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WINDING UP FOR THE WIN

OPINIONS PAGE 5

The power and pain behind the "forbidden word"

A&E PAGE 9

DC's "Birds of Prey" takes flight

SPORTS PAGE 11

Baseball looks to climb back to BSC tourney

FEBRUARY 10, 2020

VOL 98. ISSUE 15

SHANNON HENSHAW | THE ROTUNDA

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In SGA

R.R. Moton Museum visit, inclusivity discussion

by Allison Turner | Assistant News Editor | @allisonkturner



Quincy Goodine leading the conversation about virtues present in our identities.

In this week's Student Government Association (SGA) meeting, the Senate visited the R.R. Moton Museum and had a discussion on the 'art of inclusion'.

In lieu of an actual Senate meeting, the Senate was able to go to the museum, which is located at 900 Griffin Boulevard in town. Executive Senator for Committee Relations Sky Sweeney organized the event.

The Senate started off with a guided tour of the museum from Leah Brown, assistant director of education. They were taken through each room and were given a brief background on the history of the museum and education in Prince Edward County. They were welcome to ask questions and fully engage in the topic.

Afterwards, the Senate went back into the main area where they were greeted by Jonathan Page, director of multicultural affairs at Longwood, and Quincy Goodine, assistant director of leadership development. They began a discussion surrounding the

values of everyone on senate and SGA as a whole.

To do this, the senate completed a "values sheet" where they were given a list of values and they had to circle all that were important to them, then they had to narrow it down to ten, then five that they value the most. After this, they discussed their similarities and differences and how they can use them as a senate moving forwards.

Page said to senate, "You all are the campus' voice. You are the voice of often times the marginalized voices, as well as the voices of the boisterous and loud voices."

Page and Goodine went on to hold a discussion on how to be more inclusive not only as a senate body, but also as a campus as a whole. The senate was invited to share opinions in an open, safe space.

The next SGA meeting will take place on Tuesday, Feb. 11 at 3:45 p.m. inside of the Wilson Chamber at the Upchurch University Center.

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The Civil War seminar returns to Longwood

by Valerie Mitchell | News Staff | @longwoodrotunda

With seminar a variety of interesting speakers to talk about various Civil War topics, the 21st annual free Civil War Seminar was held at Longwood University's Jarman Auditorium.

One of those speakers was Dr. Jonathan W. White, a professor of American Studies at Christopher Newport University.

This was his first time attending this seminar, he spoke about the dreams that people who fought in the civil war had while away from their friends and family. "Most people don't think about this aspect of the Civil War and I think it humanizes the people of that generation in a way that other things don't," said White.

Diane Lanieve was an attendee at

this seminar. She attended this seminar because she enjoys reading and is very interested in the Civil War. Her favorite section was White's, "because to me it connects us today, who have the same dreams when we are separated from our loved ones."

Each speaker talked about a different aspect of the Civil War and why this was an important topic to understand and realize. Some other topics spoken about were the prisons during the Civil War, Lincoln's decision in winning the war, and the Civil War Records and Treasures.



Appomattox Courthouse Historical Park, Eastern National Bookstore, The Department of History, Political Science & Philosophy, and the Center for Southside Virginia History were the sponsors for this event.

The Civil War Seminar is held every year the first week in February at Longwood University in the Jarman Auditorium.

FIND YOUR VOICE. TELL THEIR STORIES.

Join The Rotunda on Mondays at 5:30 pm in Upchurch 204 for more information, email rotundaeditor@gmail.com

KAYLA PITTMAN | CONTRIBUTOR

Women and Gender Studies Question Feminism Traditions in "The Tempest"

by Victoria Thompson | Features Staff | @longwoodrotunda



Jesse Goldberg gives commentary on Shakespeare's "The Tempest" focusing on traditions and articulations of feminism.

Nowadays, the roles that women play have a huge effect on how the whole world continues to spin on and on. There are even full-fledged groups of activists that choose to speak out about issues involving gender, race, sexuality and varying combinations of the three.

On Wednesday, February 5, the Women Gender and Sexuality Studies Department hosted a discussion regarding the question of feminism in Shakespeare's "The Tempest" in the Upchurch University Center's Wilson Chamber. This talk was the first of the Women Gender and Sexuality Studies Speaker Series for the Spring 2020 semester.

Women Gender and Sexuality Studies is a Minor at Longwood University that mainly focuses on women's issues in society that are affected by a multitude of factors such as race, class, ethnicity, age and sexuality.

Melissa Kravetz, the co-director of Women Gender and Sexuality Studies commented, "We usually do [the discussions] five times a year, two talks in the fall and three in the spring, but we are doing six this year. They always happen on the first Wednesday of the month."

Jesse Goldberg, a visiting assistant professor of the English & Modern Languages Department, served as the event speaker, giving a discussion titled "What about Sycorax? Gender, Violence, and Justice in Shakespeare's "The Tempest".

Before the discussion began, Goldberg gave everyone in attendance a handout with Miranda's 'Abhorred Slave' speech from Act 1 Scene 2 of the play. In addition, the back of the handout had

a bibliography with books and articles about topics related to those discussed in his speech.

While he admitted to not being a Shakespeare scholar specifically, Goldberg's solid interest in the interpretation of the female characters in "The Tempest" primarily fueled his discussion.

After summarizing the play's plot, Goldberg noticed how Miranda's speech has often been taken and given to Prospero by directors. He also noticed how students connected empowerment to Miranda's speech since there is an elevation of a female voice that appears to be an empowering moment.

However, Goldberg points out that this moment would make Miranda a colonizer like her father Prospero since she also bashed Caliban due to race and how Sycorax (Caliban's mother) is detested for her race and magical ability while Prospero's character is not, adding diversity only to the oppressors.

Goldberg analyzes colonization in the play through a black abolitionist feminist lens, meaning it is a form of feminism that thinks beyond equality between men and women and pushes further conversation about justice for race as well as gender.

The subject matter of this discussion was layered with an honest look at the often ignored brutality that people from different cultures experience. Kravetz also mentioned, "I think honestly an exposure to discussion of Women Gender and Sexuality Studies isn't something students are getting in their everyday classes. I don't think students are exposed unless they're in a club, or they seek it out."

At one point, Goldberg elaborated

on Kimberlé Crenshaw coining the term "intersectionality", which means thinking of human differences simultaneously impacted by positions of power in society.

He also made the comparison of how teachers are their own versions of Prospero in terms of having a sense of control over what their students learn, and he prides himself on teaching people to unlearn things like oppression and instead encourages for people to imagine a world without violence and the colonization of oppression.

Overall, this presentation offered commentary on William Shakespeare's "The Tempest" in order to introduce attendees to traditions and articulations of feminism which do not hold equality as the absolute mindset for thinking about gender, but as one of the many factors that need to be considered for it.

Kravetz further said, "Jesse is clearly engaged with black abolitionist feminism; I think the talk was less about 'The Tempest' than it was on black abolitionist feminism. He even calls it a radical view, and I don't see that much on campus at all."

She continued, "It's refreshing to see someone who is a true activist through his teaching and this discussion, but he's mostly looking at 'The Tempest' through the lens of black abolitionist feminism. I found it as a very refreshing stance that I feel that is kind of lacking; race ethnicity is totally lacking on this campus. We are activists through our teaching."

Melissa Kravetz will be speaking about Women's Health in Germany at the second Wednesdays with Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies event on March 11.

The Forbidden Word

by Davina Applewhite | Opinions Staff | @longwoodrotunda

Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of the author.

Black History Month aims to remember and celebrate the history of the African Americans who fought to create and maintain the rights we have today.

Arguably, we are still creating history through actions like #BlackLivesMatter or Colin Kaepernick kneeling during the National Anthem in protest to police brutality. These are forms of civil disobedience, which once played a huge role in the Civil Rights Movement that took place across America.

Because of this pivotal movement, we no longer deal with a plethora of issues that were once a part of America's racist past. For example, there are no longer segregated public areas designed to keep colored and white people separate.

But while we may have battled segregation with integration and reforms have been put in place to ensure African Americans are treated equally, other offenses are harder to regulate and completely abolish.

One, in particular, is the use (and misuse) of the n-word.

This forbidden word has started controversies, ruined careers and continues to be a topic of debate.

A major discussion that has arisen in the past is whether or not non-black individuals are permitted to say the n-word.

Though there is no true consensus, according to YouGov, the majority rule that many find the n-word offensive and believe it should not be spoken by other races.

There are a few reasons why people believe that this word should be exclusively used by black individuals, but in order to truly understand the oppressive weight the n-word holds,

we must first understand its historical origin.

Linguistically, the n-word can be traced all the way back to the Latin word "niger" meaning "black." Used in languages like French, Spanish and Portuguese, the word soon made an appearance in the United States, in the early nineteenth century, according to The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS).

During a time in the United States where slaves were owned, the n-word was added at the beginning of a slave's name in order to distinguish between them and their white counterpart with the same moniker.

Once slaves were emancipated and began seeking their rights as citizens, the n-word became a more derogatory term, used to insult rather than indicate distinction. More critically, the word was used to enforce and maintain a harmful power dynamic that kept white individuals in control. This term evolved even after slaves were given freedom and used to keep African-Americans from having the same opportunities as their white counterparts.

Famed African-American poet, Langston Hughes has even said that the word "sums up for us colored all the bitter years of insult and struggle in America."

In essence, it is a term that encompasses the overall institutionalized and systematic racism of the past and the discrimination and oppression that many still face today.

So why use it at all, you might ask?

Plain and simple, the n-word has been reclaimed. This word that once embodied discrimination and white supremacy has evolved to African-Americans, by replacing the "-er" with

a more colloquial "-a."

And because it was once used to belittle them, African-Americans flipped the script and now use this word to more commonly refer to each other in a more friendly manner—the key phrase here is "each other" as a term of endearment.

What's important for people to understand is this word still holds a lot of weight when it leaves the lips of someone who is not black.

Though African-Americans may use it in a more positive way, we currently still see the n-word being used in a demeaning manner by people of other races.

In the past decade, many celebrities have been exposed for using it, whether it be socially or maliciously. Camilla Cabello, Charlie Sheen, Jeffree Star and Madonna are among a few of the stars who've been called out for this.

With the current racial tensions that have arisen in America in the last few years, it's essential that when we see the n-word being used, we address and advise the speaker of the power and pain the word possesses.

The insulting and oppressive racial undertones that lay hidden in the word are very much brought to light when spoken by a non-black individual.

Bottom line, no matter the context, it shouldn't be said by someone who is not particularly African-American.

Whether it be used lightheartedly, as a "joke" or even when singing along to a song, the n-word is still very much seen as a racial slur when used by non-black people and if we don't hold them accountable for saying the n-word, the dark history of it will continue to live on.

Advancing their oral and communicative skills through accurate reporting at the expense of getting their foot into the industry of news and media on college campuses, student journalists are having a ten-letter word dictate their protection in the House.

Free Speech.

Now you're probably wondering as to why this topic is even being discussed, and quite frankly as am I. Student journalists are expected to inform and even entertain the campus community through accurate and credible information, in efforts to fulfill the unsolicited position as the backbone of a university. Yet their objective as the writer, to chase and report stories, seemingly have been met with the censorship and opposition, until now.

Recently celebrating Student Press Freedom Day on Jan. 29 on behalf of the Student Press Law Center to commemorate the 1988 Supreme Court historic decision of university censorship of student journalists' case, *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*.

Unequivocally silencing the works and words of student journalists, according to the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, otherwise posed as acronym FIRE, "The *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier* allowed school administrators to censor school-sponsored publications if they had "legitimate pedagogical reasons" for doing so.

And while *Hazelwood* was decided in the K-12 context, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit applied the same rationale to college campuses, permitting censorship in that context as well."

Reverting that action, contrary just this past month Virginia House lawmakers decided to take a stance in the right direction by proposing a bill that would extend free speech protections to student journalists.

Under the disguise of the House Bill 36 and Senate Bill 80, these bills were initiated by Democrat Virginia House of Delegate member, Chris Hurst (HB 36) and Danica Roem (SB 80). With a 5-3 vote, FIRE reported, "The bills would ensure that school-sponsored media — defined as "any material that is prepared, substantially written, published, or broadcast by a student journalist" at a public middle school, high schools, and universities — do not face school censorship." In addition, the bills also protect advisers

who work with a student journalist.

While the bills are designed to override and essentially reverse the effects of an outdated Supreme Court ruling, this has also created a start of a historic moment as amongst Virginia, 14 other states have enacted bills to protect the free speech of student journalists.

Yet, as this becomes an ongoing topic of conversation for Virginia House lawmakers, this is a pivotal point in history for student journalists

where the decision for free speech is up for debate, so are their words.

"Far too many student journalists have been censored by image-conscious school administrators or intimidated to self-censor or not report on 'controversial' topics that matter to their peers and communities. It is important that we stand up nationally to say, "No more!," said Student Press Law Center Executive Director Hadar Harris via SPLC.org.



Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of the author.

Celebrating Black History Month

by Savanna Makins | A&E Staff | @longwoodrotunda

Throughout the year, there are many things we celebrate: President's Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, the New Year, and many more. However, there are times when we celebrate different kinds of events such as Black History Month. As many people are aware, Black History Month runs throughout February. Famous people are recognized during this month such as Harriet Tubman, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and more modern people such as Thurgood Marshall. Today, we recognize many of these people as leaders and role models in our society and this article will go into the three previously listed people and recognize their great service to America!

Our first topic is about Harriet Tubman. Harriet Tubman was born in 1820 into slavery in Maryland. Tubman escaped to go to the North when she was only twenty-nine-years-old, and in return, helped hundreds of families in slavery escape to the North. Tubman is also known for her work as a spy for the Union Army to gather information from the Confederate Army. Even after the Civil War, Harriet Tubman didn't stop

working with newly freed slaves and even began work with the elderly. Harriet Tubman suffered many injuries in her early childhood, but it just shows her powerful background and shows her rightful of being a leader. Tubman was even buried with military honor due to all her bravery in her service with the Underground Railroad and the Union Army. Tubman is still considered one of the most influential women of all time and is still a major leader in our society today.

Moving forward about one-hundred years to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Everyone was taught about him in school and he's known for his famous quote and speech, "I have a dream!" Dr. King was a famous activist who also followed the rules of a pacifist, meaning he created no violence but protested peacefully. Born in 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia, he led the most powerful movement of his time, The Civil Rights Movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968. Dr. King was very passionate about creating a world that was equal for all and his wish came true. Dr. King was a

natural-born leader and, of course, he still holds a high influence in our society today as many people still thank him for his work today.

Now, we are still constantly changing today, and we still have high influences in our modern society that help us with that movement such as Thurgood Marshall. For those who aren't completely aware, Thurgood Marshall was the first African-American Justice to serve in the Supreme Court. Born on July 2nd, 1908, he became a Justice in 1967 and served until 1991. He went to Harvard University to get a degree in Law. Marshall passed away from Congestive Heart Failure in 1993. Now being a justice, this makes him an obvious choice for great leadership material, but he also came to be a major influence for children, showing them that they can do anything.

So many great leaders have popped up in great moments of history. As we go through this month, let us not forget those who have worked hard to change our society to make it the way it is today. We must try to keep those in mind, not just at this time of year, but all year round.



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ALBUM REVIEW

Lil Wayne digs his own grave with "Funeral"

by LeDaniel Jackson | A&E Staff | @xidjoker500



PHOTO COURTESY OF YOUNG MONEY ENTERTAINMENT AND REPUBLIC RECORDS

Lil Wayne has been in the rap game for years under the Young Money recording label. His rise in fame is a great story as he was once considered to be one of the greatest rappers of all time. However, for the past couple of years, Wayne has released an abundance of subpar to bad music.

He eventually began to gain some of his fans back with his features on songs with Tyler the Creator and A\$ap Rocky. Then he released "The Carter V" which, despite being highly anticipated, received mixed reviews.

Now he releases "Funeral" which if you turn the album cover upside down it spells Lil Wayne. The title song "Funeral" starts the album with a beautiful instrumental which includes some bass guitar and piano. The beat switches to a normal trap where Wayne delivers some witty lyrics. His flow is decent at best, however he does match the energy of the song. "Funeral" is a decent opening track and it sets the tone for the rest of the album.

"Mahogany" introduces a mellow trap beat with Wayne discussing his lavish lifestyle by mentioning Louis' bags and even visiting the Mahogany Bay. Wayne flows well with the beat while delivering some clever lyrics. "Mahogany" is one best performances by Wayne on the album, which isn't saying much since

there aren't a lot of good performances here.

"Mama Mia" begins with one of the most annoying beats on the album. The beat starts well but the impact of it diminishes over time. Wayne repeats a similar topic as he discusses his riches and his lavish activities. Wayne again delivers a nice performance with versatile flow, however the beat does make the song hard to get through.

"Bing James" is one of the best songs on the album with Wayne and Jay Rock comparing their status to LeBron James. The production provides a decent trap with the two artists flowing well. Jay Rock is the standout with his aggressive delivery and versatile flow. Wayne delivers a subpar at best chorus since he sounds uninspired while performing it.

"Trust Nobody" discusses how Adam Levine and Wayne deal with pressure. The production is subpar with a mixture of pop and hip-hop, and neither meshes well.

The performances are also subpar as the chemistry between Wayne and Adam Levine sounds forced.

"Get Outta My Head" features deceased rapper XXXTENTACION and they talk about dealing with negative thoughts in their head. It's not good with X and Wayne screaming over the lackluster production. While the topic is interesting the song does not do a good job of expressing that. Instead, it's just a song where Wayne seems lost.

"T.O" talks about how Wayne and O.T Genasis use to sell cocaine. Wayne has a decent performance by providing some funny lyrics while matching the energy of the song. O.T Genasis, on the other hand, is subpar with a verse that doesn't add anything to the song. His simple flow brings the song down a couple of notches.

Overall "Funeral" is a disappointing album from Lil Wayne especially with some of the features and production choices. The duration also did not help as it is hard to get through 24 songs. However, Wayne does have some good moments lyrically and vocally. He just needs to become a featured artist because this album needs to be put in a grave.

★ ★ ★ 2.5/5

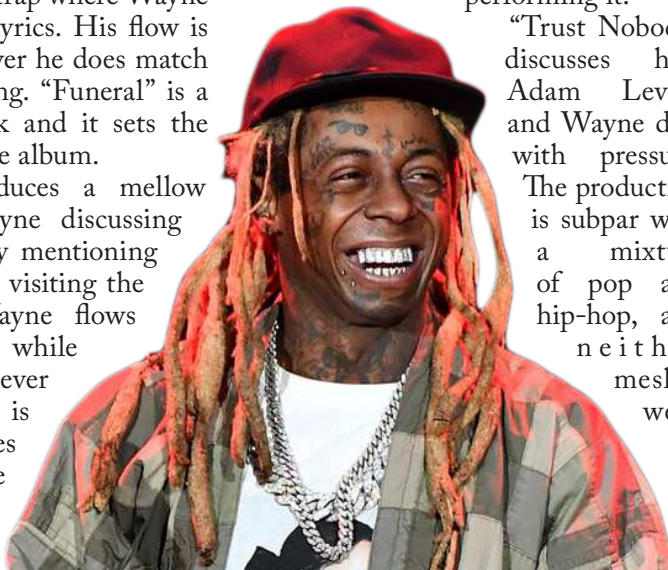


PHOTO COURTESY OF HYPEMAGAZINE.CO.ZA



THE REEL LIFE

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

BIRDS OF PREY

AND THE FANTABULOUS EMANCIPATION OF ONE HARLEY QUINN

She's definitely got moxxi. That's one thing nobody will argue against when it comes to Dr. Harlene Quinnzel, aka Harley Quinn, the kooky ex-girlfriend of the Joker and general hell raiser in her own right. Despite appearing like a lost puppy looking for the Joker in the celluloid turd that was "Suicide Squad," the past decade of comics, television and animated films have been spent establishing Harley as a force all by herself. Thankfully, "Birds of Prey" continues the streak DC started with "Shazam!" by providing a delightfully zany and scatterbrained anti-hero adventure.

Margot Robbie ("The Wolf of Wall Street," "I, Tonya"), who's also a producer on the film, clearly loves Harley. Her performance here is leagues above "Suicide Squad." She cracks wise to the camera, flips the narrative around when it suits her and constantly narrates scribbles and words across the screen. She's a delight for every moment she's on screen and her arc is quite impressive. Themes of "working together" come full circle by the time the rest of the team shows up, and Harley has made legitimate changes and it leads into the film's most action-packed act yet with strong narrative grounding.

Not everyone gets as much time devoted to them, however. Despite the title being "Birds of Prey," it's basically Harley's story. That does leave the film

feeling a bit uneven, but the rest of the cast still holds their own. Jurnee Smollett-Bell ("Friday Night Lights," "The Great Debaters") as the killer voiced Black Canary has the most equal arc and screen-time compared to Harley. Her performance is also just as varied as Robbie's and the pair really go there with their arcs.

Meanwhile Ella Jay Basco, in her film debut, as Cassandra Cain, and Mary Elizabeth Winstead ("Scott Pilgrim vs. The World," "10 Cloverfield Lane") as Huntress end up playing more comedic versions of their comic counterparts. They're still plenty fun, but they never seem to be taken that seriously. The same goes for Ewan McGregor ("Moulin Rouge!" "Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith") as Black Mask and Chris Messina ("Argo," "The Mindy Project") as Victor Zsasz. While both are menacing in individual moments, their best bits are their fantastic comedic chemistry, putting a thick layer of homoerotic cheese over their crime sprees.

If anyone gets the short end of the stick, it's Rosie Perez's ("Fearless," "Pineapple Express") Officer Montoya. Not only is she handed the most cliched and underdeveloped part of the script, she's also playing this officer incredibly ham-fistedly. Not that she doesn't get some moments to shine, she's great in the first act playing straight to Gotham's overblown shenanigans. She's just the weakest link in this flock.

Thankfully, it almost doesn't matter if there even is a weakest link, because director Cathy Yan ("Dead Pigs"), screenwriter Christina Hodson ("Bumblebee (2018)") and cinematographer Matthew Libatique ("Requiem for a Dream," "Black Swan") ground the film in a sense of pure camp and absurdity. The film is constantly flying back and forth between Harley's narration, fantasy sequences and the supposed reality of the film. It lends everything a very surreal feeling.

Similarities to films like "Deadpool" and "Pulp Fiction" are

understandable, but it's the clear personality that immediately sets the film apart from those. Often times, the audience is cut out of an important conversation because Harley was cut out of it or just wasn't paying attention. It works because the entire project is so clearly wrapped around her own psyche and perspective on these events.

One could argue that the film's heavy subjects, such as empowerment, police corruption, the male gaze, toxic relationships and more, require a more respectful hand, but given the kind of film that this is, there's something to be said for purposefully going over the top to make a point. While it might not be to everyone's taste, this state of silliness is consistent throughout the entire film, never flinching or falling prey to tonal shifts or imbalances.

The action scenes keep the bizarre absurdity, with the camera floating through car chases and fun houses with the same ease. Blood spews for every goon Harley whacks with her over-sized hammer while gracefully gliding around on her roller skates, and as she beams, it becomes clear exactly what kind of film this is.

It's the antithesis of every superhero film of the past decade. Part "Deadpool," part "Pulp Fiction," with enough blood and foul language spewing from every orifice to make both of those films proud, it feels like it should be derivative. However, it's the strong chemistry and commitment to the absurd point of view of this killer clown queen that makes this flock soar higher than its so-so character development should have allowed.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DC FILMS, LUCKYCHAP ENTERTAINMENT, KROLL & CO. ENTERTAINMENT, CLUBHOUSE PICTURES, AND WARNER BROS. PICTURES



Longwood attacker, Kaitlin Luccarelli, slows down an oncoming offensive run in Sunday's game versus the University of Richmond Spiders.

Women's Lacrosse has sights set on Big South Championship in 2020

by Nick Robinson | Sports Staff | @longwoodrotunda

The women's lacrosse team is coming off of a 2019 season where they dominated in conference play, going 5-1 in the Big South and winning their final five regular season games before losing to Winthrop by a score of 12-9 in the Big South Tournament semifinals.

Head coach Elaine Jones laid out her expectations for the 2020 season. "We always expect to finish first in conference. We got a taste of getting to the conference tournament last year and we were a little let down because we were not able to perform better. Getting to the finals is a long-term goal."

Jones added that she wants the team to be better in non-conference play this season because she believes that they started off slow and let a few games get away from them. The team was 3-7 in non-conference play in 2019 and Jones believes that they can improve that in 2020.

The team returns a majority of its starters this season, including senior

attacker Kaitlyn Luccarelli, senior defensive player Corri Calandra and sophomore attacker Nicole Fordyce, who were all given Preseason All-Big South honors.

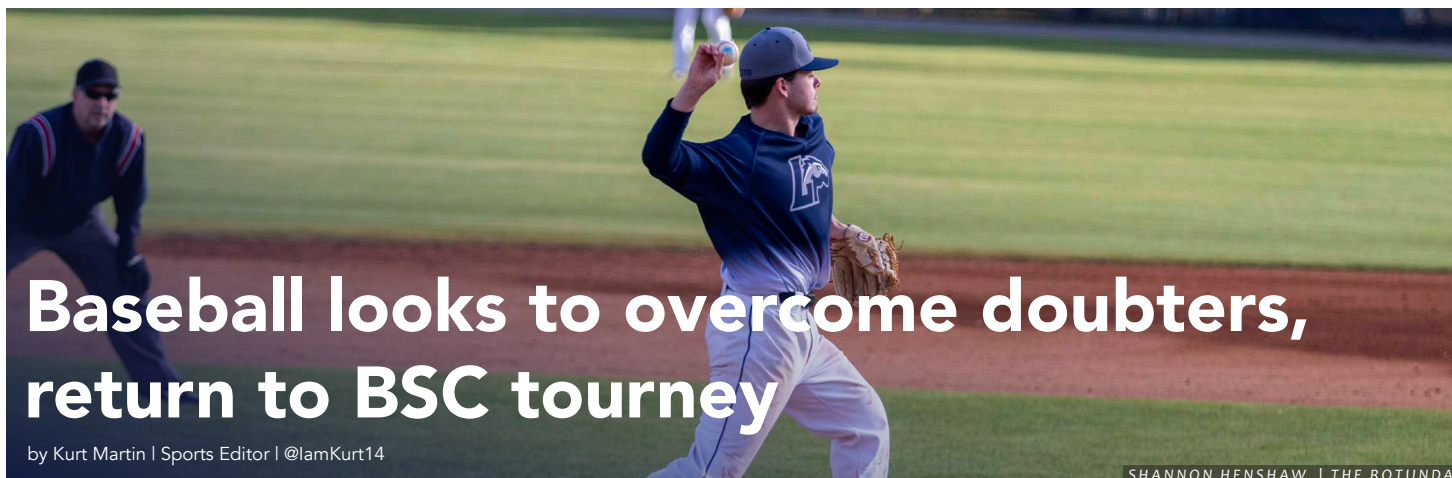
Jones spoke on the impact that these three women make to on the team. "I expect big things from them. Kaitlyn and Corri are both seniors so they're very driven on ending on a high note. All three are very capable players. We have Kaitlyn and Nikki (Fordyce) bringing it on offense and Corri holding it down on defense so we're set."

Jones also made sure to mention other players that Lancer fans should be on the lookout for this season. "On the defensive end, Olivia Zubillaga helps Corri anchor that defense. We're also excited for the return of Molly Barkman, who was out last year with an injury. Dana Joss is always a threat. Our newcomers are still coming along but we're excited about them."

A stat that did not work in the team's favor last season was the average of 12.82

goals per game given up, compared to the average of 11.41 goals scored per game. Jones remains optimistic that the team can change those numbers for the better this season. "I think it's just another year older and another year wiser for our team. We have eight seniors and they're very well-seasoned. We're looking for them to lead the way. Some of them can score goals, some of them can hold off goals and hold it down on defense. I think they're up for the challenge."

First up for the Lancers in 2020 is the Richmond Spiders, a team that won the Atlantic 10 conference last year en route to an NCAA tournament bid. Jones broke down what it would take for her team to win. "Starting off the season with a win would be great. They are challenging, but we want to focus on us and the things that we do well. We don't want to ride on what they did last year or what we did last year. It's a 0-0 game to start and we just have to put our best foot forward."



Baseball looks to overcome doubters, return to BSC tourney

by Kurt Martin | Sports Editor | @lamKurt14

SHANNON HENSHAW | THE ROTUNDA

Longwood baseball pitcher, Dominick Dercole, warms up his arm to prepare to the season ahead.

When head coach Ryan Mau first heard his team was selected 10th in the Preseason Big South Conference poll he briefly spoke to the team about it, but knew the squad as a whole would use the ranking as fuel to prove any and all doubters wrong as this season gets off the ground.

“A lot of excitement. A lot of energy. I think the focus has been really good the last couple weeks with some really crisp practices because, as we all know, it will be here before we know it. It’s right around the corner. A lot of excitement in the buildup to opening day,” said Mau.

In this point in preparation, as the season will begin on Valentine’s Day for the first of a four game set with Purdue Fort Wayne, Mau said practice is all about solidifying team chemistry and also nailing down the smaller aspects of the game.

“This is, in my opinion, our best collective group as far as how we are gelling. I’m really excited about that” said Mau. “This time of year you’re just touching some of your small game packages, your bunt defenses, your first and third, your communication, your cuts and relays, just ironing out the things on the running game...”

“Everything is in at this point when you are building that closely to the season, it’s just a matter of reviewing them and just ironing out a couple or wrinkles here-and-there,” he added.

This year’s team is looking to make a return trip to the Big South Conference tournament, as the Lancers missed out a season ago, finishing at (11-41 5-22 Big South) and 10th in the conference. Only the top nine seeds clinch a berth into the postseason dance.

Mau said making the tournament is “an absolute” for the program and the team has a “100 percent” belief that it is something they are going to do.

“It’s just a first-check box, if you will, of

many that we have,” said Mau. “So, yeah absolutely expect to be in the conference tournament and to do much more than that.”

The players, and especially those returning, echo the same sentiment and feel a chip on their shoulders to make it back. This year’s team returns 20 players, while welcoming 14 newcomers who will all need to make an impact when called upon for the club to be successful.

One of those returning players is senior second baseman Antwaun Tucker. The Chase City, Virginia native, and nephew to Longwood baseball legend Michael Tucker, said the energy and excitement of the tournament is one driving forces to make it back.

“I want to be back. I know the team wants to be back. All of those that were there, they want to be back. And (for) the freshmen, that would be a great experience for them,” said Tucker.

After batting .297 a season ago, the 2019 All-Big South Honorable Mention selection returns as the team’s leading bat, and will shift from shortstop over to second base in the field for this upcoming season, according to Mau.

The head coach also announced other changes to the Lancers’ defensive alignment for the campaign, as junior transfer Ricky Jimenez will take over Tucker’s previous role at shortstop and senior Nate Blakeney will move from second base to third base.

Mau feels these moves will place the players in positions they are more comfortable in, which would then produce more positive benefits for the team.

Alongside the position changes, Mau expressed confidence that this year’s team will be “super aggressive” when running the bases and will also have more offensive firepower than in years past.

“I expect a lot from our offensive club because they are veterans, because they have had success and because we’re young on the pitching side of things,” said Mau. “We’re

going to need to put up some runs.

With the youth on the mound, Mau said the team has an “all hands on deck” approach and each pitcher is going to have to play their role correctly to become the staff they want to be as a whole.

Now, also in his senior season like Tucker, pitcher John Gregory said he has taken more of a leadership role in the clubhouse and looked to improve his between-the-ears game in the offseason.

He said, “... last year I didn’t think I was as great a leader as I could be,” and said he has looked to get more of the younger players to feel like they fit in and belong in the program. Gregory said he was highly influenced by former Lancer standout Sammy Miller, who graduated in 2018 while John was only a sophomore.

“He set the standard of the Longwood way. Like he took all of the young guys under his wing and was just like, ‘this is how we do things here’, and he taught us what to do and what not to do in certain situations. He was just an overall great leader and I think that’s where I developed some of my leadership skills today, which was from him,” said Gregory.

In using those lessons learned, Gregory said he and his fellow teammates are looking to create a culture where everyone is a part of what the team does. He also mentioned that this year’s senior class wants to further instill that it is “unacceptable to not make the (Big South) tournament and an overall embarrassment.”

The schedule will open with 10 of 12 games at Buddy Bolding Stadium, which gives the Lancers a heightened chance for a fast start out of the gates.

Tucker said teams are simply more comfortable on their home field because there is a heightened knowledge of each thing that makes the diamond different from opposing fields, which only sounds like a small thing, but could be the difference in the game.



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