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Understanding Trump's new policy proposals ahead of his renewed presidency

Karmen Zhao • Staff Writer • Jan. 17

Donald Trump's second term as President of the United States of America begins on Jan. 20, 2025 after winning both the popular vote and electoral college vote against Democratic candidate Kamala Harris in the 2024 presidential election. According to the Associated Press, Trump beat Harris by nearly 2.5 million popular votes and left Harris with 226 electoral college votes after winning his 312. With the attention of many people following along with the election on Nov. 5, 2024, Trump's victory became flushed with promises to enforce new policies.

During Trump's previous presidency in office, he signed into law the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) on Dec. 22, 2017. Among many of its functions, it had lowered tax rates across most income brackets. However, it also left top earners paying even less in taxes than they had already done so before. These tax cuts were set to expire in 2025 unless they would be extended by future legislation. For Trump's second term, CBS News outlined his new 2025 proposal of not only continuing this tax cut, but reducing it even further.

Seth Cotlar, a Willamette history professor since 2000, noted that Trump's previous accomplishment of lowering taxes ultimately became more of a tax break for high earners and the wealthy than towards lower class income makers. "He is a very standard issue Republican. Any Republican president would pursue that sort of tax-cutting program," Cotlar explained.

Along with taxes, an article by the Washington Post explained that Trump drove his campaign with an additional promise of ending the "inflation nightmare." During his campaign, Trump called for tariffs on all imports entering the United States, naming them "universal tariffs." He claims to want to establish tariffs of 10-20% on all imported goods in order to reduce trade deficits. Once these tariffs are put into place, the initial impact would cause the price of food and electronics to increase dramatically. Cotlar pointed out that "inflation doesn't affect rich people that much. Inflation really hurts middle class people."

According to a report from PBS News covering Trump's tariffs, Trump additionally threatened



Donald Trump holds a campaign rally at the PPG Paints Arena on Nov. 4, 2024 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Photo courtesy of Shutterstock.

to float a 60% or higher tariff on all Chinese goods in order to escalate the trade war with China. Cotlar expressed that this could be a broader idea of pushing for more consumer items to be made in the United States rather than in other countries. However, this could also dampen the economic relationship the United States previously had with China. The Trump team discussed bringing the production of the defense industrial supply chain, critical medical supplies and energy production goods back to the United States. The Washington Post explained that this could include metals like steel, iron, aluminum, and copper, healthcare equipment such as pharmaceutical materials, energy supplies, and rare earth minerals to make batteries.

Another campaign promise Trump had was to achieve America's largest deportation operation. According to the American Civil Liberties Union, a 1920s-originat-

ed civil rights organization, Trump is attempting to recreate President Dwight Eisenhower's 1950s deportation policies, which included a massive removal of Mexican immigrants from the United States carried out by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). However, Cotlar expressed that Trump's policy will likely become an even bigger pursuit than Eisenhower's.

Trump has additionally vowed in his campaigns that he will attempt to end birthright citizenship of children whose parents violated immigration laws when entering the United States. Cotlar said that when Trump begins placing the orders to take measures toward deportation, they will begin by targeting the "least controversial folks," such as people living in the US without legal permission who are incarcerated for committing violent crimes. However, if Trump proceeds with further deportation orders, his claims of separating families by means of deportation and other methods of removal would be "incredibly destructive at the local level," according to Cotlar. "People will probably die. There will be economic disruption."

Regarding Trump's proposed policies on state-controlled abortion, Cotlar explained that his upcoming policies reflect the landmark case of the Dobbs decision, where the Supreme Court ruled that the U.S. Constitution does not grant a right to abortion, returning authority to regulate abortion to individual states. This decision overturned Roe v. Wade on June 24, 2022, ending the constitutional right to abortion that had been in place since 1973. Cotlar noted the reversal of Roe v. Wade had

been a goal of anti-abortion movements since the 1970s. Some states have taken their ability to control abortions to another level, introducing criminal penalties for those who travel out of state to receive abortions. Cotlar noted that future access to reproductive care will continue to become more difficult.

CBS also reported that Trump has been vocal about the American education system, expressing that he will cut federal spending for any schools that push for "critical race theory" or transgender matters." Cotlar mentioned that the University of Iowa and the University of Idaho both recently closed their women's and gender studies programs in response to state initiatives that were similar to the initiatives Trump has called for. Both universities have taken measures to remove majors, departments and support centers.

However, Cotlar believes that it would be less likely for the federal government to determine that a private institution like Willamette is unable to receive any federal funds solely because Willamette has a women's and gender studies program or an American ethnic studies program. "If we claim to have freedom of expression, how can you then say a university can't teach some subjects?" Cotlar asked.

The coming months will reveal which of these proposed policies will come into play, how they will be received by both Trump's critics and supporters, and what impact they may have on the political landscape moving forward. "We will just have to see how the consequences play out. ... Who knows what will happen," Cotlar concluded.

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WU students attempt to emulate President Thorsett in new look-alike trend

Amelia Hare • Staff Writer • Dec. 24



The contestants of the Stephen Thorsett look-alike competition pose for a photo outside Waller Hall on Dec. 3, 2024. Photo by CARAMIA CHRISTENSEN

Around 20 students gathered in front of Cone Chapel on Dec. 3 to find the closest resemblance President Stephen Thorsett — a new sensation that has been named a “look-alike competition.” The approximately seven participants were judged on their “commitment to Thorsett’s character and general vibes,” and judging was not reserved to “just looking like an old white guy” according to a promotional flyer posted about the event.

What attendees did not know was that it was Thorsett’s birthday, and the university president eventually joined the festivities, adorning a Christmas sweater, khakis and brown shoes. Students in attendance sang him “Happy Birthday.” Organizer Teya Fukuhara (’27) was dedicated to bringing the look-alike contest trend to the forefront of the Willamette community.

Fukuhara’s plans for the event began after seeing the first “look-alike competition” on Oct. 27 with Timothée Chalamet in New York City. With the success of this competition — and Chalamet himself making an appearance — the competitions have

become a national trend in major cities like Chicago, with celebrities ranging from Jeremy Allen White to Dylan Minnette. Seeing these events pop up around the country inspired Fukuhara’s local spin on the trend. “I woke up and was scrolling on Instagram and came up with the idea,” Fukuhara explained. These competitions are a way to create community and have fun while also hoping for the celebrity to make an appearance. When planning the event, Fukuhara “immediately thought of Thorsett.”

Fukuhara is planning on doing this again in future years, possibly beginning a tradition of luring Thorsett out of his office at the top of Waller Hall to meet the victors. “He’s just such a symbol,” Fukuhara declared. At other recent look-alike contests there has often been a cash prize, and the prize for this competition was a \$25 Bistro gift card. Some victors were Maya Darski (’28) for “aura,” Lola Cordero (’28) for “best dressed,” and Amaya Supancich-McCord (’26) for the overall embodiment of President Thorsett. They were even featured on Willamette’s Instagram account.

ASWU votes to continue funding for Bistro

Amelia Hare • Staff Writer • Nov. 24

The Associated Students of Willamette University (ASWU) senators voted to clear the Bistro’s current debt of \$9,928 on Nov. 14. The Bistro started this year with \$13,837 left over from the 2023-24 fiscal year, lowering the debt since then to \$9,928. Ultimately, ASWU has supported the Bistro with \$64,928 since 2020.

ASWU President Anastasiia Lemesh (’26) said she “was excited” to continue to help the Bistro. According to a statement to The Collegian from Madeline Montanye (’25), the Bistro’s general manager, this ASWU aid will help them to “make a profit and build our nest-egg back up.” Montanye claimed that they are receiving much more business this year than in previous years, which should further help the Bistro rise from their financial issues, and added that ASWU’s help is “something of a ladder to help the Bistro pay off its loan to the university.”

The Bistro has been in a consistent negative deficit since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led them to seek help from ASWU. Additionally, while the decision to provide funding was made by the ASWU senators, President Le-

mesh and Treasurer Stevie Bergstrom (’26) reached out to Montanye with the offer of support at the beginning of the school year, according to Montanye.

The Bistro is a popular space on campus for students to study, see friends, and potentially find employment, and as such its financial success is a priority for ASWU. Lemesh added on to the importance of the Bistro as a student-run coffee shop on campus: “Just to have that space, that is truly a student space, without university control, is just such a good vibe,” Lemesh said.

This help from ASWU will allow the Bistro managers to “focus on providing a comfortable and affordable space for the student body,” said Montanye, and will further give the Bistro “the ability to grow and develop,” as Lemesh described. This means more focus on fixing equipment, maintaining the space, and valuing staff and customers.

ASWU also initiated bylaws between itself and the Bistro to further communicate, expressing ideas for semester check-ins between executives from both areas along with plans to vote each year about funding



The Bistro, Willamette’s on-campus cafe. Photo by IRIS MCCLURE

with senators, according to senator Katelyn Rosales (’28). All of this communication would allow students a

continual understanding of the contracts between ASWU and the Bistro.



Comic by WES MOWRY-SILVERMAN

Chief Operating Officer Dan Valles departs from Willamette University after years of service

Karmen Zhao • Staff Writer • Nov. 25

After nearly a decade of leadership at Willamette University, Chief Operating Officer, Senior Vice President and Treasurer Dan Valles has departed the university since April 2015. In preparation for becoming the vice president for finance and administration at Albion College in Michigan, Valles was announced to be leaving Willamette on Nov. 1, 2024, and a Farewell Open House was hosted for Valles in the University Services Building on Oct. 28, 2024 to thank him for his guidance and service.

The announcement of Valles' arrival at Albion College formally stated that his new role began on Nov. 18, 2024. In providing information about Valles' past, Albion College outlined that Valles had managed a \$100 million budget during his decade at Willamette, overseeing the financial planning, budgeting, facilities and financial aid. He also helped manage Willamette's mail operations, the bookstore, enrollment and marketing. Additionally, Valles was on Willamette's board of trustees.

Willamette University's leadership team had been operating on a Chief Operating Officer (COO) framework. Now, due to Valles' departure, the university is beginning to adopt a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) framework instead. Management responsibilities have shifted toward Anne Gallagher, the former associate vice president for budget and facilities. She is now the CFO vice president of finance who oversees the budget, accounting department, the endowment and facilities of Willamette. Gallagher stated that the responsibilities

of Valles' position were "distributed across the leadership team," and she stepped up to assume the responsibility of managing finances.

Gallagher noted that Valles' departure will not cause significant changes that would dramatically impact students or the university itself. "I think everything is in good hands. He played a big role at the university, but the university does have a strong leadership team," Gallagher said.

Regarding the permanence of the CFO model the university oversight is run by, Gallagher noted that either COO or CFO models work in terms of oversight of a university, meaning the leadership may or may not revert back to a COO model in the far future. All shifting of positions within the leadership team can be seen on Willamette University Announcements.

Colleen Kawahara, chief of staff to the president and vice president for communications, also worked closely with Valles in Willamette's leadership team made up of vice presidents and deans. Reflecting on Valles' time as COO, Kawahara outlined his accomplishments, mentioning his strength in leadership within operations during the COVID-19 pandemic and his management of Willamette's merger with Portland's Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA). Additionally, she said that the "restructuring [of] our debt to help pay for some important infrastructure projects at Willamette" was also conducted under the leadership of Valles. This included the entire replacement of the boiler system and HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air



Waller Hall.

Photo by LUCY DEVLAEINCK

Conditioning) system throughout the entire campus.

Kawahara recalled that Valles had set up the institution management with "succession planning," a system devised to ensure that the entire leadership team "knew as much as he did about the finances and plans" prior to his departure.

In a final farewell statement Valles gave to The Collegian provided by Kawahara, he said, "After nine years at Willamette, my decision to pursue other opportunities was not made lightly. Willamette has been more than just a workplace for me.

For as much as I worked to transform it on the financial and operations side to ensure its long-term sustainability, Willamette has transformed me even more. This opportunity to pursue a new professional challenge in a different part of the country will allow me to apply the leadership skills and knowledge I've developed during my time at Willamette, but a part of me will always remain at Willamette and I am grateful to have had the chance to serve alongside the students, faculty, staff, and broader community on this journey."

Willamette's Black Tie Affair moves to PNCA for 2025

Nardin Ishak • Staff Writer • Dec. 6

Black Tie Affair, the Willamette Events Board signature formal dance traditionally held at the Salem Convention Center, will be at the Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA) this year due to the original venue space being booked out for the Spring 2025 date, March 15.

Jodi Santielle, assistant director for Student Engagement and Leadership (SEAL), reached out to the Convention Center during June, as usual, to book the venue nine months

in advance. However, this year the venue was not available within the event's typical time frame. After discussion with the rest of the staff, it was decided that organizers would look into the main 511 building at PNCA as an alternative venue space to hold the event for this time.

"It's a way to get the students from this campus up to PNCA and hopefully get some of the PNCA students to attend as well, who might not necessarily come down to Salem,"

Santielle said. "It felt like an opportunity to do something different, to pivot and find the silver lining."

After Santielle toured the space, she was able to map out where everything might go, such as the dance floor, media tech room, 21+ lounge, food and open space, as well as to confirm the space could hold the approximately 500-person event. Santielle, along with the staff on the Events Board and SEAL office staff, is still finalizing details such as security, transportation, catering and decorations, but is planning to keep the event the same as it would be at the Convention Center, with the only new addition being transportation.

To ensure safety of all attendees, the staff are working closely with Campus Safety to ensure the same level of security at PNCA as they usually contract with outside agencies for security at the Convention Center. Additionally, Santielle and the staff are working closely with PNCA to figure out catering details.

While Santielle plans to now reach out to the Salem Convention Center as early as 12 months in advance to book the venue for the event moving forward, the addition of PNCA's campus to the broader Willamette community has sparked a new goal to begin a tradition of holding the Black Tie Affair at the PNCA campus every three to four years if all goes well with the upcoming

event. Since transportation is anticipated to be a major concern from the Salem attendees, she is hopeful providing buses will help the event succeed. "Some people don't love riding buses, but it's an option where you don't have to take yourself and you don't have to worry about that transportation, which I think can be a concern for folks sometimes," said Santielle.

The plan is to have three charter buses with two departure and arrival times to and from the Salem Campus. Two buses will depart from Hatfield fountain at 7 p.m., and one bus will depart at 8 p.m., with a similar return schedule surrounding the event. Depending on ticket sales, the plans may be adjusted. Tickets will be available to purchase during the first few weeks of spring semester. Additionally, there will be opportunities for questions about the Black Tie Affair: tabling on the first floor of the UC and in Goudy will begin the final week of January.

"We will start ticket sales as early as possible and do a lot of tabling to explain why [Black Tie is] up [at PNCA] and why it's a great opportunity," said Santielle. "I anticipate things going well, because we are trying to make sure we have really thoughtful conversations to ensure it's a safe and fun environment for all parties involved."

The event will run from 8-11 p.m. on March 15, with individual tickets costing \$15 and paired tickets costing \$28.



March 2024 Black Tie Affair at the Salem Convention Center.

Photo by ANUSHKA SRIVASTAV

How to wave

Ike Turman • Staff Writer • Jan. 12

The college experience teaches us all many valuable lessons, academic and otherwise. However, is there any lesson so difficult to grasp as when to wave at a friend when passing one another around campus? Perhaps, though it's certainly a close call.

The quad and the Mill Stream are some of the Willamette campus' mostly lively and active locales, especially between classes when crowds of students flood the walkways en route to classrooms and parking lots. In all that hustle and bustle, it is of course extraordinarily common to happen across a familiar face — maybe a close friend, maybe just a friendly acquaintance. It is here that social etiquette poses a most turbulent trial: how should you greet this friend? When is too early, and when is too late? Just what are you meant to do through these extraordinarily tense dozens of seconds, when you have someone to greet, but no guidebook on how to do so?

"I wave as soon as I register

they can see me," shared Roan Keller ('26). Like most, Keller doesn't want to call out directly, but instead waits for that natural moment of shared recognition. "At some point, they'll notice me," they said. However, herein lies one of the trickiest hurdles of the waving process.

While waiting for this friend to notice you, what should you do?

Another Willamette student, Jacob Plax ('25), illuminated further the challenges of the waiting-to-be-noticed part of the process. "Sometimes they're walking and they, like, have AirPods in. And I think, 'I could wave right now, but I'll look silly because they won't see me.'" Indeed, avoiding waving into empty space, with no one to wave back, is critical. However, with so many potential dis-

tractions, it's impossible to know how long you'll be waiting for this friend to notice you and be ready to receive a wave. Until that happens, Plax will "just stare at them until they notice [him]."

Keller employs this tactic as well. "I'm kind of just staring them down," they said, not particularly worried about waiting too long or waving too late. "Is there a point at which it's strange to wave?" they asked, in firm dismissal of any such concerns.

Thus, the staring tactic seems entirely reliable. However, it is not always easy to employ. Plax spoke more about how the level of familiarity he has with a person will influence how he handles the waiting-to-be-noticed stage. When in doubt, "I probably

won't stare at them," he said. "I'll just look in the general direction." Plax concluded that the appropriate waving distance is "maybe 20-30 feet away."

Waving to someone you know on a college campus is an easy thing to not think too hard about — nearly as easy as it is to think extremely hard about. These moments of fleeting interaction are always a part of a wider context involving the kinds of days people are having, the classes they're going to, the cultures and social etiquettes they grew up around, how aware they happen to be of their surroundings at that moment and countless other variables. Even so, as complex and daunting as it can sometimes feel to wave at someone you know, in the vast majority of cases, a wave is taken as a simple and welcome statement that someone's happy to see you — a little moment that can brighten a day in a small but real way. "If I have a class with people, and I see them, I'll wave at them," said Plax, and truly, it can be that simple.

"I'm just kind of staring them down."

—Roan Keller ('26)

Opinion: AI is killing the planet and it's killing us in the process

Maisy Clunies-Ross • Staff Writer • Dec. 5

Imagine a service where someone would draw anything you wanted. The drawings would vary in quality, but still, they would meet your needs. Pictures of your dog as a Pixar character, what Severus Snape would look like pregnant, promotional images for your company, and whatever else tickled your fancy. However, for every drawing created, this service would cut down five trees and shoot a turtle right in the face. Would you use this service? Would you condone your friends using it? Would you be alright letting the internet as you now know it be consumed by these images, funny as some may be, easy as the service is, letting original content and the planet burn in their wake?

This is the current state of artificial intelligence (AI). Over the past few years, it's gone from obscure to nearly inescapable. AI-generated responses are the first to appear on Google, grandparents everywhere are fawning over "heartwarming" images of soldiers and babies, while their Gen Z counterparts are reposting Taylor Swift as a nonbinary barista and cheating their way through school. AI isn't new, it's just become far more capable and complex in the past few years. Rudimentary language learning models, the basis for AI, were first created in the 1960s. Such models just created simple sentences, calculating which word should follow based on the texts they were trained on. This is how AI functioned for many years, making simple predictions based entirely on the data it was loaded with. However, generative AI (like ChatGPT) functions somewhat differently, identifying patterns in the data it was trained on in order to create new data. The large and ever-growing data sets generative AI has access to allows the current model to create far more intricate content than was previously possible.

In many ways, AI seems to be relatively harmless. People use it to create funny content and advocate that AI can be well-utilized in tandem with human creativity. It makes simple tasks quicker and can be genuinely valuable when working with code.

Initially, AI presented a shining future, where humans were unburdened by responsibility as menial tasks became automated. Alas, the drawbacks of AI far outweigh the benefits. AI is incredibly harmful to the environment. Training and running AI models is resource intensive: it requires water to regulate the temperature of the technology, the mining of rare materials to create the necessary chips can cause environmental damage, and AI uses thousands of megawatts of energy and emits hundreds of tons of carbon. Additionally, the manufacturing of the components and the hazardous byproducts of data centers only further the havoc AI is wreaking on the natural world. AI is creating emissions equivalent to the annual carbon emissions of hundreds of American families. It's depleting the already dwindling global water supply and ruining millions of lives in the process.

To be clear, everyone will be hurt by ongoing and worsening climate disasters, but not equally. The people most harmed by climate change will be poor, people in the Global South, and overwhelmingly people of color. Those most often using AI—certainly leaders in the tech sector forcing AI onto homepages and down everyone's throats—will be padded enough by their money and power to escape without ever facing the destruction they caused.

Additionally, the planet isn't AI's only victim. Willfully or not, the sacrifice of art, autonomy and everything that makes us human in favor of momentary convenience has begun. Many artists' careers have already been impacted by AI. People are now generating art they may have otherwise commissioned and sloppy, overly-glossy AI images are flooding websites previously centered around original work. This is just the tip of the iceberg; Goldman Sachs has estimated that 26% of work currently done by artists and designers could be replaced by generative AI. Co-



Phone showing ChatGPT logo. Photo courtesy of Shutterstock.

ca-Cola has already used AI to create an ad for their Christmas campaign. This clarifies the true purpose of AI — to replace human workers with automation. One of the only barriers standing between many firms and exponential profit is labor costs. While many corporations push the limits of human decency every day, at least in America, there is only so much employers can underpay and exploit their workers without pushback. Yet, with AI, firms no longer need to rely on people who require pay and rest, and do annoying things like unionize. Companies can destroy jobs and create fast, low-quality content without hesitation.

Everyday people will never be as guilty as large corporations, but many are becoming complicit. AI is already common in schools and workplaces; people use it for essays, emails and job applications. Why put in the effort to write something one's self if a computer could do the writing? Why spend the money on someone's art when it could be generated for free? Why do anything ... ever? The answer

is simple: it's the only reason to live. Our ability to make choices is what makes life beautiful. While it's easy to offload boring, unimportant tasks to AI, it sets a dangerous precedent that AI can do what people can, that it can make our choices and live our lives. Studies have already shown that AI can encourage laziness while discouraging decision making. It seems likely that a desire to avoid work could turn into a devaluing of creativity and the pursuit of knowledge. It takes work to learn, to make something you're proud of, to figure out who you are and what you like, but it's work worth doing.

AI isn't a godlike entity with a magical power to create. People have that power. People can create art. People can evoke emotion, can cause pain and feel the depths of sadness and the overwhelm of joy. AI presents a facade of humanity, the appearance of beauty and a simulacrum of creation, but all it will ever make is a cheap, soulless copy of the human experience at the expense of our personhood and our world.

Is Mill Stream dunking dying?

Aubrey Tuttle • Staff Writer • Jan. 9

One of the long-standing traditions that Willamette students participate in is dunking their friends in the Mill Stream on their birthday. This event has been banned many times throughout Willamette's history for numerous reasons. In 1952, it was deemed unsafe to dunk or bathe in the stream due to pollution, it was banned in 1949 for violence, and in 1934 and 1955, it was banned to dunk people as a blue Monday punishment, a day that students dedicated to repaying bets placed regarding Freshman Glee. Nowadays, however, this tradition finds itself in more danger of dissolution than it was in its prohibited years, as students are simply losing interest.

Kat Bowyer ('26) had a couple concerns regarding cold temperatures in the mill stream as well as the leeches that inhabit it from time to time. For these reasons listed, they did not participate in the tradition during their first year. During their second year however they decided to join the fray and take the plunge on their birthday in April of 2024. The deciding factor in their participation was the support of friends, one of which was getting dunked with them, as their birthdays were close together. They did not imagine the experience for themselves when they first

came here, but afterward stated that they "definitely think that it is a fun way to be a part of Willamette history." Having decided to participate after previously opposing it, they found themselves recommending it to other students, saying that "if they are comfortable and interested then [they] would recommend the experience to others."

Colin M Davis ('26) brings a fresh perspective to the tradition, as he was dunked in the Hatfield Fountain (commonly referred to as the Chicken Fountain) instead of the Mill Stream. After being dunked during his first year on his birthday, Davis said that the experience made it feel like he was "a little bit more included in the Willamette community during [his] first year." Another aspect of Davis' experience that contrasts with Bowyer's is the fact that Davis was not aware of their friends' plan to dunk him in the water. Instead of giving Davis time to mentally prepare for an ice-cold plunge, his friends calmly and inconspicuously took the things out of his pockets before they ceremoniously dunked Davis in the water.

Students who hear of the tradition and choose not to participate find other ways to connect to the campus and its history. On his birthday, Keegan Stershic ('26), chooses to engage in a similar but more personal

tradition involving the Mill Stream. Saying that he prefers to instead "sit by the Mill [Stream] with friends and reminisce on another year well-spent." By taking the tradition provided and choosing to alter it to better fit his personal preferences, Stershic is connecting to our campus's history in his own unique way. Examples such as this illustrate that maybe the importance of tradition lies not in the action itself, but in its effect of connecting students through shared experiences.

With birthday dunkings on their way out, they leave behind the history of students past and present,



Three people lowering their friend into the Mill Stream. Art by BASIL ALLEN

their shared experience connecting them to something bigger than themselves. The tradition might not be for everybody, but for many who have taken that daunting step into frigid waters, the story was worth the moment of temporary discomfort.

Opinion: Yik Yak should be discarded

Mari Kauffman • Staff Writer • Nov. 12

Students around campus lay in their beds as they select the teal icon from their phone's selection of apps and configure a statement to upload to the Willamette community, Roommate Rants, the Ask Anything, and/or to the other sections that are available to post on within Yik Yak. They post their comments into the app and move about their day. The anonymity gives them leverage and power to assemble witty remarks, sometimes much-needed advice, and — for the most apparent reason — to attack students who are desperate for information and advice. For people that are active on Yik Yak, they know the absurdity and awfulness of some comments outweigh the goofiness and useful advice aspect of the app.

The blue background behind the long-haired cattle represents Yik Yak's profile. As adorable as it is, it's

misleading, as the cattle has no significance with the udder chaos of the app itself. From the straight-up weird comments, to the specific rants about roommates, to real advice about when to apply for internships and other college concerns, Yik Yak has certainly grown from its first year of its launch, having less threats of violence, but still arguably producing content that should be categorized as cyberbullying.

To better comprehend the negative effects of using the app today, it's necessary to establish how Yik Yak became an app for campus-wide degradation. In November of 2013, two college students released the app, and it became the ninth-most downloaded social media a short year later. However, their journey did not stop there. Four years after the app's release, the students raised \$73 million

in venture capital, but in that same year, closed their chapter with Yik Yak and sold its intellectual property to a mobile payment company, Block Inc.

In August of 2021, an unidentified team bought Yik Yak from Block Inc. and later relaunched the app. As stated earlier, there were negative outcomes of this Twitter-like platform that allowed for anonymity — students would post threats of violence, as well as hateful comments accompanied by derogatory speech. This is still occurring today, including within the Willamette community. Having a masked persona should not be a reason to share hatred on a platform where innocent people are asking about information on the operating hours of the Writing Center or for others' recommendations of certain professors.

Maddie Hershberger ('28), who utilizes the app for information purposes, believes "[Yik Yak is] not helpful at all. It does not benefit our community in any way." This sentiment is not contained to Willamette and rather is true for all students currently enrolled in universities that use the app for complaints and attacks on other students.

In some cases, initial threats of violence have compelled administrations to evacuate students from buildings due to fears of school shootings and bombs. Schools around the country have been placed in situations where, if students hadn't had the opportunity to participate in such hostility, they wouldn't have been put through the false, or worse, real threats of violence. Yik Yak needs to be disabled, as its existence goes beyond mere toxicity. As weird and entertaining as it is, the platform should be evaluated, and perhaps, restrict the absurd comments that are being displayed on the app. Though they are comically delightful, the inappropriate and advertent comments should not be relinquished into the app, let

alone, anywhere else. It's about supporting and informing one another, instead of adding more fuel into a burning fire.

It is also detrimental to students' mental health, especially if students continue to misuse it. The platform's negative impact is not going to stop until the app is completely deleted or restructured. Though the Willamette community on Yik Yak does not seem to be at a point where a threat of violence needs to be assessed, students' provocative comments are still often followed by insensitive and hurtful responses. It should be stated, as students are focusing on their studies and working part-time, the power of anonymity should not allow grown adults to engage in conversations where a user could be impacted negatively by the writer's decision to compose a certain, sometimes, hurtful statement.

Not every post is negative, however. Many are deemed simply inappropriate, absurd, or, according to Samantha Hoffman ('28), "silly." Hoffman and Molly Joyce ('27) both mentioned that Yik Yak is pure entertainment for them. It can be a place to get insight into what caused the fire alarm to go off in Kaneko or if there is a class that students should avoid taking. There are some ways that Yik Yak could contribute to a thriving campus community, but in the current way it is regulated, the app's flaws outweigh its benefits.

Ultimately, what this comes down to is responsibility; students need to recognize that they are adults and that purposely calling someone out for having differing beliefs than their own or for simply posting a genuine question is childish. As entertaining as it is — and sometimes helpful for getting answers to desired questions — Yik Yak in its current state should be dissolved, as the platform has no limits regarding cyberbullying.



Community icons flood out of the Yik Yak app. Art by ELLIE STARR

New NAIA trans athlete ban, lawsuits put NCAA on notice

Arlo Craft • Staff Writer • Dec. 9

Since the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) announced a new policy regarding transgender athletes in April, the future of trans women's participation in collegiate sports has remained up in the air.

Even the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), which Willamette belongs to, has placed its current trans policy "under review" following a lawsuit in which several swimmers accused the NCAA of violating their Title IX rights by allowing a transgender player to compete against them in national champion-

ships.

Before April of this year, the NAIA's policy on transgender athletes "mirrored that of the NCAA," according to its website. The NCAA policy to which this refers allowed trans athletes with a year of hormone therapy to participate on the team that aligned with their gender identity. The NCAA updated this policy in 2022 to a "sport-by-sport" approach, which follows the rulings of each sport's national governing body. Additional regulations for documenting hormone levels were also implemented.

According to the NAIA, it was the 2022 policy change that prompted it to form a "Transgender Task Force" in 2022. This task force recommended the NAIA's latest policy on transgender athletes. It's unclear what exactly this organization determined in its "two years of work" and how, but the new policy bars transgender women from participating in women's sports in any way.

Cedric Shaw ('27), a former midfielder for WU's women's lacrosse team, thinks these policy changes have more to do with the current political climate than fairness in sports. "I get to an extent why you would need regulations, not only for the social pressures ... but also

for internal safety," he said, "but there comes a point where the regulations are not for the safety of your athletes anymore, and that is what the NAIA is doing."

According to Shaw, NAIA schools have a reputation for being religious and conservative. Whether or not this is linked to transgender policies, at least 60% of current NAIA schools (of which there are 237) are "faith-based institutions."

Salem's own NAIA school, Corban University, follows this trend — it's well-known for its religious affiliation. The university, alongside others, successfully fought to affirm its right to discriminate against LGBTQ students this year. Shaw suggested that universities like Corban might have an inflated view of how often transgender women's participation in sports even comes up.

Shaw is a trans man and stopped competing with the lacrosse team this year in order to pursue his long-held goal of medically transitioning. His experience playing lacrosse at Willamette gives him firsthand experience with the NCAA's transgender policies.

"I wanted to continue being a part of the sport without ... being controversial, so I really wanted to be a practice player. ... I love playing lacrosse and I love my team," he said. Practice players are just what they sound like — athletes who help a team during practice but don't play with the team competitively. In fact, cisgender men are integral components of some Bearcat women's practice squads, including basketball and soccer. Regardless, Shaw was required to submit a hefty dose of paperwork regarding his transition, the reason he takes hormones, and more in order to participate similarly.

Shaw claims the process of becoming a practice player is usually simple. "I thought it would be easy for me," he said. He began the application in August, but because of the

abundance of paperwork and a lack of timely responses, he's still not approved to practice with the team.

The NCAA's policies wouldn't allow Shaw to play competitively on a women's team, but even if they did, he wouldn't be interested. "I don't think that someone like me should be playing in women's sports," he said, citing the social aspect as well as the advantage provided by masculinizing hormones. "I clearly am not a woman."

Shaw also says that he's an aggressive player. His aggression on the field, however, has nothing to do with his gender identity. "It's not the trans part. It is just me being aggressive." He explained that the two are often conflated in arguments against transgender athletes' participation.

"They pinpoint specific athletes for their aggression and the features they exhibit during play that, if exhibited in a cis player, would just kind of ... make them a good player. That aggression is associated with them being trans instead of just them being a person, [and] it takes away from them being an athlete."

It "doesn't make sense" to him that the NAIA has made it impossible for transgender women with a history of hormone therapy to be considered for women's teams.

"Being trans is not something people do to win at NAIA sports. Put some perspective on that! That's not why they're doing it. People transition because it vastly improves their lives. ... That's not a choice."

Shaw's shoulders folded inwards as he spoke. "I wouldn't choose this," he admitted. "God, I would not choose this."

It's currently unclear when and if the NCAA will alter its policy again. There has been backlash against the NAIA's new policy, however, which suggests controversy regarding trans women's participation in collegiate-level sports will be ongoing.



A Willamette Bearcats jersey in the trans pride flag colors.
Art by BASIL ALLEN

New fishing and conservation club puts trout, cleaner waterways on the menu

Skeet Starr • Sports & Rec Editor • Dec. 12

Eyan Hackney ('26) signs all his email correspondence, "Best fishes" — a mark of his commitment as president and founder of Castaway Club, the new fishing and stream conservation student venture. At the club's first-ever open trout fishing trip on Dec. 2, he spent two hours setting up attendees' rigs, then setting them up again once they lost bobbers, spinners, weights or power-bait. When at last he was able to cast his hook into the black waters below the Detroit Reservoir dam, he reeled in a 10-inch rainbow trout off-the-rip.

Some of the trout trip's four attendees had already been to Castaway's Willamette River stream cleanup or its seminar featuring Marion County conservation planners. Hackney explained that Castaway is a conservation club which recruits through fishing, not the other way around: "If we get people involved with the fishing aspect ... I think they will ... want to be out there and also clean [the streams]."

On the trip, not every fish lived to see said cleaner streams. Once landed, the Bearcats called their own shots regarding the fish's life — Hackney thanked God before dispatching one. Ronan Cole ('28), who had had

his waders on before even leaving campus that morning, was planning on keeping his catches. However, the "shock factor" of using a rock to percussively stun the fish made him decide on catch-and-release in the moment.

Kristin Gaskins ('28) said she was expecting the event to be catch-and-release and admitted that the killing of the trout "makes her sad," but wasn't against the other club members doing it. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) prefers percussive stunning, the method used by Castaway, from a humane treatment standpoint.

Those who kept their fish regarded it as an expression of consumptive responsibility. Hackney explained, "In today's society we're so used to just being able to go to a grocery store and pick up whatever we want. ... [Fishing] makes me more thankful with where my food comes from."

Hackney, who taught himself to fish in high school, has big plans for the club beyond reeling in rainbows. Namely, he wants to implement a native species restoration project throughout the campus Mill Stream, which he says was once a salmon run.



Hackney and Cole pose in front of the towering Detroit Reservoir Dam.
Photo by SKEET STARR

"That's the main ... purpose of Castaway Club: to make change, good change, within our waterways and ecosystems." On the ride back to cam-

pus, Hackney asked the group if he could have done anything to make the trout trip more enjoyable. He was met with silence.

Duck faithful lament another playoff loss at Magoos Sports Bar

Kat Thornton • Staff Writer • Jan. 9

The Oregon Ducks made quite the splash during their first year in the Big Ten pond, winning the conference championship. Loyal fans watched with high hopes, but the splash wasn't quite big enough to land them at the top of the national food chain. On Jan. 1, fans watched from Magoos Sports Bar in downtown Salem as the Ducks were trounced by the Ohio State Buckeyes in the Rose Bowl.

The team made the switch from the dissipating PAC-12 into the growing Big Ten this year along with the University of Washington. The schools joined other universities, which included schools as far flung as Rutgers University in New Jersey and The University of Maryland. Phil Knight, arguably the most famous and wealthy University of Oregon alum, has been pouring money into the school over the last 25 years. He also provides support to the school's name image and likeness (NIL) program, which helped the team bring on impressive players to compete against other schools.

A local fan watching the Rose Bowl at Magoos said she's had season tickets for years, but was priced out this year, having to pay double the price she'd snagged them for the year prior. When asked about Phil Knight specifically, she said, "Uncle Phil? ...

I'd be his niece," to which her friend replied, "I'm a nail tech and I would gladly give that man a pedicure." The women later reflected more thoughtfully on how fun it's been to watch the team wear new uniforms each game thanks to Knight's contributions.

The Ducks had beat the Buckeyes earlier in the season 32-31, fueling the teams' emerging rivalry. Ahead of the Rose Bowl, the big yellow "O" on the UO campus was splattered with red paint, Ohio State's primary color, per Bleacher Report. The feeling of anticipation heading into the semifinal for fans was high. Despite being competitive over the last several decades, the Ducks have never won a national championship.

Many of the fans at Magoos had been cheering on the Ducks for the last thirty years, waiting for them to clinch a national title, celebrating wins and mourning losses. One woman, a UO alum, recalled a game against Oklahoma in 2006. Her ex-boyfriend was rooting for the Sooners. She'd started to leave the stadium with the Ducks losing 27-33, but with 45 seconds on the clock, they scored a touchdown and a field goal. She said her ex-boyfriend went home crying while she celebrated.

On Jan. 1 it was the loyal Duck fans that rang in the New Year teary eyed. Ohio State crushed Oregon in



Patrons look up as the Ducks are defeated on Jan. 1. Image by KAT THORNTON

the first half, and despite a couple touchdowns worth of hope, the team was unable to recover. "I don't want to be superstitious, but I think it's because Chip [Kelly] is coaching for Ohio. Who knows, he might know their strategy. Ohio seems to know their every move," said one woman, discussing the former Duck head

coach. Her friend chimed in, "It's not an excuse. I heard there are a few players down with the flu. But it's not an excuse. We should be able to beat them."

They did not. "They always get so close, but they never get there," said a Salem native and UO alum.

Hiroataka Kanai crossed the world to play football. Now he faces a bittersweet graduation

Ruby Hampton • Staff Writer • Dec. 20

For many students here at Willamette, sports are a way to stay rooted and healthy through their college years. For Hiroataka Kanai (25), a graduating senior, playing college football was the opportunity of a lifetime. Now, on the verge of graduation, he reflects on a college career marked by personal and team struggle.

Born in Tokyo, Japan, a young Kanai didn't know much about the gem that is American football. His fa-

ther, who was a professional cameraman, showed him a movie that would change the course of Kanai's life forever: the 2004 film "Friday Night Lights."

"Before I watched the movie, I didn't even know what football was," Kanai said. "After watching ... I told my dad I had to play high school football." Kanai set out to find a school in America that would help launch his football career. He moved to Santa Cruz, California his senior year, play-

ing for the Aptos High School Mariners. His rushing touchdown against San Benito High School in the opening round of the 2019 Central Coast Section Division III playoffs helped the Mariners reach the state semifinals.

Kanai explained, "I feel like I had nothing to lose. I did everything I could do before practice, at practice and after practice. As a result, I became a starter and played under the Friday night lights, which has always been my biggest dream. I was nervous, but I enjoyed playing football and I think that is my biggest motivator to keep playing." He was selected to play for an MVP second team at an All-Star football showcase, which led Willamette football recruiters to his email inbox.

Kanai's college career started off strong. He worked tirelessly on and off the field to improve his gameplay and showed up to the lifts with a positive attitude that extended onto the field. "It was amazing, just amazing. You know, I had nothing to lose, so I knew I had to do everything that I could do and work hard everyday," Kanai said. His hard work paid off. As a first-year, he started on the field and earned plenty of playing time. Then, tragedy struck.

During a spring off season training, a routine squat would end up benching him for the rest of his college career. "After I got injured, I watched my fellow 2025 defenders get better and better, and I felt stuck in one place and left behind." Feeling discouraged and lost without football, Kanai tried his best to get well and play again. During his senior year, a doctor told him the worst possible news: he wouldn't be able to play football anymore.

"It was the toughest moment of my life," Kanai expressed. "The amount of stress was unbelievable, but at the same time I found so many things outside of football, which was a pretty beautiful thing. I could feel a small happiness while still chasing big dream."

It's not a secret that Willamette's football team has been in a conference game winning drought since 2016. Nonetheless, Kanai speaks highly of the coaching staff and their hands-on approach to making him feel seen and heard even when not physically on the field. "They are my coaches, but at the same time they feel like my second parents," Kanai said. A sports team's morale can be a tricky balancing act between wanting to push yourself and others for the benefit of the win and still remembering the real reason why you play: the love of football.

The seniors this year, who never achieved a conference victory, contemplate an accusation that because of the consistent conference losses, the team has become used to losing. When asked about this, Kanai said, "That is a good point. I feel like because I came from a really competitive high school team, I definitely see a difference between a winning and losing team. I don't think it's only the seniors, though. If one bad play happens, the whole team's atmosphere goes down. I don't like losing. No one likes losing."

"Seven or eight years ago I was this skinny Japanese boy watching 'Friday Night Lights,' and now I am playing college football in the U.S. My life is like a movie." Kanai looks back on his time at Willamette fondly and has high hopes for the future of the Bearcats football program.



Hiroataka Kanai during his freshman year football season. Photo courtesy of Hiroataka Kanai.

Editors' Picks: Sports Photography

Skeet Starr • Sports & Rec Editor • Dec. 10

Every season, tens of unused sports stock photos are left to languish in the labyrinthian confines of The Collegian's Google Drive. Here are my and last semester's Photography Editor Lucy Devlaemink's picks for fall sports stock photographs that deserve to see daylight, even if they didn't end up joining an article. Enjoy.



Leina Chu ('28) sets for Carolina Jameson ('26) on Oct. 19.
Photo by MAC CHILDERS



A young Bearcat supporter takes in the game on Oct. 20.
Photo by KEENAN YOSHIZAWA



Thomas Ordonez ('27) takes on Simpson U on Sept. 28.
Photo by IRIS MCCLURE



Swimmers dive in against PLU on Nov. 9.
Photo by KEENAN YOSHIZAWA



Wsoc ahead of their home opener against Lewis and Clark on Sept. 18.
Photo by KEENAN YOSHIZAWA



Sean Kim ('25) eyes down a free kick on Oct. 20
Photo by LUCY DEVLAEINCK

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