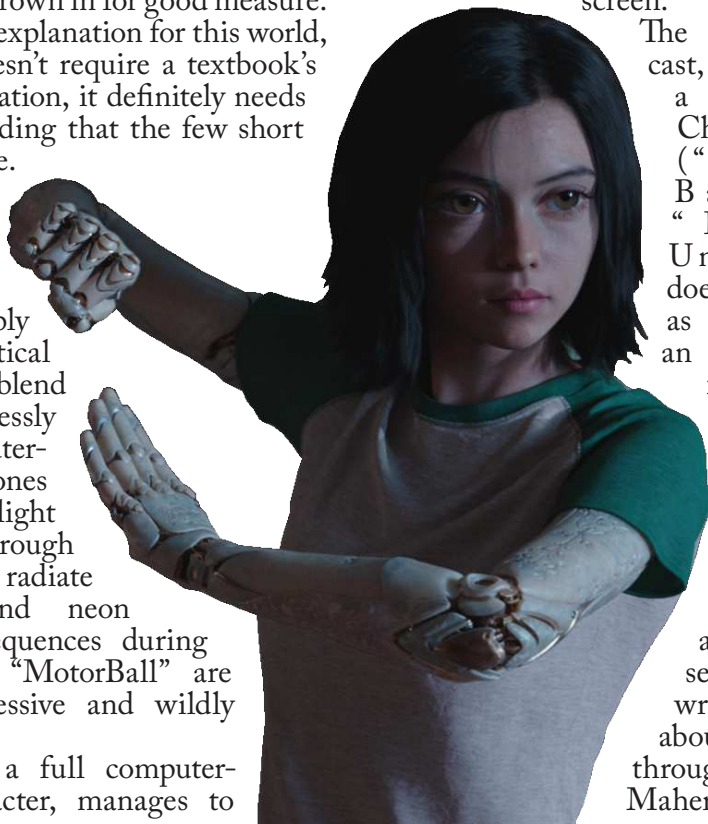
There’s no better way to describe the film as a whole. It has a spit-fire spirit mixed with a white-hot sense of style and bizarritiy that makes it a simple fun time. Alita herself basically carries the film with her spirit.

It’s goofy and nonsensical but also incredibly sincere, with a rock-solid emotional core. Its characters genuinely care for each other, even though they may not be terribly well-written. It ends in an anticlimactic way, clearly setting up a sequel but just provides just enough emotional resolution and third act confrontations to classify as an ending.

That manages to life “Alita: Battle Angel” just above mediocrity. Its sense of action, gorgeous visual style and wonderful characters don’t surpass the plot and structural failings, but they at least make them tolerable. It’s not a great film so “Alita: Battle Angel” definitely doesn’t win the day. But damn if she doesn’t put up a fight.



3/5



The man behind the microphone

"Skip" has brought out the Lancers since 1996

by Kurt Martin | Assistant Sports Editor | @IamKurt14



JACOB PUTERKO | THE ROTUNDA

Acting as the PA announcer for Longwood athletic events, Carlton "Skip" Maynard Spain has seen the transformation of a campus, five different athletic directors and the growth of the Longwood athletics department altogether.

The Colonial Heights, Va. native moved to Farmville in 1988, where he announced his first Longwood athletics event in the spring of 1996. Longwood, a Division II program at the time, hosted the Carolinas-Virginia Athletics Conference baseball tournament with Hampden-Sydney College.

"When I was asked to do baseball, Coach Buddy Bolding, our longtime baseball coach, his wife was the announcer for baseball and she couldn't do it that weekend, so that's when Jack (Williams) called and asked if I wanted to do it, and I told him 'yeah I do,'" said Spain.

Announcing for the Lancers ever since with over 90 games per year, Spain recalls the athletic field transformations as well throughout the program's history.

"Where the maintenance facility is (behind Iler Hall) was the field hockey field, but it was not the legal size for the NCAA, so (for) field hockey we had to use the University of Richmond field as all of our home games," said Spain.

Spain also remembers how the Lacrosse team used to either play at the field located on First Avenue, or on the practice field behind Longwood's softball stadium, Lancer Field,



"Skip" says that in his 24 years of announcing, he's probably only ever missed three games.

"Skip" announces the women's basketball game against High Point, while Longwood tries to make a

and even when the conditions were rough he was still there.

"We had no press boxes," he said. "The only press box that we had was the baseball press box, the rest of them we fought the weather, we put tarps over us."

"We had no press boxes. The only press box that we had was the baseball press box, the rest of them we fought the weather, we put tarps over us."

Carlton "Skip" Spain (Longwood Athletics Public Address announcer)

Spain works as the public address announcer on a volunteer basis and yet the dedication has not subsided.

"He could be at home spending time with his wife or spending time with his kids, or just spending time at home," said Director of Athletic Events Jamal White. "We try our best knowing that and appreciating everything he does for us because if it wasn't for him we don't know what we would do, trying to find somebody new, somebody who is going to be consistent to be a PA person."

Spain has always had a connection with baseball, as he played for four years at Virginia State University, while also playing football on scholarship.

Prior to college, Spain enlisted in the Air Force, then after college worked full time in the National Guard.

"When I was in the Air Force I had a job of making maps and that indirectly affected what was going on in Vietnam," said Spain.

Even though Spain was working to have an impact on the war through his service, the love of sports never left him as he played football and baseball while serving in Germany.

In his time in the National Guard, Spain worked as an Operation Sgt. Major in which he served during Operation Desert Storm spending six months abroad during the crisis. Spain then retired from the Guard in 1994.

Upon retiring, he wanted to get into the

teaching field, and that he did, teaching physical education and sixth grade math at Cumberland High School for 15 years.

Through all of these different ventures and experiences, sports has always been a constant. Part of his experiences in sports has landed him to meet some of baseball's legends.

"In where I'm from (Colonial Heights) they have a little league tournament every August, and back in the 50s, 60s and 70s they would have a celebrity to come throw out the first pitch, and it was my dad's job to drive to the airport and pick them up," said Spain. "Once I became driving (sic) he let me take them back to the airport. I took Mickey Mantle back to the airport."

The experience with Mantle was something Spain will never forget, he said.

Spain went on to drive other legends Warren Spahn, Satchel Paige and Hank Aaron all in his 20s to the tournament.

The way Spain carries himself in a work setting is something that has resonated with coaches at Longwood.

"He is a consummate professional in what he does, you can tell with the passion that he exudes on the mic," said men's soccer head coach John Atkinson. "He has found his niche with the announcing and you can tell that he gets great joy from being apart of the successes behind the mic at Longwood and being able to announce these athletes to the world."

Adding to his vast experiences, Spain also spoke about the run of continued success from the Longwood softball program, a run featuring the Lancers clinching three straight Big South Championships from 2015-2017, one of which came on the team's home field in 2017 - a tournament and championship that Spain was able to announce.

"Skip has been so service oriented since I've known him, that's the first thing that really comes out to me. It wasn't like I had to go ask him for help, he actually came and asked us all the time 'hey do you want me to run the scoreboard, hey do you want me to drive you guys?'" said head coach Kathy Riley.

After all of this time as a member of the Longwood community, he keeps taking it all in.

"Watching the campus grow, it is unreal," said Spain.

Longwood softball looks to repeat previous successes

Big South preseason favorites seek consistency

by Nicholas Lione | Sports Staff | @longwoodrotunda

While the Longwood softball program has seen success in previous seasons, they are looking to improve and accomplish feats they haven't this year.

After coming up short in the conference tournament last season, the team looks to recapture conference supremacy and has an ultimate goal of winning an National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) regional this season.

Two players received conference preseason

Batten was tabbed as the number one batter in the early-season Lancer lineup. She said the team has to play with consistency in order to contend when the Big South tournament comes around in May.

"Consistency is very important when you come out here and play for any player, (and) it is very important to have a group that can be consistent and carry the team. It is something that we aim for," said Batten.

Being picked as league favorites comes with a great deal of pressure, and for long-time Head Coach Kathy Riley who has come to be familiar with this position, pressure won't be a focal point.

"It can cause pressure. The one thing we have really done is not talk about it," Riley said. "We come out and we talk about how good we can practice that day or week."

The team understands this season won't be easy with other Big South powerhouses challenging for a championship, including newcomer USC Upstate, who were picked second in the preseason poll.

Riley explained how this might change their rivalry, saying former Big South program Liberty leaving would alter the dynamic of the conference.

"Liberty is right in our backyard and we have a natural rivalry with them, so now our rivalry might switch to Upstate and Radford a little bit more."

This year's schedule is headlined by notable out of conference opponents including: Big 12 foes Texas A&M and Texas on the road, and ACC oppositions UNC (Chapel Hill) and UVA at home. The regular season ends on May 4 as the Lancers will take on cross-town rival Liberty, now a member of the Atlantic Sun Conference.

The team currently sits at 5-2 early in the season after sweeping the "Lancer Launch" tournament they hosted, featuring two



JACOB PUTERKO | THE ROTUNDA

Senior Jordan Clark crosses the plate during a recent doubleheader against Robert Morris. Clark currently leads the team with a .353 batting average.

wins over Robert Morris and a 6-4 victory over Norfolk State University. The team will be back in action on Friday, Feb. 22, as a participant in the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Invitational in North Carolina.



Senior Kaylynn "Bug" Batten looks to make contact to generate run support for the Lancers.

accolades; senior pitcher Sydney Gay was named the Big South preseason co-pitcher of the year, and senior catcher Kaylynn "Bug" Batten was pegged as the league's preseason co-player of the year.

"Definitely for my senior year it is very exciting to be named co-pitcher of the year, definitely gives me a confidence boost knowing people are thinking of me as being higher up there," Gay said.

Gay, who serves as captain alongside Batten in their final seasons, serves as the first pitcher in their rotation.



Redshirt senior Chelsea Whitcomb tracks down a fly ball.



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