

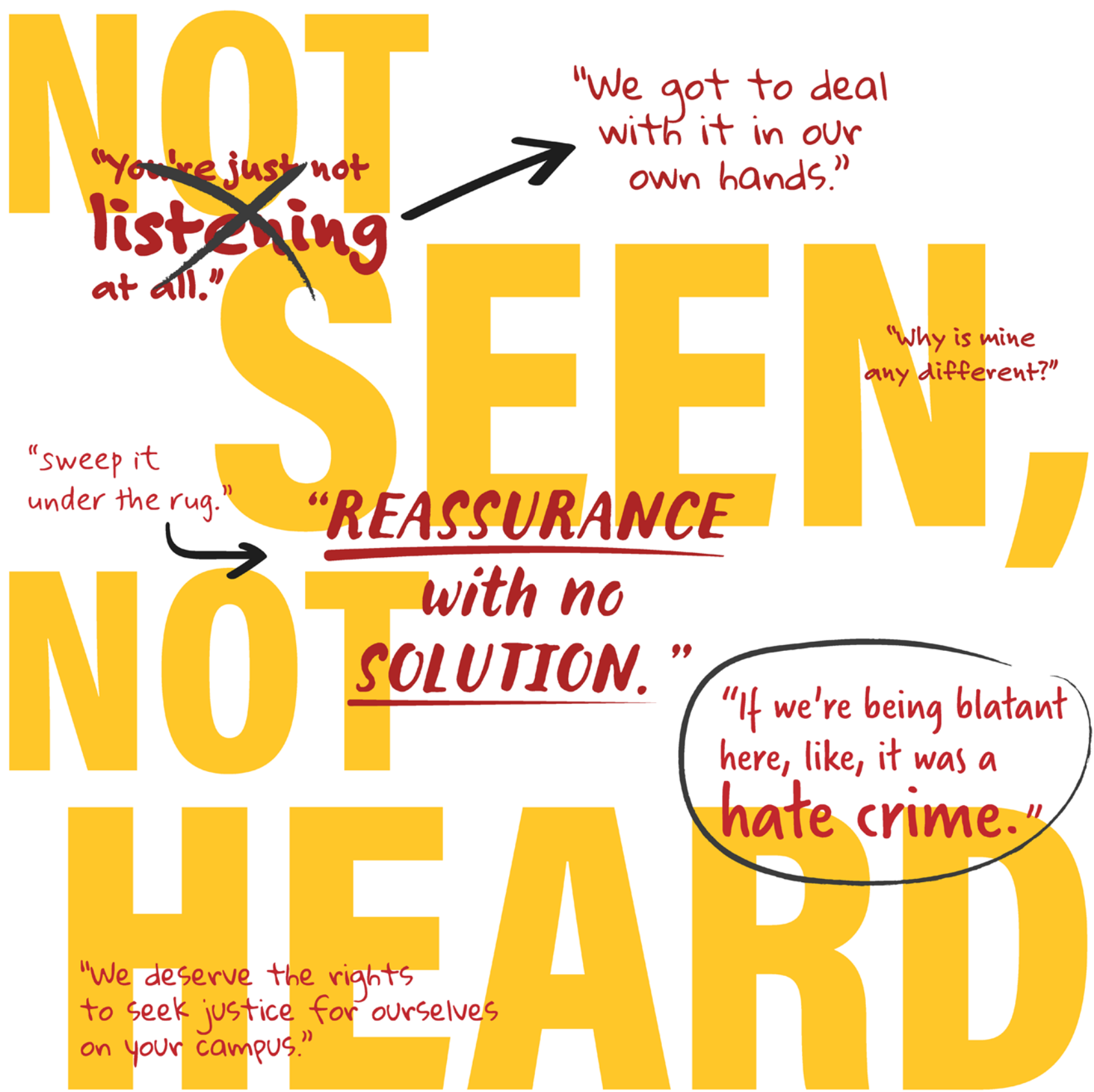


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Graphic by Thy Vo / The Sunflower

Two Black freshmen said white student committed hate crime against them on campus. Here's how Wichita State responded

BY COURTNEY BROWN
newsprojects@thesunflower.com

Caden Spaulding, a sports management freshman, regularly played on an intramural basketball team in the Heskett Center at Wichita State. He and his teammates are all Black.

On Feb. 28, Spaulding said his team was in a playoff game for intramural basketball. He said the league has a “chill, not really that competitive environment.”

Early in the game, Spaulding said he set a screen on Dawson Dreher, a white WSU graduate student on the opposing team, and Dreher grabbed his neck.

“(Spaulding) told the ref... ‘Ref, you just gonna let him grab my neck?’” Malcolm Gilmore, a freshman and Spaulding’s teammate, said. “And (Dreher) said, ‘I can do that because I’m white.’”

The Sunflower received the police report of the incident through a Kansas Open Records request. Three witnesses, including Gilmore, said a player grabbed another by the neck or the neckline of their jersey — the accounts are inconsistent.

According to Spaulding and the police report, the game’s unnamed referee said she didn’t see anything and let Dreher continue playing.

Spaulding said he, Gilmore and Dreher “got wrapped up over the ball” later in the game. When he and Gilmore let go of the ball, Dreher fell out of bounds and into the referee. Spaulding and Gilmore said that after falling out of bounds, Dreher threw the ball at Gilmore and called him the N-word.

In the police report, four witnesses besides Spaulding said they saw a player throwing the ball; one described it as intentional, and two said it was done “aggressively.”

The Sunflower reached out to Dreher multiple times via social media and email from April 4 to April 24 for an interview. Dreher did not respond. In the police report, Dreher denied

“We didn’t want to have to make this a public thing and go to The Sunflower. We went to every single possibility, every resource that the school gave us, and still nothing.”

DONOVAN MCCLELLAN
WSU psychology sophomore, Black Student Union president

saying the N-word and grabbing Spaulding’s neck.

Spaulding said players from Dreher’s team said they didn’t hear Dreher use the N-word and asked Spaulding what had happened after the incident. Spaulding said the same people were giving police statements about the incident.

According to the police report, the referee also didn’t hear the N-word. Spaulding said the referee had Dreher sit out but only for the first half of the game.

According to John Lee, the director of campus activities and recreation, those playing intramural games must take a quiz about “sportsmanship rules” beforehand, and a supervisor oversees the gym “at prime times.”

The Black Student Union (BSU) had been playing a separate basketball game in Heskett at the time. BSU member Emanuyel Brown said he asked Wesley Horner, who supervises Heskett referees, about the Heskett Center’s policies and if Dreher would be asked to leave.

According to Brown and the police report, Horner said Dreher could continue playing because he hadn’t heard him say the N-word. Horner said to police that he “was in the room when the event happened but not close enough to know what was said.”

Horner did not respond to The Sunflower’s requests for an interview.

“That just shows you at its finest, like, you’re just not listening at all,” Brown said.

Spaulding said the rest of the basketball game was played with “too much intensity” and “kinda like a violent atmosphere” from the other opposing side.

Following the game, the teams went downstairs to the main floor of the Heskett Center, where Spaulding and Gilmore addressed Dreher for saying the N-word. Spaulding said that Dreher denied using the word.

Donovan McClellan, a psychology sophomore who was recently elected BSU president, told The Sunflower he tried to calm Spaulding and Gilmore down because he initially thought WSU would ensure they “get their justice.”

While members of both teams were downstairs, along with BSU members, the police report states Dalton Sporing, whose tie to the situation is unknown, called the police.

WHEN THE POLICE CAME

Following Sporing’s call to the police at 10:08 p.m., at least eight police officers arrived at the Heskett Center that night. The incident is described as a “disturbance” in the report.

According to the police report, a large group of people were outside Heskett’s main entrance and inside the front doors.

Dalton Taylor, who is also described as the calling party in the police report, told officers the game had gotten “heated” but was solely “verbal.” This contradicts the multiple witnesses who mentioned they saw someone grabbing another player’s neck or jersey neckline or throwing the ball.

In a follow-up interview on March 1 with the police, Dreher was asked if he grabbed anyone’s neck on Feb. 28, and Dreher said he was simply “boxing out” other players.

Dreher also denied saying the

N-word and said the other group called him and his friends the N-word. Sporing said the same in his follow-up interview with the police.

Dreher said he thinks his race is why others assumed he was using derogatory language.

“(Dreher) didn’t say this originally, but he said later that we were, like, antagonizing him and calling him ‘peckerwood’ and ‘cracker,’” Spaulding said. “And I’ve never used that word in my life.”

Spaulding and Gilmore were also both interviewed by police on Feb. 28; their accounts align with what they told The Sunflower.

In the report, Spaulding and Gilmore told police they didn’t want to press charges against Dreher but that they still wanted “something done about the incident.”

Spaulding told The Sunflower he didn’t think the police were taking their situation seriously.

SENT IN CIRCLES

Following Feb. 28, Spaulding and his friends navigated multiple Wichita State resources to “seek justice” for the incident, but they said Wichita State didn’t address the discriminatory event and they didn’t think Dreher faced any meaningful consequences.

Instead, Spaulding, Gilmore and McClellan said they felt like WSU departments were sending them in circles, with Gilmore comparing it to “ring around the rosie.”

Spaulding said the Heskett Center administration first reached out to him to discuss what happened on Feb. 28.

Lee said he was aware of the incident but wasn’t allowed to comment on specific cases to The Sunflower.

After the meeting with Wichita State administration and CTAC, Spaulding met separately with CTAC, which redirected him to the police department.



Kylee Hower receives the gavel as the president of the 67th Student Government Association session from the 66th President Iris Okere. Hower ran alongside Matthew Phan as vice president. | Photo by Garima Thapa / The Sunflower

118th student body president and vice president installed

BY TRINITY RAMM
managing@thesunflower.com

The room was all smiles and applause as Kylee Hower and Matthew Phan were inaugurated as president and vice president in an official ceremony on Thursday.

Along with Hower and Phan, Lesly Hernandez, chief justice, and a new Senate were officially installed in their positions.

During her inaugural address, Hower said she is filled with “an overwhelming sense of gratitude and responsibility” as she steps into the role.

Hower thanked Noël Hawkins, her campaign manager,

Phan, and her “peers, classmates and (her) friends at Wichita State University.”

Phan was handed the gavel of the Student Senate by Sophie Martins, former student body vice president. Phan will handle Speaker of the Senate duties until the position is filled in a few weeks’ time.

Hernandez received the gavel of the Student Supreme Court from former Chief Justice Maureen Wetta.

Richard Muma, university president, and Teri Hall, vice president for student affairs, both extended their congratulations in speeches before the inauguration took place.

HATE CRIME FROM PAGE 1

In the meantime, McClellan reached out to local Black community leaders for advice. Brown, drawing on his connections from Student Government, reached out to Teri Hall, vice president for student affairs.

Brown, Spaulding, McClellan and McClellan’s brother met with Hall and CTAC to discuss the event. Gilmore said he wasn’t able to attend due to work, but he later met separately with CTAC.

During the meeting, Spaulding said that Hall tried to comfort him and provided “reassurance with no solution.”

“She was trying to sweep it under the rug, just redirect it from what (the incident) actually was,” Spaulding said. “Because if we’re being blatant here, like, it was a hate crime. Like, putting your hand on someone’s neck, calling them the N-word, like that’s a hate crime.”

According to the United States Department of Justice, hate crime laws at the federal level are when a crime is “motivated by bias against race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or disability.” The “crime” in a hate crime is often a violent crime.

McClellan said that Hall focused mainly on how Dreher said the N-word.

“(Hall) just keeps reverting back to ‘Well, First Amendment says that he can say the (N) word,’” McClellan said.

In an email statement to The Sunflower, Hall said she is saddened when any student doesn’t

feel supported by her or others on campus and that her “door remains open” to them.

Courtney McHenry, the CTAC associate vice president and university Title IX coordinator, said he couldn’t comment on potential issues or investigations.

During the meeting with Hall and CTAC, the conversation also turned toward the lack of cameras in the Heskett Center.

“So basically, it never happened,” McClellan said. “Basically, we just can’t do anything, we can’t even investigate ... because they messed up on their end and didn’t put cameras in an atmosphere that they’re over. We’ve paid to go to school. We deserve the rights to seek justice for ourselves on your campus.”

Lee confirmed there are no cameras in the Heskett, and as of April 18, he said there are no plans to install cameras, and that it would be “quite the undertaking” for a large building like Heskett.

According to Spaulding and McClellan, Hall said that they could offer Dreher diversity training, but they couldn’t force him to take it. Spaulding said the lack of guarantee is like giving Dreher “nothing at all.”

After seeing how Wichita State handled the situation, Spaulding said he changed his mind and decided to try pressing charges against Dreher. But, when meeting with the police department in late March, Spaulding said the police told him nothing could be done.

“He basically told me, ‘Well, I mean, you don’t have any bruises.’ Mind you, this (incident) was (on) Feb. 28,” Spaulding said. “(The

officer) says ... it’s just a ‘He said, she said,’ and it’s just like, there’s cases that go to court all the time off of just witnesses and just word of mouth. Why is mine any different?”

Spaulding also said that Hall had told him she would reach out again after spring break, but she didn’t, leaving Spaulding to make contact. He said he was also told the case was sent to Student Conduct, but that the office never said anything to him.

“We didn’t want to have to make this a public thing and go to The Sunflower,” McClellan said. “We went to every single possibility, every resource that the school gave us, and still nothing.”

‘OUT OF NOWHERE’: A SURPRISE MEETING

In a follow-up interview with The Sunflower, Spaulding and Gilmore said they met with Hall and CTAC again on Monday, April 22, along with McClellan, the WSU police, and Gabriel Fonseca, the interim executive director of student engagement.

Nearly two months after the initial incident, Spaulding said Hall reached out to them, which he described as a “call out of nowhere.” Brown said he thought the Wichita State administration contacted them because The Sunflower “had reached out.”

“That’s the only time they are going to do their jobs,” Brown said. “And then, lo and behold, they like to handle the situation, but in reality, I’m pretty sure they just do what they needed to do.”

Read the rest at thesunflower.com

Women’s, ethnicity and intersectional studies recommended for merger with another program, four other WSU programs put on action plans

BY TRINITY RAMM
managing@thesunflower.com

The women’s, ethnicity and intersectional studies department will no longer stand on its own within the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences if its merge plan is accepted by the Kansas Board of Regents.

Geology, physics, philosophy and forensic sciences were all recommended for action plans, which were crafted by the provost’s office, the dean’s office in the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) and the members of each department.

If women’s, ethnicity and intersectional studies (WEIS) is able to merge with another department, it cannot be triggered under program review, safeguarding it from elimination.

LAS faculty members were told about the recommendations via an email from Andrew Hippisley, LAS dean, on Monday morning. Ashlie Jack, associate vice president for institutional effectiveness, presented this progress to the Faculty Senate that afternoon.

In an email to The Sunflower, Jack said conversations with each department were “very productive and focused on telling (their) story beyond the data.”

The provost’s office and the dean’s office in LAS met with each program and planned a way forward and submitted those preliminary plans to the university program review committee.

Jack is the chair of this committee that is designed to assess academic programs and provide “faculty leadership” during annual reviews.

Provost Shirley Lefever will have 45 minutes at the academic affairs committee meeting on May

15 to present the plans to KBOR and answer questions before the board makes final decisions, which will come out in “late spring 2024,” according to Jack’s presentation.

In the fall, the previously named five academic programs were flagged for review based on four criteria:

Over a four-year period, programs need to average 25 or more junior and senior majors

Over a four-year period, programs need to average 10 or more graduates

Over a four-year period, programs need to average 51% or more of their graduates working in Kansas or Missouri

Their five-year post-graduate median salary needs to be \$38,050 or high.

In order to pass this review, programs needed to fulfill three or more of those requirements.

The future of WEIS

The current plan is to list WEIS as a field major within another department. Multiple sources compared it to international studies, which is housed in the political science department.

In a traditional major, a majority of the student’s major-specific classes would be listed under a single department that houses their major. A field major allows a student to take classes across multiple departments to count toward a single degree.

Wichita State’s women’s studies program was the first program of its kind in Kansas and is the second oldest in the country. The program was established in 1971 and the degree was first offered for the 1974-75 school year, according to an article from the June 20, 1974 edition of The Sunflower.



Ashlie Jack, associate vice president for institutional effectiveness at Wichita State, talks to the Faculty Senate on Aug. 28. | Photo by Mia Hennen / The Sunflower

Robin Henry, WEIS department chair and associate professor of history, said any kind of women’s studies program is “essential” to the university.

“I think it’s something that speaks to the basic core element of interdisciplinary studies, a recognition of the intersectionality that we all live with, and it allows people, both within marginalized groups and within the majorities, to think about people other than themselves,” Henry said.

During the Faculty Senate meeting, Jodie Hertzog, associate professor of sociology and WEIS affiliate, said the department attempted to create an action plan, but the provost’s office said that the department would face elimination.

Hippisley clarified that the provost’s office and dean’s office felt like KBOR would eliminate the program if they came to them with an action plan rather than a merge plan.

Chase Billingham, at-large senator from sociology, questioned why WEIS was part of the program review in the first place. Only programs five years or older were eligible for this review.

“It is not true that it is the same program,” Billingham said. “The program underwent a several-year reformulation on which several faculty members set to reenvision the program. It is effectively an entirely new vision of that program.”

WEIS underwent its name change in fall 2023, but according to Jack, it is still under the same Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code, a system used across the United States to organize academic programs.

Because of this, WEIS inherited the age of the original women’s studies program.

Henry said she would have liked “a few years” to see where the “new reformulation” of the program could have gone but that

sentiment didn’t “have a lot of traction” in conversations after the program review results.

Should women’s ethnicity and intersectional studies merge with another department within LAS, Henry would still oversee the program as director.

Because a final decision from the Kansas Board of Regents has not been made, WEIS’ new home has yet to be determined.

Due to the nature of this academic review process, there is still the possibility that KBOR could decide to eliminate the program. Henry said the provost’s office and dean’s office is confident that the merge plan is “viable.”

“It looks (to KBOR) as if, first of all, Wichita State is doing something, that we are all, as a university community, taking enrollment and efficiency numbers seriously and considering what we offer to students and the ways in which we offer it to students,” Henry said.

MISSION

The Sunflower — both in print and online — will be a timely resource of information about the Wichita State University community. It will report on news, issues, activities, academics and athletics, in addition to offering a forum for discussion, reviews and commentary. It will also be an effective learning experience for students, who will have the final authority over what is published.

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EDITOR IN CHIEF
Mia Hennen
editor@thesunflower.com

ADVERTISING/DESIGN MANAGER
Thy Vo
admanager@thesunflower.com

MANAGING EDITOR
Trinity Ramm
managing@thesunflower.com

NEWS EDITOR
Courtney Brown
newsprojects@thesunflower.com

NEWS EDITOR
Allison Campbell
newsprojects@thesunflower.com

ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR
Taliyah Winn
assistantnews@thesunflower.com

ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR
Salsabila Attaria
arts@thesunflower.com

SPORTS EDITOR
Melanie Rivera-Cortez
sports@thesunflower.com

ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR
Jacob Unruh
assistantnews@thesunflower.com

OPINION EDITOR
Sascha Harvey
opinion@thesunflower.com

PHOTO EDITOR
Kristy Mace
photo@thesunflower.com

PODCAST EDITOR
Jacinda Hall
podcast@thesunflower.com

CONTACT US

019 Elliott Hall
1845 N. Fairmount Ave.
Campus Box 134
Wichita, KS 67260-0134

EDITORIAL
Mia Hennen: 316-978-6906
editor@thesunflower.com

ADVERTISING
Thy Vo: 316-978-6905
admanager@thesunflower.com

FACULTY ADVISOR
Amy DeVault: 316-978-6052
amy.devault@wichita.edu

CORRECTIONS

The Sunflower is committed to accuracy in its publications. If you find an error in any of its publications, please email the editor at editor@thesunflower.com immediately.



GOING GREEN

On Earth Day, students gathered in the Rhatigan to participate in various activities.

Sean Wentling, dressed up as planet Earth, weaves cotton candy to hand out as part of the Earth Day celebration in the Rhatigan Student Center. Wentling is the current president of the Green Group on campus. | Photos by Garima Thapa / The Sunflower



Justine Moran-Buendia paints pot at the Earth Day event, held by Green Group. At the event, free food and crafting activities were offered.



Carrie Robinson poses for a photo, dressed up as the Lorax to celebrate Earth Day on April 22. Robinson, a senior at WSU, is the vice president of Green Group.



A Green Group member wears a leaf crown to celebrate Earth Day on April 22.

‘Doesn’t need to be any harder’: oSTEM club creates safe space for LGBTQIA+

BY AVERY GATHRIGHT
averygathright@outlook.com

When nonbinary student Kenzie Brant came to Wichita State to study aerospace engineering, they came to the same realization that many students like them do: the majority of STEM students seem to be straight men.

Out in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (oSTEM) is one national organization trying to help queer STEM students find their place among peers.

Brant, an inaugural member and president of the group at WSU, explained how having “classmates (who) are generally going to be cis het men” can be alienating for queer students. So, they started the chapter of the group on campus during their sophomore year.

“I remember going to my adviser and just saying, ‘I don’t feel like I have a space,’” Brant said. “I feel like there are two separate parts of me — my engineer identity and then my queer identity — and it just feels like I don’t really belong anywhere right now.”

The adviser asked Brant if they had heard of oSTEM, a social group for LGBTQ+ students in STEM, which immediately intrigued them.

“When she was explaining (oSTEM), I just remember sitting there like, ‘This sounds cool. This sounds interesting, and I want to see this done,’” Brant said.

oSTEM Vice President Bri

“It’s been really good to have made those connections with people on campus who understand me, who don’t think it’s weird.”

BRI PFEIFER
oSTEM vice president

Pfeifer described the club’s intended purpose as a sanctuary for queer students with shared interests.

“It is a safe space for students to find like-minded individuals who are in similar academic fields, and have similar identities to kind of form those bonds and feel less alone on campus,” Pfeifer said.

Pfeifer, who uses she/they pronouns and identifies as an asexual lesbian, enjoys having a group of people who understand her.

“I didn’t have a lot of friends in the community in high school because I was still kind of figuring out who I was,” Pfeifer said. “It’s been really good to have made those connections with people on campus who understand me, who don’t think it’s weird.”

The group’s meetings generally involve some sort of activity or game. Sometimes, these are STEM-related activities, like making paper airplanes and foil boats. However, more often than not, the activities are designed to help students decompress and connect with one another. Past events have included video games, crafting with Perler beads, origami and more.

According to Brant, the group

has also worked with other LGBTQ+ and engineering-focused campus groups to create inclusive events that allow students to relax in a safe space.

“We have collaborated in the past with Spectrum (LGBTQ & Allies) and some other engineering organizations for an end-of-the-year organization party, just sort of to relax and let some steam off and just have some fun,” Brant said. “One of my main jobs is just like (making) connections and keeping people connected as much as I can.”

oSTEM member Sadie Frye enjoys the calm environment of meetings.

“The atmosphere is very positive, very chill,” Frye said. “It’s smaller than Spectrum, and it’s also a little chillier than Spectrum because Spectrum can get loud and a little chaotic sometimes.”

Anyone is welcome to join the group, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation or major, and Brant wants oSTEM to create a sense of community.

“It’s difficult to get through STEM majors,” Brant said. “It doesn’t need to be any harder by feeling like you’re the odd one out for being weird. And so I genuinely hope that people have gotten something like that out of this.”

Anyone interested in learning more about the group can attend meetings every other Wednesday in the Rhatigan Student Center or visit its page on ShockerSync.

The group can also be found on Instagram @wsu_ostem.

Victoria Owens selected as new speaker of the senate

BY ALLISON CAMPBELL
news@thesunflower.com

After more than two hours of presentation, debate and deliberation, Student Sen. Victoria Owens was installed as the new speaker of the senate during Wednesday night’s Senate meeting. Owens was the only candidate who did not anticipate being nominated for the position.

Four candidates, an abnormally high number for speaker of the senate elections, were nominated by members of the Student Senate for the role.

Owens was nominated for the position by Sen. Evelyn Lewis, who expressed her support and confidence in Sen. Owens to guide the Senate through her years of experience in important SGA roles.

Newly confirmed Sen. Michael Miller nominated At-Large Sen. Jasmine Peng, citing her experience in the Student Senate as well as her ability to “uplift and maintain new senators.”

Sen. Emanuyel Brown recommended Sen. AJ Haynes for the position. Brown, who spoke in Haynes’ favor, said he was a “true leader” and more than capable of applying his vision of inclusion and connection for the Senate.

Sen. Connor Pore, another newly confirmed senator, nominated new Sen. Scott Recheck, who gained popularity during the student body president and vice president elections among students on Yik

Yak and fraternity life. While he is new to the Senate, Recheck said that he still hopes to “make a difference” in his community through his passion for student government.

When it came time for debate, the candidates were asked to leave the room so senators could discuss freely. Several expressed their concerns regarding Recheck assuming the position, claiming that he wouldn’t have the necessary experience or understanding of the SGA constitution and bylaws to fulfill the role properly.

When it came time for the first full Senate vote, Haynes and Recheck were eliminated as candidates after receiving fewer votes than Peng and Owens. The Senate entered a second round of presentations and debate, in which Owens emerged victorious with 23 votes. Peng received eight votes and newly installed Sen. Olivia Gallegos abstained.

Student Body Vice President Matthew Phan swore in Owens with a pledge to uphold the student body constitution and act on behalf of the students of Wichita State.

During the same Senate meeting, 66th session Student Body Treasurer Jia Wen Wang was reappointed as the treasurer for the 67th session with support from Student Body President Kylee Hower and Sen. Peng.

Owens closed out the first meeting of the 67th session to raucous applause with several giving a standing ovation.

The Senate will reconvene next week on May 1.



Photo courtesy of Wichita State Athletics

Men's golf nabs podium finish at AAC Championships

BY OWEN PROTHRO
owenprothro@gmail.com

Wichita State's men's golf team traveled to the Pelican Golf Club in Belleair, Florida, from Friday, April 19 to Sunday, April 21, to compete in the American Athletic Conference Championship. The Shockers finished third overall out of 12 teams with 842 total strokes.

It was the highest-ever finish for Wichita State at the AAC tournament.

Junior Michael Winslow was Wichita State's best performer, as he tied for fourth place with 207 overall strokes.

The University of South Florida shot 828 to win its sixth conference championship since the 2013-14 season.

ROUND ONE

The Shockers shot 279 in the opening round, taking an early second place.

Winslow made four birdies en route to a 68, two strokes from the lead.

Seniors Blake Lorenz and Zach Sokolosky each shot 69 in round one. Lorenz made five birdies, and Sokolosky went without a bogey on the front nine.

ROUND TWO

Wichita State dropped to a tie at fourth place after shooting 285 in round two.

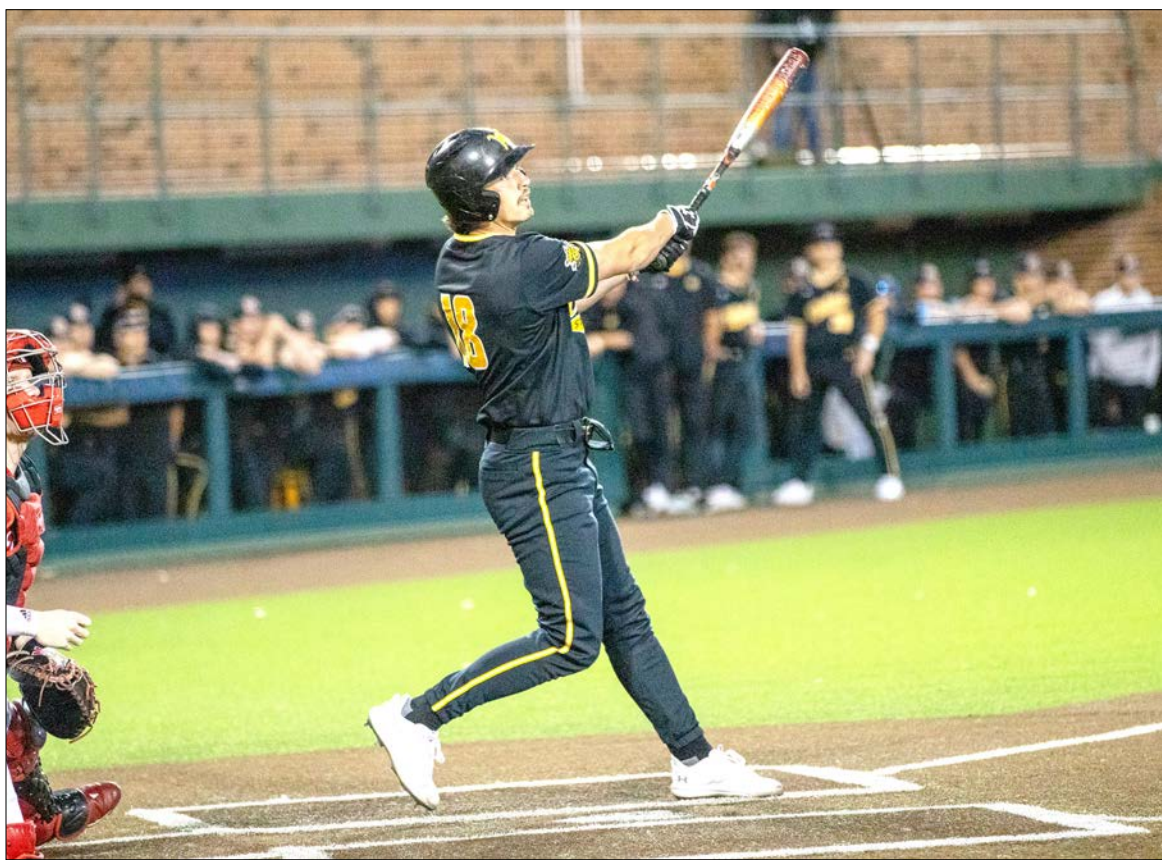
Junior Lucas Scheufler and Lorenz both shot 70, combining for five birdies. Sokolosky shot 72 and painted his scorecard with seven pars, five birdies, five bogeys and a double bogey.

ROUND THREE

In round three, the Shockers shot their best round of the tournament at 278 to find their spot on the final leaderboard.

Winslow shot 66, going bogey-free on the front nine to decide his final position. Sokolosky shot 70 and tied for 14th place.

With this, the 2023-24 season for Wichita State's men's golf has concluded.



Jordan Rogers bats for Wichita State on March 12. | Photo by Garima Thapa / The Sunflower

Jordan Rogers' positivity helps him overcome sophomore slump

BY JACOB UNRUH
assistantsports@thesunflower.com

During a drastic sophomore slump last season that knocked him out of the starting lineup, Wichita State baseball second baseman Jordan Rogers never lost his trademark positivity that has made him loved in the Shocker dugout.

After a sweep of East Carolina in late April 2023, Rogers was recorded dancing on a ping-pong table in Wichita State's locker room while his teammates cheered him on. As Rogers puts it, that type of energy is "just who I am."

"I bring positivity, just good vibes," Rogers said. "I'm always smiling and stuff. You'll never see me mad or not talking to anybody ... Whenever I show up to the field, I think that I bring people up."

During his freshman year with the Shockers, Rogers slashed .307/.383/.393 at the plate and started 34 of Wichita State's 53 games. In his sophomore season, Rogers declined to a miserable .102 average and saw his playing time sliced to a third of what it was the previous year.

This year, Rogers has rebounded to surpass his impressive freshman season. Currently, he's slashing .308/.424/.510 while anchoring the middle of Wichita State's lineup on a routine basis.

"Overcoming last year has meant a lot to me this year," Rogers said. "I didn't play good ... Having the year that I'm having right now means a lot to me, because I've worked really hard for it."

NOT TAKING THE EASY WAY OUT

Prior to his sophomore season, Rogers' grandfather, who was

“Whenever I show up to the field, I think that I bring people up.”

JORDAN ROGERS
Junior second baseman

a father figure in his life, died. Rogers said this, on top of other familial issues, left him "in a mixed state of mind."

"(I) had a lot of stuff not going for me, and I wasn't really able to park that all outside the field, and (I) kind of brought it with me inside the field," Rogers said.

During an offseason that saw a head coach transition for Wichita State with Brian Green stepping in to replace interim coach Loren Hibbs, Rogers joined many of his teammates in entering the transfer portal.

Rogers had a conversation with Green over the summer and, after hearing Green's emphasis on team culture, was convinced to stay on the team. Rogers referred to almost transferring after last season as "the easy way out."

"It's easy to leave instead of just doing what's hard and doing what's uncomfortable ... it just made sense to stay," Rogers said. "People do what they have got to do. But for me, I just feel like I had to make a name for myself again."

Green said Rogers was very transparent about last season's off-field struggles during their initial conversation, which meant a lot to Green.

"As soon as players do that with coaches ... you've got somebody who's willing to trust you," Green said. "And I think that whenever you get that, I just think you're going to find players who're going to be successful ... And I think

being upfront enables him to be aware of it and be aware of his mindset."

'KEEP BELIEVING IN YOURSELF'

According to Green, Rogers was "crazy good" in the fall season and carried that over to the spring.

Rogers said he adjusted in mindset by simplifying his approach at the plate and maintaining self-confidence.

"I'm playing comfortable," Rogers said. "I'm playing loose; I'm not playing timid or tense. I'm just going out there and being myself."

Green said Rogers is "scratching the surface of how good he can be" on the field. Off the field, Rogers is one of the primary leaders in the locker room — which was instrumental in forming the team's culture around the new coaching staff.

"Jordan is one of the centerpiece people that ... essentially from day one just said, 'We're going to be the leaders of this team,'" Green said. "And they've done that through optimism and being positive."

Rogers has been through the emotional highs and lows of baseball, from an impressive freshman year to his year two struggles to his resurgent junior campaign. Rogers has used his experiences to impart some important lessons to the new people on the team.

"I've talked to a lot of guys this year who started out the game kind of sluggish," Rogers said. "I'm like, 'Just move on.' You're going to have games where you just play like crap, and you're going to have a week where you don't feel good ... You just got to move on and keep grinding and keep believing in yourself."

Baseball loses four straight vs. ranked opponents

BY JACOB UNRUH
assistantsports@thesunflower.com

Wichita State baseball battled with its highest-ranked opponent of the season over the weekend. The Shockers gave up a seven-run lead in game two and a three-run lead in game three against the No. 9-ranked East Carolina University (ECU) en route to a sweep.

GAME ONE

Wichita State fell short of a comeback in the series opener on Friday, falling 6-4 to the Pirates.

Senior Caden Favors picked up the loss on the mound for Wichita State, dropping his season record to 5-4. Senior Dayvin Johnson led the way at the plate for WSU, going two-for-four with a double.

GAME TWO

Wichita State played a Saturday doubleheader against the Pirates. In the afternoon game, the Shockers scored seven runs in the third inning but could not plate anyone else, losing 11-7.

Wichita State sported a balanced offensive attack in the first game, with eight different batters

reaching base with a hit. Five different pitchers took the mound for the Shockers, with sophomore Caleb Anderson picking up the loss after entering the game in the fourth and giving up three runs.

GAME THREE

In the evening game on Saturday, Wichita State took another early lead but still lost, 11-4.

Junior Mauricio Millan went three-for-five at the plate and scored a run. Freshman Tommy LaPour got the start and the loss on the mound for the Shockers, giving up five runs in 4 2/3 innings.

VS. OKLAHOMA

No. 18 ranked University of Oklahoma completed a season-series sweep over Wichita State baseball with a win in Norman, 3-1.

The Shockers' losing streak extends to five games, dropping their season record to .500 at 21-21. Oklahoma is heading the opposite direction with eight straight wins and a 25-14 record.

The Shockers rolled out nine pitchers on April 23, all of whom



Mason Munz walks back to the dugout after the end of the fourth inning on April 9 against OSU. | Photo by Kristy Mace / The Sunflower

largely kept the Sooners in check, but a lack of hitting from the offense prevented Wichita State from securing the win.

Junior Jordan Rogers led off the fourth with a solo homer, but that was all the offense Wichita State could muster.

Wichita State outhit Oklahoma, with five hits for Wichita State and only three for the Sooners in the

game. No Wichita State pitcher faced more than six batters, with sophomore pitcher Daniel Zang remaining in the game the longest at four outs and six batters faced. The Shockers will look to end their losing streak over the weekend in Eck Stadium when they take on Tulane University in a three-game series. The first pitch is scheduled for Friday at 6 p.m.

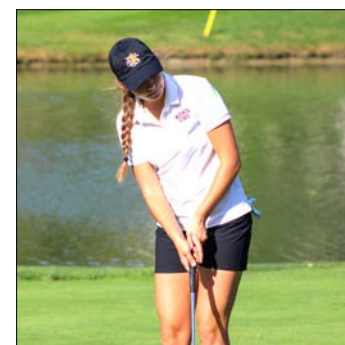


Photo courtesy of Wichita State Athletics

Women's golf places ninth at AAC Championship

BY OWEN PROTHRO
owenprothro@gmail.com

The Wichita State women's golf team traveled to the Southern Hills Plantation Club in Brooksville, Florida, from Monday, April 15 to Wednesday, April 17, to compete in the American Athletic Conference Championship. The Shockers finished in ninth place out of 12 schools, totaling 900 strokes.

Sophomore Kate Tilma tied for 25th, shooting a 223 and was Wichita State's top individual performer.

Southern Methodist University won the conference title for the second time in a row after shooting 843 as a team.

ROUND ONE

The Shockers were alone in eighth place after shooting a 294 in round one. Sophomore Brooklyn Benn led the charge, shooting 72, even par.

Redshirt freshman Lauren Thiele and Tilma each shot 73 to open up their tournaments. Senior Madison Slayton and sophomore Mackenzie Wilson both shot 76.

ROUND TWO

After round two, Wichita State maintained its eighth place after shooting a 298.

Thiele and Tilma matched each other's round two scores at 71, one under par.

ROUND THREE

In the final round of the conference championship, the Shockers shot a 308 total, dropping a position on the final leaderboard.

Benn finished tied for 38th place after shooting a 75 in round three. Thiele tied for 38th place after shooting an 83.

The 2023-24 season for Wichita State's women's golf team has concluded.

Rowing wins awards in SIRA competition

BY JACINDA HALL
podcast@thesunflower.com

The Shocker Rowing team returned home after first-place finishes this weekend at the Southern Intercollegiate Rowing Association Regatta at Melton Hill Lake in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

On Saturday, Austin Weston placed 19th in the men's varsity 8+ time trial with a time of 5:45.541, advancing him to the D final, where he took first place with a time of 6:37.679.

Andrew Bobbitt took 10th in the Men's 1X Time Trial with a time of 8:33.073, advancing him to the B final. In the final, he took third with a 9:27.947 time.

In the women's varsity 8+ (club) time trial, Maureen Wetta took third place with a 6:26.105, advancing her to the semifinals. She took second in both the women's varsity 8+ club, Semi 2, and A final with times of 7:09.386 and 7:12.652 behind top 10-ranked Clemson University.

Wichita State took 11th overall in the women's second varsity 8+ time trial with a time of 7:31.460.

The women took fourth overall in the women's second varsity 8+ B final with an 8:14.113 time.

Shocker Rowing will be back in action at the Shocker Rowing Boathouse for the Plains Regional Regatta on Sunday, May 5.



Theodora Chantava serves and wins a three-set 4-6, 6-0, 6-1 against Louisiana Tech on April 13. | Photo by Garima Thapa / The Sunflower

Women's tennis knocked out in second round of AAC Championship

BY JACOB UNRUH
assistantsports@thesunflower.com

The Wichita State women's tennis team faced two conference foes they'd lost to earlier in the season during the American Athletic Conference championship tournament in Dallas over the weekend.

As a seven seed, the Shockers knocked off the 10-seeded University of Tulsa on Thursday, but were narrowly beaten by two-seed University of North Carolina at Charlotte the following day.

VS. TULSA

Wichita State picked up its first win at the AAC championship tournament since 2019 on Thursday, sweeping Tulsa, 4-0.

In doubles, the teams split victories on courts two and three, which left the result down to the first court, where graduate student Jessica Anzo and freshman Kristina Kudryavtseva rallied from down 4-2 in the tiebreak point to win, 7-4.

Anzo and freshman Xin Tong Wang and Theodora Chantava delivered quick wins in singles to seal the victory for the Shockers.

Women's tennis earned its first win against the Golden Hurricane since 2019, ending a streak of six consecutive losses that included a defeat in the Sheldon Coleman Tennis Complex on April 8.

VS. CHARLOTTE

Wichita State's season ended on Friday in the quarterfinal match against Charlotte, 4-3.

For the second consecutive game, the doubles point was won by Wichita State, 2-1. This time, it came down to Chantava and freshman Giorgia Roselli, who prevailed, 6-4, on court one.

In singles, the lead shifted back and forth between the Shockers and 49ers. Charlotte took the lead, 3-2, after a win on court one, but Anzo tied up the match with a two-set victory.

With the teams locked in a 3-3 tie, all eyes turned to Roselli on court five. Roselli won the first set after a 7-3 tiebreak. She was defeated in set two but took a 4-1 lead in the deciding third set.

Freshman Shona Nakano won the remaining five games for Charlotte to clinch the victory, 6-4.

Wichita State ends its season with a 13-10 record, an improvement over its 12-10 season the previous season.



Taylor Sedlacek bats at the game against UAB at Wilkins Stadium. WSU won 9-1. | Photo by Garima Thapa / The Sunflower

Softball takes two wins in home series against the University of Alabama at Birmingham

BY MELANIE RIVERA-CORTEZ
sports@thesunflower.com

In its Taylor Swift-themed night, Wichita State lost against the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), but was able to come back in its next two games over the weekend to win the series.

The Shockers improved to 21-19 overall, catching UAB in the conference at 12-9.

GAME ONE

Over the weekend, the Shockers added their fourth loss in a row in a blank space scoreboard at Wilkins Stadium as Wichita State was not able to make any runs against the Blazers.

A double from senior Addison Barnard and a single from red-shirt senior Laine Brown's single were the only hits for Wichita State all night.

UAB started strong in the first inning and placed its first two batters on the bases. After a bunt, the Blazers put their runners into scoring positions and capitalized with two runs. Another run in the sixth added comfort to the Blazer lead.

Junior pitcher Alison Cooper found her groove after the first two UAB runs and managed to strike out 12 Blazers, but without any run support, she still picked up the loss. Cooper finished the night with three runs on four hits in five innings.

GAME TWO

Wichita State found its groove on Saturday when it defeated UAB, 9-1 in a six-inning run-rule victory.

The Shockers put three runs across in the bottom of the first with back-to-back doubles from redshirt senior Bailey Urban and sophomore Sami Hood.

Wichita State added four more runs in the bottom of the second starting with a homer from Barnard and an RBI from Hood.

UAB remained scoreless until the top of the fourth when junior Lindsey Smith hit a solo home run, 7-1.

After three scoreless innings, the Shockers added two more runs at the bottom of the sixth. Following CC Wong's double, Barnard hit another homer which allowed them to end the game, 9-1.

Senior pitcher Lauren Howell

tossed a complete game and allowed three hits and two walks with six strikeouts.

GAME THREE

In the final game of the series, Wichita State defeated the Blazers 5-0 on Sunday morning.

Another scoreless first inning for UAB set the Shockers on the path to success, as in the bottom of the inning Wichita State scored two to set the tone of the game. Taylor Sedlacek hit a homer to score her and Wong.

The Shockers doubled their lead in the second as Wong hit a double to center that allowed junior Krystin Nelson and freshman Mila Seaton to run home.

Wong would add a home run to make the score 5-0 in the bottom of the fifth.

Freshman pitcher Chloe Barber found her groove in the series, tossing a complete game shutout with 15 strikeouts, just one short from her single-game record of 16. Barber allowed three hits and five walks.

Wichita State softball will travel to Denton, Texas, to face off against the University of North Texas from April 26 through April 28.

Basketball signs three commits, announces Virgin Islands trip

BY MELANIE RIVERA-CORTEZ
sports@thesunflower.com

Wichita State women's basketball head coach Terry Nooner added three new players to next season's roster on Friday; senior Taylor Jameson, sophomore Jasmine Peaks and sophomore Maimouna Sissoko.

Jameson, a Wichita native, will transfer to Wichita State after playing four seasons for George Mason University. Jameson, a guard, has scored 1,033 total points and put up

double figures in points 48 times during her career.

Peaks will join the Shockers from Indian River State College, a junior college in Florida. During her time at Indian River State, she made 81.3 percent of her free throws, started in 28 games last season and averaged 11.4 points per game.

A transfer from Cloud County Community College, Sissoko set the single-season rebound record for that school with 392 rebounds last season. As a forward, she averaged 12.6

rebounds and helped lead the team with 16.5 points per game, shooting 44.6% from the field.

Four former Wichita State players; senior guards Ambah Kowcun and Jeniah Thompson, junior guard Raissa Nsabua and freshman center Sophia Goncalves remain unsigned in the transfer portal.

Sophomore forward Daniela Abies announced she is committing to the University of Miami on Monday afternoon.

On Wednesday, the women's basketball team announced it

will travel to compete in the 2024 U.S. Virgin Islands Foreign Tour from July 28 through August 2.

The team will arrive in St. Thomas on July 28 and are set to play two games, one on July 30 and July 31.

The teams will stay in a four-star resort hotel and go on multiple sightseeing tours.

In a press release, Nooner said the trip will help the team bond and give the players valuable insights on and off the court.

Wichita State freshman pitcher Tyler Dobbs finds his rhythm on the mound

BY OWEN PROTHRO
owenprothro@gmail.com

At the start of Wichita State's baseball season, freshman pitcher Tyler Dobbs began to turn heads that he was the real deal. The 6-foot-3-inch lefty worked from being a reliever to a conference-game starter.

Pitching coach Anthony Claggett said that Dobbs' early-season showing against Oral Roberts University opened up the eyes of the coaching staff. Dobbs pitched five complete innings, gave up one hit and struck out four batters after coming in relief.

"The opportunity to pitch in length, in a relief role during that outing, gave us a good vision to say, 'Okay, Tyler can start,'" Claggett said. "That was a big moment for him and gave us some more confidence to put him in the role he's in now."

Thirteen appearances later, Dobbs holds a 5-3 record on the

mound with a 3.57 ERA, 37 strikeouts and he has held his opponents' batting average to just .217.

"Honestly, I'm just playing loose," Dobbs said. "I've had a couple of outings where it didn't go my way, and they scored a couple runs. When that happens I'm like, 'Okay, I need to make sure I lock in here and there's a lot of game left,' and I keep pitching. I let my talent do the job."

Before his early success as a Shocker, Dobbs found his knack for baseball during high school. Growing up, he said he was always an athletic kid, playing football and basketball until eighth grade and switching to baseball during high school.

Dobbs grew up in Lewisville, Texas, which is 24 miles northwest of Dallas. It was during his childhood that he said his love for baseball grew, and he and a group of neighborhood friends would play what they called "tennis baseball."



Tyler Dobbs about to throw on the bottom of the fifth inning on March 26 against OSU. | Photo by Bryan Chavez / The Sunflower

Dobbs attended Hebron High School, where he was ranked the No. 27-ranked pitcher and No. 245-ranked player in Texas, according to Perfect Game. As a junior, he was named Honorable Mention All-District, and as a senior, he was

named Second Team All-District, bolstering a 1.54 ERA.

Through ups and downs, Dobbs said his mom has been his biggest supporter, and he often goes to her for motivation.

"The night before a game ...

she'll call and talk to me about, 'Hey, you just need to be calm, just breathe whenever something's not going your way,'" Dobbs said.

As Dobbs continues to develop as a player, Claggett said that hitting the weight room will exponentially grow his game, adding velocity to his fastball and more deception in his off-speed pitches.

"I think it's going to be really exciting when Tyler puts on 20 to 25 pounds," Claggett said. "The looseness of his arm, the way his body works; when there's strength behind it, ... I think you're going to be looking at something pretty special ... the sky's the limit on him."

Claggett said Dobbs' ceiling is "who knows?"

"We keep telling him this ... but stay humble," Claggett said. "Keep your head down, work and the next thing you know, you'll look up and meet your dreams ... the ceiling is inevitable, and we'll see what happens."



Freshman Vanja Hodzic prepares to hit the ball at Coleman Tennis Complex on April 1. | Photo by Garima Thapa / The Sunflower

Men's tennis concludes AAC bid against Tulsa

BY MELANIE RIVERA-CORTEZ
sports@thesunflower.com

Wichita State men's tennis fell to the University of Tulsa in the first round of the American Athletic Conference Championship Tournament. The Shockers traveled to the Michael D. Case Tennis Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on Thursday afternoon, where they were defeated 4-1.

To start the doubles match, sophomore Richey King and graduate student Misha Kvantaliani fell 6-2 on court one.

At court three, sophomores Luke Bracks and Alejandro Jacome fought a tight match, rallying from a 4-1 deficit to tie it 6-6, before going on to claim victory, 7-5.

Vanja Hodzic and Marcelo Sepulveda were tied 5-5 on court two. They went on to split the next two points and send the doubles point to a tie break. In the tiebreak, Hodzic and Sepulveda won four of the final five points to claim victory, 7-3.

In singles, the Golden Hurricanes won against King, Bracks and Hodzic. Kvantaliani was the last to keep hope alive but ultimately fell against Tulsa's No. 82 ranked Pierce Rollins.

With this, Wichita State men's tennis ended the season with a 5-18 record.



Letter to the Editor: Your network really is your net worth

From the moment I stepped foot on Wichita State's campus, the phrase "Network is your net worth" has been drilled into my brain. I remember Dr. Jeff Noble of the Sports Management department offering me this important piece of advice when I first visited campus. I understood the comment in theory but was curious how it would play out in my academic career. After a few recent experiences, I think I've begun to find out.

As a sports management major, the importance of building meaningful relationships in the industry has always been stressed to me. Professors were adamant that it was important to try to connect with as many professionals as early and often as possible.

The benefits of having a large network was something I got to see firsthand growing up. My mother worked in college administration, primarily as a dean and vice president. My mom created a large network that she was able to use to benefit her students. She was always reaching back and finding ways for former students to help new ones.

Witnessing these people continue to pop in and out of her life, almost exclusively with good stories and experiences, has left a profound impression on me. Seeing the incredible benefit of what a large network can do has really shaped my mindset and shown me the importance of developing and sustaining relationships.

From March 19-27, I had the privilege of participating in an internship with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) helping to coordinate their national basketball championship tournament in Kansas City.

This hands-on experience transcended the classroom. It offered a dynamic environment where the ideas from the classroom met real-world application, allowing me to immerse myself in the workings of a national championship sporting event. From logistics to fan engagement, I gained practical skills that will be essential for success in the sports industry.

The opportunity to work alongside NAIA professionals like Mike Hall and Austin Bennet enhanced my understanding of the industry and fostered professional growth and networking opportunities.

However, it wasn't until the final day of the internship that I made a connection I didn't even fully see coming. As I was beginning the teardown process at the end of the event, I bumped into and began a very short conversation with the president of the NAIA, Jim Carr. While our conversation was quick, he told me that we should meet to discuss future opportunities the next time that I found myself in Kansas City. I will definitely be taking him up on this generous offer.

On March 28, I had the opportunity to attend the Kansas Sport Summit. Dr. Wonyoung Kim and other members of the department organized an event where we had the opportunity to learn from experts in the field.

Full letter available on thesunflower.com

SUBMITTED BY MICHAEL LUEBBE, SPORTS MANAGEMENT SOPHOMORE
mluebbe@shockers.wichita.edu

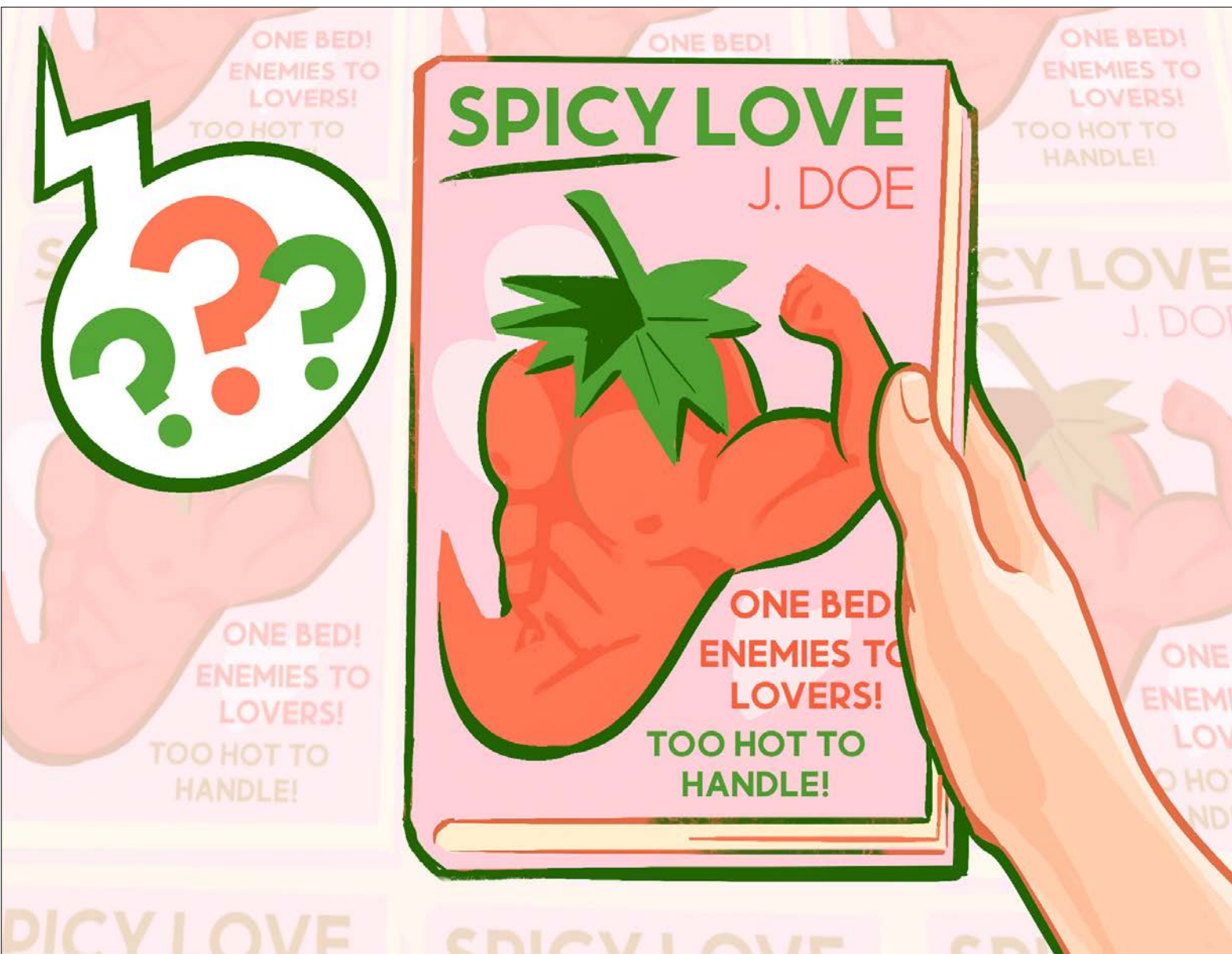
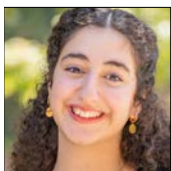


Illustration by Savanna Nichols / The Sunflower

Leave the dark romance to Wattpad

BookTok's dark romance obsession has gone too far



Salsabila Attaria
arts@thesunflower.com
OPINION

Many of us on TikTok have had the displeasure of the algorithm showing us to a certain corner of "BookTok," the so-called community of readers on the app. There, you'll find a group of readers, mostly women, who make countless videos sharing bits and pieces of the "dark romance" genre. These books are often ranked by their "spice level" or, for those of us who at least occasionally touch grass, how pornographic they are.

Nearly every social media app has a subcommunity where people discuss literature, but what I find notable about TikTok's bookish community is the significantly higher concentration of people who rave about these horribly written, tacky, Wattpad-esque publications.

I'll admit, when the first criticisms of the "dark romance"

TikTok genre were voiced, particularly about Colleen Hoover (the mother of trashy BookTok writing), I rolled my eyes. I've never been super into the romance genre in general, but I held the opinion that this was the usual pretentious attempt to make younger women the butt of another joke. At least people are reading something, even if that's a pretty tasteless something.

Fortunately, my opinion has changed. While the Colleen Hoover era has passed its peak trendiness, it has acted as a gateway into a world of even worse books I want the young, impressionable girls on TikTok freed from.

The content some of these authors are pushing out (at the pace of a SHEIN factory, mind you) is not only poorly written but downright harmful. Again, romance has never been my cup of tea, but surely you people are not enjoying reading scene after scene of what is essentially sexual assault and domestic abuse.

Don't get me wrong — I'm not one for censorship; however, I think it's more than reasonable to see a problem with literal porn being marketed like crazy to a younger audience and getting away with it because of the label "dark romance."

The work of authors like Hoover and Penelope Douglas belongs in mass market paperback covers with cover art of posed shirtless actors so embarrassing that you can't pull it out in public or in the AO3 bookmark you have in your incognito window from when you were 16. They do not belong on the front table of your local Barnes & Noble or at the top of every other BookTok micro-influencer's list of recommendations. What happened to shame and decorum?

Besides the garbage fire that is the content and writing of these books, TikTok has created a culture of reading that I despise. It's part of a larger issue of anti-intellectualism TikTok and influencer culture has barfed

all over its chronic users that I truly hope we can leave behind someday.

Instead of being valued for plot and decent composition, these books compete for who can cram the most ridiculous, hyper-specific tropes into one story. Why do I care that your book is about academic rivals to lovers with forced proximity and arranged marriage at a masquerade ball when it's written at a seventh-grade level? And, in turn, popular BookTok creators compound the problem by recommending books based on these tropes instead of quality. I find this to be an insufferably cheap, consumerist way to discuss literature, if we can even call these books that.

At the end of the day, we read and enjoy what we want. I merely hope that this odd little subsection of online readers is another internet phase we soon grow out of, and the female main character in an abusive relationship with the hot alpha male of your dreams becomes a thing of the past.

No way that TikTok is our biggest concern



Makenzie Miller
makenzieleighart@gmail.com
OPINION

For the umpteenth time, the rumor has begun that TikTok will be blocked for Americans by the U.S. government. This time, though, the rumor could actually come true.

On March 13, 2024, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to pass a bill that could cause a ban on TikTok in America. They argue that the content gathered from American citizens could be leaked to the Chinese government through ByteDance, TikTok's parent company. The bill would push TikTok to move away from ByteDance. If TikTok fails to do so, the app would be banned for Americans in approximately five months.

What confuses me most about this entire situation is the fact that before becoming TikTok, it was Musical.ly, and no one seemed to have an issue with the app then. While Musical.ly was not originally owned by ByteDance, it was bought out by it in 2017.

While I understand the fear surrounding data leaks, this is something we, as a society, are forced to deal with. Data mining is incredibly common on apps in order to give the "best customer experience," as well as scams

that steal information that can come from a sketchy website, whether that be a singular link on Facebook, or a message in an online gaming world. (I'm looking at you, "MovieStarPlanet," you know what you did.)

Everything related to technology in our world is tracking you. If you have an Amazon Alexa or Google Home in your house, I am not fully sure why you would even be concerned about TikTok. At any point, someone's information could be leaked from the multitude of technologies we use each day, even down to the computer I am typing this on. So, as long as you look over your terms of service and understand what you are signing over, it is no different than any other app.

A common argument is that users are willingly giving away too much information on "American life" through TikToks. To me, and most of the people I know that are on the app, it's just stock-full of dumb videos, ranging from dancing trends to nonsensical jokes. These do not really seem like the best place to receive information on the "American people," at least not in any useful way, and definitely not any information that isn't readily available elsewhere.

There's also countless content from creators outside of the U.S., so by this logic would it mean America could learn about other

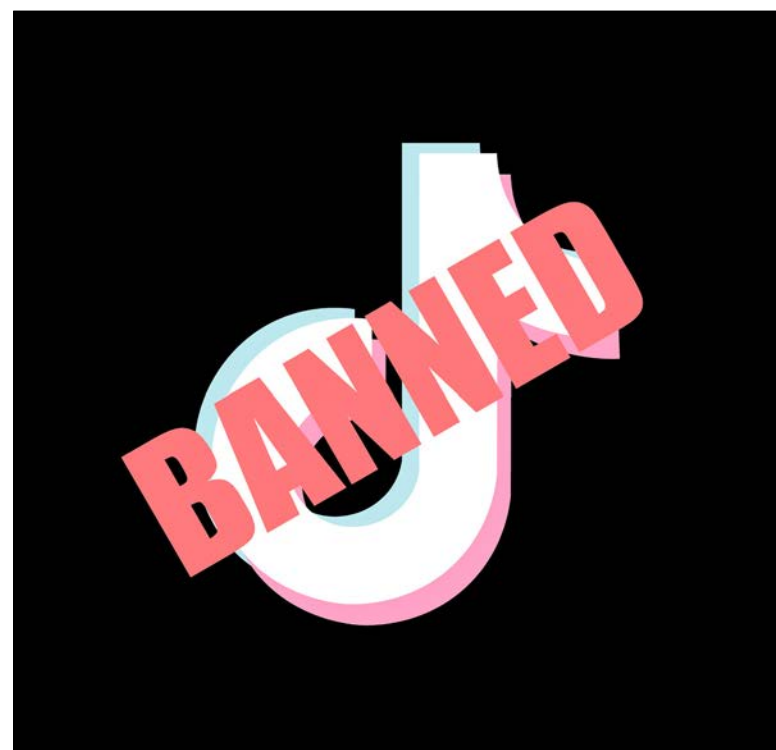


Illustration by Preston Caylor / The Sunflower

people's way of life through the app? Anyone can see the same videos on TikTok, so I personally do not understand how we are "giving away" our day-to-day life.

As someone who grew up in a family that was skeptical of the app — and they still are — I have had many conversations over the validity and ideals surrounding TikTok and if it is safe for me to get it. In fact, I did not actually download the app until I was 18.

Social media, in general, can be dangerous and should be taken seriously. but with

everything happening in the world, this doesn't really seem to be something we should be putting all of our energy in. A social media app is the least of our concerns at this point, and if we really want to argue against its use, maybe we should provide more education on how to combat the dangers or make it harder for minors to download the app.

Banning TikTok nationwide might end fear surrounding this data leak, but what about the millions of others that exist in every corner of the internet?

From the vault to the gallery: Students discuss interning for Ulrich Museum

BY MIA HENNEN
editor@thesunflower.com

With less than 15 full-time employees, a quarter of the staff at the Ulrich Museum of Art is made up of Wichita State student interns. To alleviate the difficulties that come with a small staff, the Ulrich annually hires Wichita State students as interns.

Currently, four students assist the Ulrich through various part-time roles, working behind the scenes, in the museum's vault and more.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Gus Denneler, the Ulrich's education intern, said that before working at Ulrich, he didn't realize all that went into the exhibitions, events and activities that a museum coordinates.

"When you look at it in actuality — you go to a museum, you go through the exhibits and you think, 'That was a great experience.' You might reflect on it once or twice," Denneler said. "But when you're ... working in it, you get a different experience with how it's set up, how it's basically run, how different things have to work together and how all the pieces interlace."

While no two days are the same, Denneler spends most of his hours on campus, planning and creating materials, helping with events from start to finish, and hanging posters.

"Gosh, I feel that Gus has been all over; he's here almost every day," Jo Reinert, curator of modern contemporary art, said.

Abby DeHaven, the Ulrich's collections intern, also does plenty of work out of the public eye — specifically in the museum's vault, which houses over 7,000 art objects and pieces.

Along with helping organize

the vault, DeHaven's internship includes handling artwork, working in the museum's database and upkeep of the Collection Study Center.

"Seeing the inside of a museum, seeing how it works, handling other artworks, handling famous artists' artworks like Andy Warhol and (Salvador) Dalí and all kinds of artists that are just incredible to witness having in your hand," DeHaven, an applied drawing major, said. "That's really what drew me to (the internship)."

Occasionally taking a golf cart to check on Ulrich sculptures, DeHaven collaborates with Taryn Trapani, the Ulrich's registrar and collections manager.

"Working closely with Abby has just been really rewarding, just sharing the experiences with young people and that have such a passion for (art and museum work), as well," Trapani said.

ON THE FRONT-END

Lucia Suniga began her internship at the Ulrich later than the rest, a few months into the semester. As the events and community outreach intern, she spends much of her time at events, helping set up and mingling with guests.

"I'm sort of an introverted person naturally," Suniga said. "It's really hard for me to get out there and socialize, so it's been fun having this job that kind of forces me to do it."

A ceramics major, Suniga has also done more hands-on work, like learning about laser engraving and cutting. She gets to practice her partnership skills as well; recently, she collaborated with WSU's Hispanic American Leadership Organization on the Belonging Plaza, a mobile monument.

Suniga said she's been motivated by the staff largely being



Lucia Suniga, Brisa Perez, Abby DeHaven and Gus Denneler jump for a photo in front of the Ulrich Museum of Art. The four are interns for the 2023-2024 academic year. | Photo courtesy of Jo Reinert

made up of women at the Ulrich.

"I've just been really inspired by them — feeling like, 'Okay, like I could actually do something, like make a move, make a change or start something of my own one day if I keep going along this path,'" Suniga said.

'MORE ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE'

Brisa Perez, the Ulrich's curatorial intern, gets to lay hands on various tasks — from doing research and exhibition planning to translating large parts of the museum's current exhibition to Spanish.

Perez said she's always had a passion for art, and the position felt like the "perfect chance."

"My favorite part about working at the Ulrich would definitely be just the opportunity to witness ... the impacts of our efforts to make art more accessible and inclusive, whether it's through providing bilingual labels and audio guides

or just developing educational programs for underrepresented communities or curating exhibitions that celebrate these diverse voices."

Reinert called Perez the "dream art history student."

"(She) just has contributed so much research and reporting on different artists for the exhibitions that we've had the past year," Reinert said.

'RESILIENCE AND GROWTH'

While Suniga and DeHaven are juniors, Denneler and Perez are in their final semesters at Wichita State. For Denneler, nothing's set in stone, but he thinks the combination of his psychology major and art and design minor sets him up for "a lot of different paths."

"Having all those different ... experiences, to have different places to go is really interesting to me and really beneficial for future career goals," Denneler said.

Perez plans to look outside

Wichita in her future art endeavors, while leaving behind a temporary piece of her and her art. Over the course of the semester, she's worked on curating a pop-up exhibition in the Rhatigan Student Center's Looking Glass gallery, which will be up from April 26 to May 31.

"The pop-up will stand kind of as a celebration to just human growth and change and the overall passage of time," Perez said. "Over the course of the time that I've been at the Ulrich, really, I've undergone significant transformation, both in my personal life and academically."

Perez said, in a way, the pop-up serves as a celebration of her "resilience and growth."

"I just hope that students and visitors will be able to just take a moment to pause and check out the artwork," Perez said. "And maybe just see a bit of their journeys reflected back at them."

STRINGS IN SPRING

The WSU faculty chamber series performed "Welcome Spring!" to celebrate the new season.



Susan Mayo plays "Appalachian Spring" with the WSU faculty chamber on April 20. Mayo is a part of the Kansas musical community and is active as a cellist, composer and community arts organizer. | Photos by Garima Thapa / The Sunflower



Leonid Shukaev, associate professor of cello at Wichita State, plays the cello at the faculty chamber music series performance.



Courtney Long performs "Untamed Wilds" by Allison McIntosh on saxophone. Long is a saxophone instructor at Wichita State.



Warren Kim, a visiting assistant teaching professor of piano, plays the piano during the Faculty Chamber Music Series to welcome spring.



Timothy Jones, Linette Gordon and Addison Wegerle play "Appalachian Spring" by Aaron Copland. The faculty chamber music series took place in Wiedemann Hall to welcome the spring season on April 20.



A fire eater with the ScallyWags Pirate Comedy prepares to do fire tricks at the Great Plains Renaissance Festival on April 20. The festival took place in Sedgwick County Park. | Photos by Cheyanne Tull / The Sunflower



A young adult prepares to throw weight over a bar for the Highland Games on April 20.



A fire eater with the ScallyWags Pirate Comedy gets help from 9 year old Misha at Great Plains Renaissance Festival on April 20. He put the fire out with his mouth.



Caricature artist and founder of Capybara Caricatures, Alec, draws a caricature portrait of a couple at the Great Plains Renaissance Festival. The Renaissance Festival comes to Wichita once in the spring and once in the fall, with the last festival coming to Sedgwick County Park on Sept. 30.



A woman dressed as a pirate paints a child's face at the Great Plains Renaissance Festival on April 20. There were several children lined up for face paint.

UPCOMING EVENTS

UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY INNOVATIONS FOR POSITIVE AGING

THURSDAY, APRIL 25
11 - 4:30 p.m. | Hughes Metropolitan Complex

MENTAL HEALTH AND MOVEMENT CLASS

THURSDAY, APRIL 25
12:30 - 1:15 p.m. | Steve Clark YMCA & Student Wellness Center

HEALING FROM TRAUMA SUPPORT GROUP

THURSDAY, APRIL 25
3 - 4 p.m. | Steve Clark YMCA & Student Wellness Center

MARIANNE MARTI | OUR WORK IS NEVER DONE: A QUARTER CENTURY OF CONSERVING WSU'S OUTDOOR SCULPTURE COLLECTION

THURSDAY, APRIL 25
5:30 - 7 p.m. | Ulrich Museum

WICHITA CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATRE

THURSDAY, APRIL 25
7:30 p.m. | Wilner Auditorium

SHOCKER NEW VENTURE COMPETITION TRADESHOW

FRIDAY, APRIL 26
10:30 a.m. - 1:10 p.m. | Charles Koch Arena

WSU COACHES ON LEADERSHIP

FRIDAY, APRIL 26
11 a.m. - 1 p.m. | Woolsey Hall

ADCI ANNUAL ART HISTORY AWARDS

FRIDAY, APRIL 26
Noon - 2 p.m. | McKnight Art Center

JAPAN FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, APRIL 26
1 - 3:30 p.m. | Rhatigan Student Center

SHOCKER NEW VENTURE COMPETITION

FRIDAY, APRIL 26
1 - 2 p.m. | Charles Koch Arena

SHOCKER NEW VENTURE COMPETITION FINALS

FRIDAY, APRIL 26
2 - 5 p.m. | Charles Koch Arena

UNTITLED: STUDENT CREATIONS ACROSS DISCIPLINES - EXHIBITION RECEPTION

FRIDAY, APRIL 26
5 - 7 p.m. | McKnight Art Center

CLOSING RECEPTION: OUT IN THE OPEN

FRIDAY, APRIL 26
6 - 9 p.m. | Fisch Haus

WICHITA CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATRE

FRIDAY, APRIL 26
7:30 p.m. | Wilner Auditorium

CREATIVE WRITING MFA GRADUATE READING

SATURDAY, APRIL 27
7:30 p.m. | Ulrich Museum

WICHITA CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATRE

SATURDAY, APRIL 27
7:30 p.m. | Wilner Auditorium

HAVE AN EVENT YOU WOULD LIKE LISTED?

CONTACT THE ARTS EDITOR:
arts@thesunflower.com

CONTACT THE NEWS EDITOR:
news@thesunflower.com

COMIC CONTEST

This is your chance to create a comic anything WSU related

Winner will have their comic published in the Graduation Edition on May 2.

SUBMISSION BY APRIL 28

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