

# THE COLLEGIAN

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## Opinion: Willamette's unpreparedness for the network outage put pressure on students, professors

**Kate Snyder**  
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, Feb. 21 at 5:21 a.m., Willamette students and faculty were graced with a brief email from Casey Feskens, the director of Willamette University Integrated Technology Services (WITS) Infrastructure & Operation team, reading: "We are currently experiencing a network outage affecting core services on Salem and Portland campuses. WITS Staff are looking into the issue."

This email didn't come as a shock to most Willamette students who are used to similar messages regarding power outages in dormitory buildings or the occasional Wi-Fi outages occurring throughout the academic year appearing in their inboxes. While frustrating, these small, day-long outages are to be expected when attending a small university and need little to no academic accommodation. However,

those outages were generally pertaining to either the Portland or Salem campuses exclusively, indicating a larger issue was happening with this outage — perhaps one that Willamette should have been better prepared for.

Students were left in the dark on the cause of the outage until Feb. 22, when a lengthy email from WITS gave students and faculty a glimpse into the issue: "On Tuesday, February 20th, our teams detected suspicious network activity and subsequently implemented our incident response protocols. ... The initial results from this investigation indicate that the network outage is the result of a cyber incident. ... Currently, we do not have an estimate for when network access will be restored." This email made Willamette faculty and students aware of how serious the situation was.

A similar cyberattack happened at Lewis & Clark College in March of 2023 that left their students and facul-

ty without network access for weeks. Another happened just a few weeks ago at Clackamas Community College just outside of Portland, which stopped classes for a week while they investigated the cause. With cyberattacks being a common occurrence for smaller institutions, one may have hoped that Willamette would have a stronger safety net or that its staff would be trained to have alternative teaching methods not reliant on technology.

The duration of this outage has put a damper on both students' and faculty's daily activities. Students have struggled to access Wi-Fi unless they go to a local coffee shop or other nearby businesses, which can become costly quickly. Institutions that offer free Wi-Fi, such as the Salem Public Library, are only accessible by car or on foot. Mackenzie Lorenz ('26) detailed her experience in navigating classes without network access. "All of my classes use Wise or Canvas for class material, and most

rely heavily on electronic media, which obviously I couldn't access without the internet. Only one of my classes was able to switch easily to classic pen-and-paper, but again, the others rely on electronic media such as web sources and PDF documents."

Not having access to online submission sites or class lectures forced professors to shift their already tight syllabi in order to accommodate students' lack of access to reading material, lectures and submission forums. Lorenz said, "My professors have been accommodating in terms of due dates. Some even switched the schedule entirely or asked the class for our input on the situation," she said. The same sentiment was shared by Abbigail Richeson ('26): "Professors have been great, pushing back deadlines on assignments and understanding that we don't have access to all campus resources; however, professors aren't cutting material, which means my schedule is busier than ever."

This accommodating nature professors have held is appreciated by students. However, it only forces more rigorous schedules for students down the line as the last weeks of the academic year creep up.

On the other hand, this time without the internet has allowed students to engage with their hobbies. "I've been able to lay on the quad and read, visit coffee shops I otherwise would've never gone to," Richeson said. Lorenz stated similarly, "I've been outside, reading and spending more time on my hobbies during the times which I would've been studying."

Fortunately, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. On Sunday, Feb. 25, Salem students were notified of temporary Wi-Fi, "WUTemp." On Monday, Feb. 26, WUTemp was made available to PNCA students. At the time of writing this, most of Willamette's applications and networks have been restored.

*Art by Alice Thornes*



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# 2023 Campus Climate Survey finds high rates of discrimination despite low participation

**Alan Cohen**  
Staff Writer

In December 2023, Willamette published its Campus Climate Survey Report for the first time since 2019. This survey is conducted every four years to better understand the experiences of students, faculty, staff and administrators relating to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). The findings show high rates of discrimination toward multiracial respondents, as well as on the basis of political belief, age and religion.

Carried out in February 2023, the survey asked respondents about their perceptions of Willamette's climate, Willamette's support for diversity and equity, and experiences with discrimination and harassment at Willamette. The survey was conducted by the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS), a third-party organization, and the report was constructed by the Assistant Provost for Institutional Equity and Community Engagement Emilio Solano and the Associate Provost for Institutional Research Kelley Strawn, along with other members of the EDI committee.

In terms of results, the response rate of the survey was 24% of the 3,128 Willamette community members sent an invitation to respond — down from a 49% rate in 2019 — and thus potentially not fully representative of the entire campus population. Nonetheless, according to the report, “the statistics that we derive from the survey data are useful if utilized appropriately.” Respondents were students, faculty and staff from all of Willamette's schools, including the Pacific Northwest College of Arts in Portland.

Solano is in charge of the university's EDI efforts and entered the role in 2022. He said the COVID-19 pandemic halted many of the university's plans to implement changes in light of the 2019 report, and the context for both surveys is very different for the same reason.

According to Solano, one of the key takeaways from the survey is that the average respondent reports a neutral-to-positive experience of Willamette's campus climate, which he sees as “a very positive thing.” In addition, the index that measures satisfaction with the university's EDI efforts and institutional priorities is 3.2 on a scale of 5.

He added that despite the average experience being neutral-to-positive, some results may be cause for concern. For instance, 70% of respondents reported having heard

insensitive or disparaging remarks about people with a particular political affiliation or view during their time at Willamette. The average percentage of people with this experience at other liberal arts universities is 64%, and the average across all participating institutions is 52%.

Solano also said that the percentage of respondents who have reported hearing these remarks about a particular age or religious background is also significantly higher than at other institutions. Students rank first as the main source of these remarks, followed by the local community.

26% of the respondents reported having experienced discrimination or harassment during their time at Willamette, including at off-campus events affiliated with the university. According to the report, “The most common source of the reported discriminating or harassing remarks were other students (35%), followed by faculty and administration (22% and 21%, respectively), then staff (13%), and others in the community (10%).”

The rate of multiracial people who reported experiencing discrimination or harassment is nearly 40%, which is overwhelmingly higher than among monoracial respondents.

In July 2023, the university EDI committee received 40 hours of training from the USC Race and Equity Center, which focused on interpreting the report, communicating its findings and implementing changes based on the results. In addition, the EDI committee has created a climate response subcommittee that is already planning student listening sessions and focus groups largely centered on students of color, multiracial students, political views and religious groups. “We felt as a committee that these were four areas we wanted to dig further into,” Solano said. There is also an increasing effort to host events centered around EDI issues and events that generate community connection, especially with regard to hiring and retaining faculty members and staff, according to Solano.

“I hope that different departments are looking at this survey; I hope that different schools are looking at this survey. I hope the students are reading this survey and they're asking questions. The dialogue that will come from this is going to be really impactful,” Solano concluded.

College of Arts and Science (CAS) Representative to the EDI committee Anya Friedman ('24) worked with the committee to synthesize

the data and help Solano and Strawn generate the final report. “A big part of it was making sure that the story that is conveyed is not misleading and makes the most sense in the context of the last school year,” Friedman said.

Before serving on the committee, Friedman had worked on a project for Student Scholarship Recognition Day (SSRD) in which they examined past climate survey reports and changes in the questions asked. Friedman is also the founder and co-president of the Multiracial Collective, which is a student organization that seeks to “connect members with community resources, hold multicultural events, and host multicultural speakers,” according to the Student Engagement and Leadership webpage.

They believe that some improvements to the report could have been made, especially regarding survey participation. Friedman's suggestions included using class time to fill out the survey the same way the university does with course evaluations in order to increase the representativeness of the sample. They also recommended changing the name of the survey to make its mission clearer and more appealing to future respondents, as well as making the questions more comprehensible and less ambiguous.

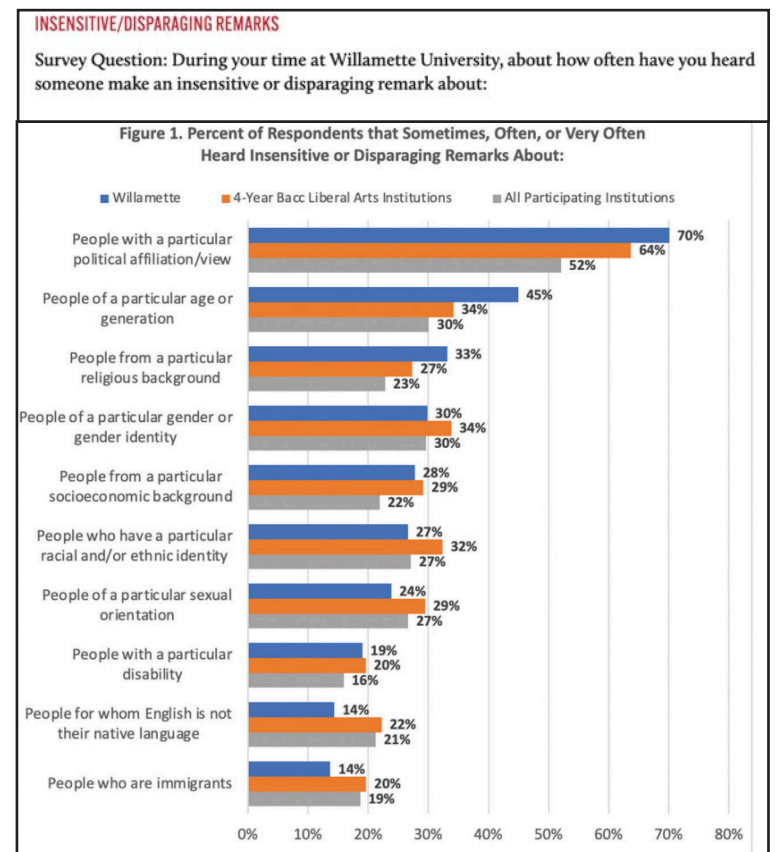
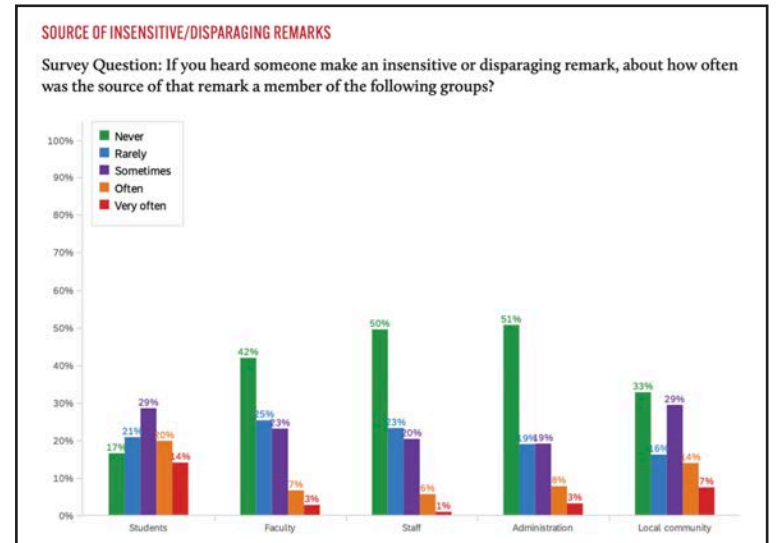
Friedman highlighted similar takeaways to those mentioned by Solano, especially regarding high rates of discrimination among multiracial respondents. “It's really important to cater to the needs of students who don't fit into specific racial or ethnic boxes.”

They concluded that they hope to see positive change in light of the report and improvement of the university's institutional efforts with regard to EDI issues. Both

Friedman and Solano are hopeful that the new focus groups will provide important qualitative data and context to make future improvement of EDI

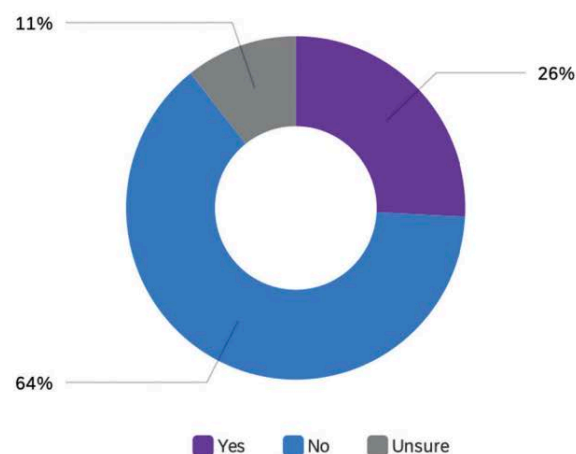
policies more effective and impactful.

*Graphs from Climate Survey*



## EXPERIENCES WITH DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT<sup>2</sup>

Survey Question: Have you ever been discriminated against or harassed on campus, at an off-campus residence, or at an off-campus program/event affiliated with this institution?



## Willamette's plants give deeper insight into campus history and culture

**Izzy Cornelison**  
Staff Writer

A walk around the Willamette University campus can often feel like a walk through an enchanted forest, a stroll through a fairy tale. The luscious trees dappled with sunlight, the gentle ebb of the Mill Stream, and the newly blossoming flowers signaling the arrival of spring all contribute to a place so aesthetic it almost looks staged. However, going beyond beauty, Willamette's nature — particularly its plants — tells a different story about the university if one looks closely.

"The most notable thing about a campus like ours is it is an old campus and the [agricultural design] choices have been where people have tried to make things both beautiful and interesting and sometimes just weird and wonderful so that [Willamette] feels like a different place," said Biology Professor David Craig.

In fact, the white oaks in the Sparks Center parking lot and around the University Apartments are some of the only plants on campus to pre-date intentional design. These trees have been here since before the American Methodist colonization and are more than 200 years old, having witnessed the entire university's life. "In some cultural contexts, old trees that were used in landscapes were called witness trees so those trees have seen

and experienced everything," said Craig.

Beyond the white oak, there are over 2,000 trees spanning 125 species on campus. If community members are ever interested in learning more about them, there is a tree map that allows individuals to see where the different types of trees are located.

"The rest of the vegetation," Craig said, "everything reflects either an idea somebody had, [that] they wanted to plant something or a weed."

Some of the plants, especially those around the science buildings, came about as part of previous biology theses or projects. Craig said, "There's some places, like the Olin science building, that used to be boring grass right up to the building that now has about 40 species of prairie plants that were planted for monarch [butterflies] as a special refuge for migration."

Craig encourages both Willamette plant fanatics and those with an untrained eye to observe nature. For those who are curious about what plants they are looking at, Craig suggests using iNaturalist, an app and website that allows anyone to document the plants around campus. Users can look at photos and identifications done by others or upload their own photos for identification.

As a self-described champion of conservation and preventing extinction, Craig is

particularly focused on Willamette's native plants. "Native plants are really important because through the last 2,000 to 10,000 years, through the last retreat of the glaciers, through the millions of years in ... western North America, they have evolved and there's a lot of relationships that depend on them," said Craig.

In addition to preserving native life, however, Craig believes that there is considerable merit to increasing the diversity of our plant life. "I don't think our campus should be completely Willamette Valley native plants," he said. "The reason is that our campus is a really unique place for many people from different backgrounds to come [together]. So if you have a Korean heritage or a Senegalese heritage or you're going to be traveling and studying abroad in Australia, we have plants that are from those areas on our campus that you can start to connect to your heritage, ancestors or the places you will be visiting."

Craig stressed the importance of asking questions about the surrounding environment, such as wondering what a plant is and where it's from. The iNaturalist app uses artificial intelligence to give a tentative identification of what plant one might be looking at, and then someone with more knowledge like Craig can confirm the identification.

When asked about

his favorite plant on campus, Craig immediately replied that it was Tree Number 92. "Right now, it's a very provocative individual plant. [It's] one of the big old oak trees in the parking lot [and it] has a whole bunch of biodiversity, including a lot of things that are making it diseased and architecturally dangerous to be in a parking lot. So we collaborated with the grounds staff, the city of Salem, and some other experts to go and do surgery on it, so now if it falls over it will be [safer]," said Craig.

In his students' words,

the tree looks sad or unfinished. Craig's plan for the tree is to cover it with birdhouses and other wildlife houses so that it not only serves a practical purpose but also as an art installation. Willamette's flora grows and changes just like the university itself and Tree 92 is a prime example. As the old white oak takes on its new life as an art installation, ready to witness and welcome new generations of students, Tree 92 and all of Willamette's plants teach us that the future is always sprouting.

Art by Lucy Devlaeminck



## Trolls in Portland? A look at the Nordic Center's cultural art

**Sage Lamott**  
Staff Writer

Ole Bolle, the giant 19-foot troll of the Portland Nordic Center, holds a very special place in the hearts of many. Invented by Danish sculpture artist Thomas Dambo, the giant lives in Fogelbo, peeping into the historic Nordic house that rests just beyond the grounds of the main Nordia House. Tall trees frame the red onlooker house that the troll statue looks into. Allegedly based on a poem, the troll is peering into the vacant window of the red, cottage-like house to locate a cookie jar. With large eyes and a body made of wood paneling, he looms over the small shape.

The Nordic Center describes the troll's creation on its website: "Drawing inspiration from historic Fogelbo and the traditional 'stugas,' designs were planned, and preparations were made over a few short months." The troll and its surrounding exhibit pieces were completed in about 10 days, and on Aug. 17, 2023, "After over 438 hours of work by 93 volunteers, Nordic Northwest welcomed our new troll."

The Troll is housed

at the Portland Nordic Center, Nordic Northwest. Nordic Northwest is a Pacific Northwest non-profit organization that aspires to preserve the history of the Nordic nations. The center consists of a few key buildings. The central Nordia house is crafted with the shapes and textures of Viking ships, dense forests and the movement of water. Grand doors open to two central exhibit halls, space for activity and collaboration, a Swedish cafe, and a gift shop selling Nordic mythology-related goods.

Artist Dambo describes the troll on his website: "His name is Ole-Bolle and it originates from an old Danish troll song. Both Ole and the house are entirely built of reclaimed wood and old pallets, and you can find and visit him for free in the garden behind Nordia House in Portland, Oregon."

Ole Bolle was built as part of a six-installment art series of Nordic statues across the Pacific Northwest, titled "Northwest Trolls: The Way of the Bird King." Dambo has also successfully crafted trolls in Bainbridge Island, West Seattle, Issaquah, Ballard, and Vashon. Created entirely

by Thomas and a small army of volunteers, the trolls are crafted with an environmental stance in mind. Each of these projects utilizes recycled materials, reflecting the project's dedication to environmental responsibility. For Dambo, preserving Nordic history requires preserving natural resources.

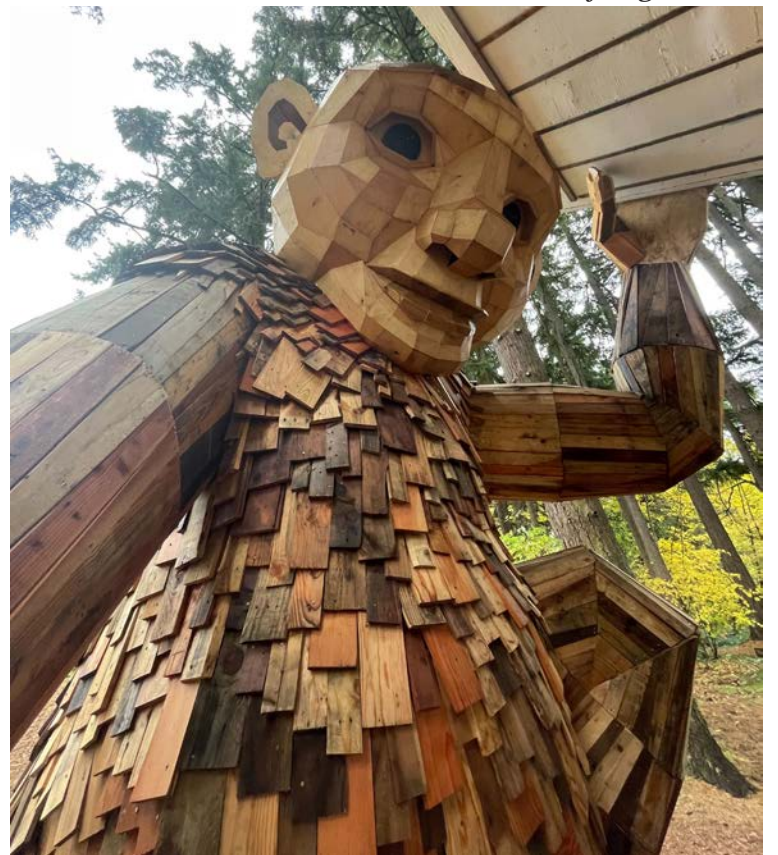
The work was created with the support of Nordic Northwest and the Scan Design Foundation. Created by a couple hailing from Denmark, the foundation strives to incorporate Scandinavian architecture specifically into the furnishings of homes in the Pacific Northwest. In addition to pursuing cultural exchange, their organization also focuses on educational opportunities in the form of internships or study abroad opportunities relating to their mission. Aligning with environmental sustainability and the awareness that Dambo emphasizes, the Scan Design Foundation supports creating artwork sustainably. Having supported the creation of not only Ole Bolle but all of the other PNW trolls, the foundation values their connection to Dambo.

Ole Bolle brings light to the Nordic Center through

craft, playfulness, and a sense of whimsy. According to the organization's website, "[The troll] provides opportunities for youth and adults to learn, support, and make a difference

in our environment. The trolls are visiting the Pacific Northwest from Denmark because they desire to help the little people: humans."

Photo by Sage Lamott



## What is Willamette Reading?

**Elise Lien**  
Staff Writer

With all the stress of the midterm season, many students find themselves turning to books to help them relax and take a break from the stresses of school.

One of these campus bookworms is Emelie Taylor ('26), who has been making her way through the "Dark Rise" series by C. S. Pacat. Pacat, a queer Australian writer, is known for her two fantasy series, "The Captive Prince" and "Dark Rise," as well as the graphic novel series "Fence." "I'm addicted," Taylor said about the new series. "There is a huge plot twist at the end of book two, and I am so excited. I'm going to have to wait a year or two for the next book to come out." The third book in the series is likely to be released in 2024.

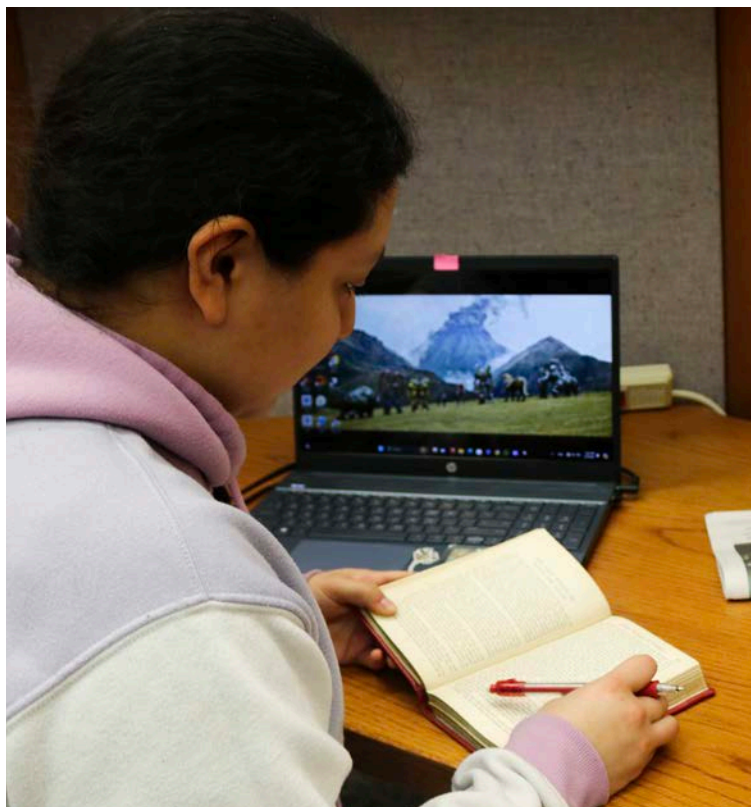
Another student enjoying a good mystery is Ceph Tronco ('26), who is reading the "Rivers of London" series by Ben Aaronovitch. Aaronovitch is an author and screenwriter who also wrote two "Doctor Who" serials, "Remembrance of the Daleks" and "Battlefield." Tronco said, "I'm making my way through 'False Value,' which is the eighth book in the River of London series." They described the book as "sort of an urban fantasy detective book where the protagonist works for the magic cops in London." Tronco explained their love of the series: "It's just fun! It's really different from what I've been reading for school or when I'm doing intensive research.... The writing style is really funny, the mysteries are well-plotted. It's nice to have, for my own personal reading, something that's just fun."

Making time for a book in between his busy schedule of class and theater is Nick Zimmerman ('27), who is reading "Creative Clowning" by Bruce Fife. Zimmerman explained, "It's a how-to manual on how to be a traditional clown. It was written in the 1980s and it's pretty great. I think it's a really excellent guide on how to be unfunny now, but decently funny in the '70s." Zimmerman likes to read to relax when he has the time and said he will often go to Archive Coffee and Bar, "order the cheapest thing on the menu and sit and read for a couple of hours."

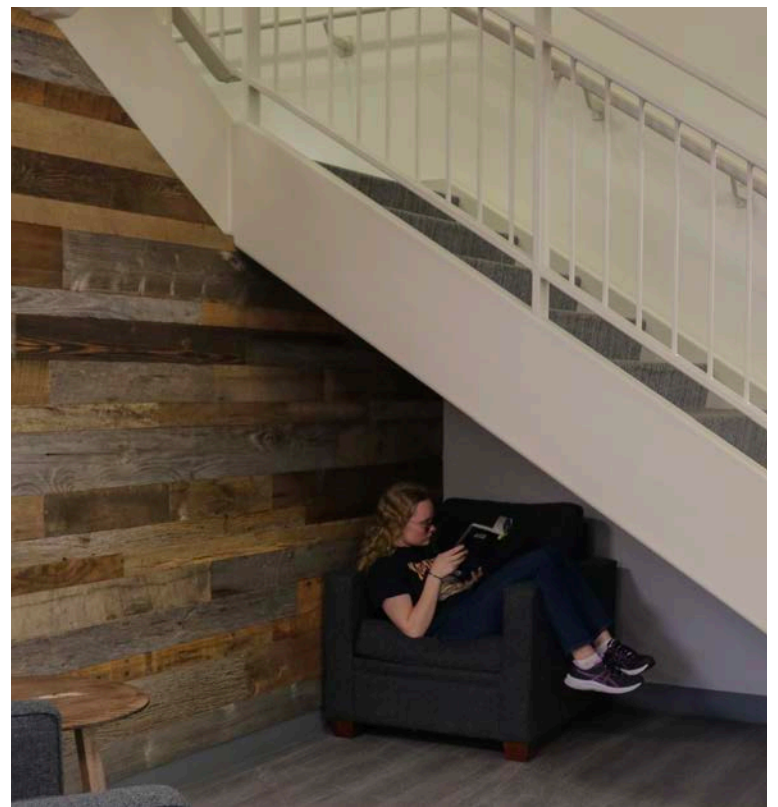
While spring brings midterms and stress for many students, it is also accompanied by a wonderful time to get involved in a new book. The season provides a perfect setting for reading, whether that be basking in the sun in the Quad or curling up in bed while the rain pours outside.



Photos by Lucy Devlaeminck Above: Rowan Spangler ('27) reading their favorite book, "Middlesex" by Jeffrey Eugenides.

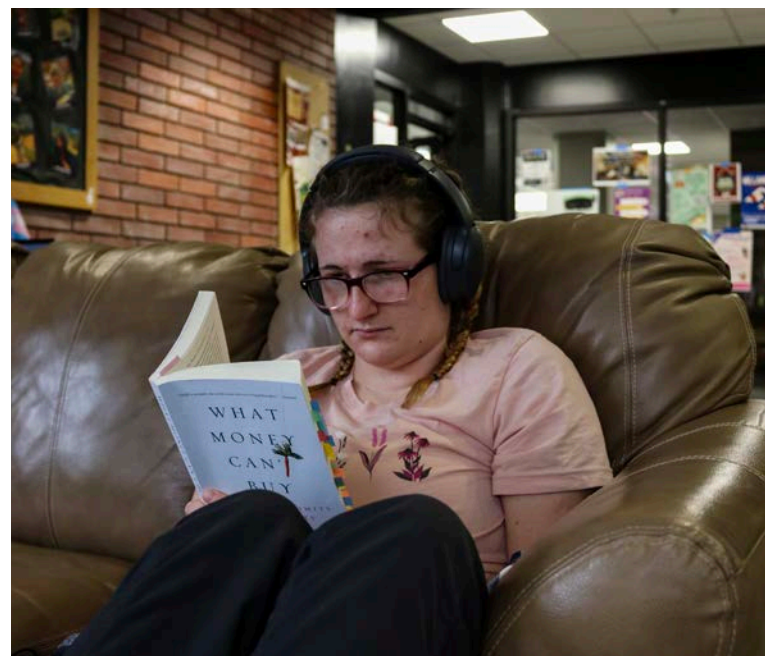


Below: Ceph Tronco ('26) reading "Roman Women" with a grilled cheese at Goudy.



Above: Emelie Taylor ('26) reading "Dark Heir" while awaiting the third book in the C.S. Pacat Series.

Below: Sheridan Donovan-Stauder ('27) reading "What Money Can't Buy" for class.



# Bearcats prove that it's a new era for men's hoops

**Jackson Garrett**  
Staff Writer

Men's basketball may have had one of the largest one-year turnarounds as a program, not only in the NWC but likely in all of college basketball this season. After winning only one game in the conference last season, the Bearcats finished 2024 at 15-10 overall and 9-7 in conference. The boys had a chance to make the conference tournament until the bitter end, winning both games in their final weekend at George Fox, as well as at home versus Lewis & Clark on Senior Night. Unfortunately, as usual, Pacific had to ruin all the fun. The Boxers won both their games on decision weekend as well, beating Lewis & Clark and Linfield and clinching their spot in the conference tournament.

This is the first time the 'Cats have had a winning record in conference since the '14-'15 season. They were slated for last place in the '23-'24 preseason poll after defeating only Linfield in the conference last year. New head coach Mike Lenahan, his staff and the newly defense-focused Bearcats were able to prove the voters wrong.

"My first two years

we wanted to play fast. We wanted to keep that this year, but have a good defensive gameplan going into every game," said guard Ryder Hsuing ('25). A new coach can create difficulties for players who are used to a certain dynamic and culture. Dramatically switching the playstyle throws yet another obstacle in for returning players.

With that said, it is fair to say they adjusted quite well to Lenahan's new scheme and were able to hold their opponents to much fewer points this year as compared to last.

On the offensive side of the ball, the boys ran more ball screens, pindowns and handoffs to get shooters open and in a good position to put up points. There was also a newfound sense of confidence and unity on the court. "The two biggest things were the belief we had in each other and the confidence. You could see before [each] game how connected we were," said Hsuing.

While the ball didn't exactly roll their way in the end, there is nothing for the boys to be too down about. For the first time in years, Bearcat men's basketball is a force to be reckoned with.

*Photos by Jason Lehman*



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# Laying a foundation: Aric Williams' plans for Willamette Football

**Ernie Samora**  
Staff Writer

After failing to find a conference victory in five seasons, fans' expectations for Willamette football have dwindled. In light of the recent departure of former head coach Isaac Parker, Willamette has hired a new head coach, Aric Williams, for the upcoming season. But will this change in leadership translate to a change on the field?

Williams has significant NCAA Division I and

NFL on-field experience under his belt. After playing cornerback for Oregon State, he signed as a free agent to the Philadelphia Eagles, spent several years at NFL camps and even competed in NFL Europe.

Most recently acting as defensive coordinator and linebacker coach at Montana Tech, Williams has served as an assistant coach at several DI universities. Considering his broad perspective in the sport, he feels good about his ability to improve Willamette football. He explained, "I've seen ... what the blue-

print was to get certain programs turned around and get them on the right track. So I do have confidence that I can do that here." This upcoming season will be his first time as a head coach.

Williams has big plans for the 'Cats, including a complete shift in the culture. "It's going to be the foundation," said Williams. Establishing a philosophy along with inspiring a mentality of discipline are his top priorities. "Discipline, to me, is the only shortcut." Asking questions such as "Who are we?" and "What

do we stand for?" establishes knowing and doing what's right: a moral compass. Williams hopes this shift in team culture will lead to results in tough situations, both on and off the field.

Part of that culture of discipline includes creating a voluntary football class which anyone on campus can sign up for. The class, currently ongoing, focuses on cardio, speed, conditioning and getting in shape, with the hopes of inspiring intrinsic motivation and discipline in all class participants.

Recruiting is also a large focus for Williams. "I'm always recruiting," he said. He's looking off campus at high schools, transfer students and junior colleges, but also recruiting on campus. Students all across Willamette may be considered, from athletes in other programs to non-collegiate athletes who have an interest in football. "However you identify as, if you're the right fit for our football program and you can help us

win and you fit into our culture and our character, come on and play!" As a sports writer, he even asked me if I had any interest in playing for the team.

Williams is emphasizing getting the team active in the community. Although he hasn't been at Willamette long enough to begin community outreach, Williams has many volunteer ideas based on work he has done with past teams. "I want to be a positive fixture in every aspect of the community."

"We [have] a lot of work to do," said Williams. "Is it going to happen overnight? Probably not. Anything worth having ... you gotta put the time and effort into getting that." He recognizes that students may have doubts based on prior seasons of football, but he is confident the 2024 season will go differently and hopes students will continue to show up and support the team in the stands. "Our goal is to win."

*Image from Willamette Athletics website*





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**Keep up with Willamette Athletics!**



## ASWU Student Org **Upcoming Events**

- **Health Professions Club's Annual Glasses Drive— Feb 7– Apr 30**
- **Mount Hood Skiing or Snowboarding— Sunday, March 10**
- **Maslenitsa! – Friday, March 15**

**Be sure to get your club or org event on the calendar by posting to the university events calendar or contacting The Collegian directly.**

ASWU sponsored orgs from the University Calendar are added here.

See more at: <https://events.willamette.edu/>

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## Fast Break sports report

### Skeet Starr Sports Editor

2/29

The sun is out, the Wi-Fi is questionable and spring sports are now in full swing. Take a break from staring at your screen, ceiling or bowl of Goudy tortellini to peruse the latest in Bearcat sport.

Willamette hosted the Women's Basketball Northwest Conference Championship tournament this weekend. The women faced the University of Puget Sound Loggers, losing 50-70. Seniors Carolyn Ho ('24) and Ava Kitchin ('24) put up a good fight, scoring 16 and 11 points with five rebounds, respectively. It was a tough loss, but the Bearcats earned a surprise bid to the national

tournament! They will face Millikin in Wisconsin this Friday.

Lacrosse demolished Corban in the season opener. First-year Cedric Shaw scored four goals, leading the women to a final score of 22-3.

Baseball opened their season with two doubleheaders, hosting Oneonta University from New York. Game 1 Friday ended by mercy rule (13-1). Jeff Hoffman ('24) impressed with four RBIs, a triple and two home runs, one of which was a grand slam. The second game was back and forth, but Willamette ultimately took the W (13-12). Jackson Garrett ('24), sports writer for The Collegian, made an impressive stretch

*Art by Carolyn Vazquez*

to snag an out at first base before ending the game with a walkoff. The men knocked it out of the park again Saturday, ending Game 1 early (10-0) and scraping out Game 2 (8-7).

Softball fared similarly, shutting the door on Warner Pacific 9-3 and 6-5 on Saturday. Kenna Davis ('25) led the team to victory after striking out ten batters.

Women's Tennis served, ate and left no crumbs Friday against the College of Idaho. Anika Groener ('24) won two of her three sets. Sunday, the Bearcats floundered at George Fox (0-9).

Men's Tennis had a tough weekend, losing Friday at Lewis & Clark (1-8) and Sunday at Pacific (3-6).

Consider in the coming weeks: Failure is not a dead end. Embrace failure on your terms, for it signifies your courage to venture into the unknown. Is the world throwing everything at you? Get back up. Resilience is your greatest strength. Are you listening? Even love for yourself isn't earned. It's a fundamental kindness you bestow upon yourself. You are doing better than you think; every step forward, no matter how small, is a triumph in itself. The more you use it the more it works! Stay Frosty, Bearcats. Today is a new day. Vamos!

**Ernie Samora  
Staff Writer**

3/4

Hello, Bearcat Fan!

The Collegian sports section has been pretty focused on official university athletics recently, so this edition of the Fastbreak hopes to help retain our more fringe readers. Let's go to the news, and then let's go to some existential poetry that loosely centers on climate issues!

Women's Basketball lost to Millikin 89-31 in the first round of the National Tournament (see more in print).

Lacrosse has a +59 goal differential over three games.

Baseball thrice narrowly defeated Lewis & Clark; they remain undefeated.

Men's and Women's Tennis were starved by the Pios and the Wildcats.

Softball took the fight to Tucson and found mixed results. They lost to Dickinson State (4-6), and stalemated Drew over two games (10-2 and 2-9).

In the world of sport: When walking in a false and silent summer, I was ambushed by a cougar. As I fell back I thrust my blade through her eye, and lying in the roadway she wheezed and spake thus in dual voices:

"When my mother-of-a-thousand-mothers first glimpsed your father-of-a-thousand-fathers floundering on the milky wastes, she whispered jokes and cheerful things to her cubs in the womb about the hair-

less birds who make aimless noise and have to steal skin. However, when I whispered to my unborn, I spoke of you in the same way I spoke of time and water. You try again and again, and you must do so. You eat as an afterthought."

She continued: "I am honored to have been slain in the old way, in a chance and danger, and not in the inevitability of your feast. Thank you. Please lay me in the bulrushes by the stream that I might feel the heat and trembling of the deer as they come to drink one last time, and may the spring floods, if they come again, wash me into the blue horizon."

I looked in her mouth and saw that all four of her canines had been taken for jewelry. I heaved and dragged and fought and clawed, but the cougar was far too heavy for me to fulfill her wish. That night my garden froze over, and the magnolias, which had bloomed early, withered and lost their scent.

Consider in the coming weeks: It's been almost a year since Joe Biden's administration approved the Willow Project, and alternatively, is Lacrosse OK? MVP of the NBA all-star game. Very neat, Dame!

Consider in the coming weeks: Has your world been shepherded into a few square blocks of campus by forces beyond your control and processes you will never live to understand, and alternatively, what are you up to this Friday night?



## Women's basketball recap: March 2

**Skeet Starr**  
**Sports Editor**

Women's basketball made history this season by taking first in the Northwest Conference regular season for the first time since 1996. Cone Field House surged to an estimated 1,250 spectators on the evening of their conference tournament semifinal, but the elusive title remained out of reach. Three days later, the 'Cats had hopes for redemption by way of a National Tournament berth, but Millikin left them without a postseason win. Here's a glance back at The Collegian's coverage of the best Bearcat hoop class and season in decades.

*Credit: Anushka Srinivastav*

*ASWU, SAAC, and CREC organized a round of 64 national tournament watch party. The squad, who were selected for a national bid after their conference tournament loss, faced the Millikin University Big Blue. A late game surge wasn't enough to see the 'Cats through to the next round. Their postseason ended in Wisconsin (83-91).*



*Above: Credit: Keenan Yoshizawa*

*Ava Kitchin ('24) shoots two during the 'Cats' conference tournament defeat. Kitchin, who was out with a knee injury last season, added a crucial dimension to the squad and pulled down 157 boards.*



Left: Credit: Jason Lehman

The Cone Field House wasn't always the friendliest environment for those in the wrong colors. Student support often searched for the limits of NCAA sportsmanship regulations. SKO 'CATS!

Below: Credit: Jason Lehman

Elyse Waldal ('25) shined, dropping 327 points over the course of the season.

Below: Credit: Jason Lehman

Carolyn Ho ('24), who averaged 11.4 points-per-game in the conference, drives through the Blues' defense. The 'Cats defeated the defending champs twice this season.



Right: Credit: Keenan Yoshizawa

Ava Kitchin ('24) shoots two during the 'Cats' conference tournament defeat. Kitchin, who was out with a knee injury last season, added a crucial dimension to the squad and pulled down 157 boards.

In Cone Field House, life goes on. Coaches recruit, graduating seniors start new lives and the scoreboard remains indifferent. But long after every member of the 2023-24 squad has graduated, those who care will remember the season in which the standards of Willamette Basketball were raised.



## Review: “Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind”

**Brooke Austin**  
Staff Writer

Willamette’s second mainstage production of the 2023-24 season, “Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind,” ran from Feb. 14 to 25. This play was advertised through word of mouth as an interactive and improvised comedy. After seeing the production, it can be confirmed: the play delivered.

“Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind” was a series of 30 short plays that the actors had to complete in an hour. Though this show was advertised as a comedy, some scenes reflected upon deep and complex themes like remorse, anger and grief. The cast was particularly small, consisting of six people: Henry Ives (‘24), Kiele Jarnigan (‘27), Anya Jones (‘24), Grae Siebenaler-Ransom (‘26), Lily Walsh (‘26) and Valentine Wells (‘27). Each show was different, as the audience got to dictate what scenes the actors performed.

With a play like “Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind,” it’s necessary to acknowledge that some audiences may dislike improv and audience interaction. It can feel uncomfortable and awkward.

A play presents a world created on stage, and an actor breaking the fourth wall completely erases the world they spent so much time building. Audience interaction puts pressure on an unexpected viewer to say something funny, which, in the heat of the moment, feels almost impossible. Leeloo Rohe (‘26), one of the scenic studio supervisors for this production, explained that most of this show is improvised, and actor Jones started the play by talking directly at the audience, making it clear that this production was heavily centered around improv and immersion.

“Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind” was filled with surprises: death, blood, spotlights on wheels, random sound effects and even a medieval interpretation of modern dating. Arguably the most surprising aspect of the show was how seamless the production was. Turns out, when the actors include audience members in the show from the get-go, the audience understands that they are a part of the world immediately instead of being jump-scared with that realization halfway through the show when an actor calls on someone in the crowd. The audience interaction and immersion were so well done that when I was called on to be a

part of a scene, I found myself excited to do so.

Though the audience dictated a lot of what the actors did, it was clear when a rehearsed scene was occurring. Wells and Ives had the most rehearsed dialogue and performed a lot of the scenes with a bit more depth than silly comedy, showcasing their acting abilities. Despite the audience’s involvement, it was evident that nothing the actors were doing was an accident, and their ability to conform to the metaphorical body language of the audience was impressive.

With a fantastic cast must come a fantastic crew. Rohe stated that, from a scenic point of view, there was very little to do. “This show is funny because there’s not really a set,” Rohe said, explaining that because the show took place in a theatre, there was not much for the set team to build. However, this was not true for all technical teams. “Scenic studio really took a backseat, but lightboard and soundboard really stepped up into that role,” Rohe said. “And when the actors say tech is improvising just as much as we are, that is true. Because they are deciding what the lights are going to be. They are throwing new things at the actors and at themselves,

and it’s absolutely beautiful.” Throughout the show, the audience was consistently impressed by the technical team, whether that be lighting, sound or props.

Above all else, it was clear that everyone involved in this production, including the audience, enjoyed themselves with this show. The actors’ ability to conduct a successfully improvised, immersive theatre production allowed viewers

to enjoy a thought-provoking show like Willamette’s production of “Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind.”

*Cast photo provided by Lily Walsh*

*From left to right: Henry Ives, Anya Jones, Kiele Jarnigan, Lily Walsh, Valentine Wells, Grae Siebenaler-Ransom*



## Opinion: Should you step on the seal?

**Mari Kauffman**  
Staff Writer

The bronze Willamette seal depicting a beaver is located outside the Hatfield Library. The seal is known to all Willamette students and faculty; professors and students pass it by as they head to the Bistro, to classes and to Goudy. However, the superstition that stepping on the seal will automatically cause an individual bad luck is a mystery in itself. Perhaps the answer to how it became a superstition will never be known, but the ultimate questions are: Should students step on the seal? And ... could all of this be a lie?

A step on the seal is not unlike the phrase, “Step on a crack, break your mother’s back.” The superstition is not legitimate, but people avoid it anyway, and for what reason? The fear of failing midterms and finals? To avoid breaking their mother’s back? While it may be understandable to purposefully maneuver around the seal, being manipulated by a fictitious curse is quite frankly absurd. Why not step on the seal? The superstition has yet to be proven. As far as actual evidence goes, a student cannot be proven to have failed their exams because they accidentally stepped on the cursed seal. So, why are students avoiding the seal?

After speaking with several students, a common opinion appeared to be that most people avoid stepping on the seal, so the seal’s “bad luck” is never tested. Emma Matthews (‘27) also mentioned, “Knowing that [students are] stepping on something that’s considered bad luck gives them bad luck.” If a person is unconsciously aware that they’re stepping on the seal, they won’t be cursed with an “F” on their next exam. However, Sofawni Gay (‘27) stated, “This superstition was made up to try to keep the seal clean. .... I haven’t stepped on it yet. ... my dog won’t either.” So what does it mean? Either Willamette really cares about the cleanliness of the beaver, or

it’s just paranoia guiding students in a different direction. Either way, it’s concerning that people let an unproven superstition control the way they walk to Goudy and the Bistro.

Paranoia and fear are the common themes in motivations for avoiding the seal. But is it rational? There’s no documented evidence that anyone has failed their exams from stepping on the seal. If there’s no evidence, what makes the decision to not step on the seal comprehensible? If anything, it’s the reason to step on the seal — people like to rebel.

People come from different backgrounds; backgrounds shape their personal beliefs that might make them avoid the curse of the

seal. However, some people couldn’t care less about the superstition and prioritize getting to and from classes.

All students are different, and yet all seem to share the same fear that “stepping on the seal will mess up exam scores,” according to Ciandra Choun (‘27). But how can that be accepted if there’s no hard evidence that this superstition is true? For any kind of apparition sighting, evidence is significant in proving its validity. If there’s no history behind this idea, isn’t it fair to speculate that the person or people who continue to convince students that they will fail their exams if they step on the seal, even years later, may have just cre-

ated a myth?

The temptation to step on it is right there, in the middle of Jackson Plaza. It jumps at students every time they pass through it. It tugs at their hearts, but still, the feeling of paranoia is controlling them. Failing is in no way connected to stepping on the seal. Why not step on the beaver? It’s not like some kind of discordant sound is going to ring in the background as the foot touches the face of the beaver!

So, should students step on the seal? While most of the superstition has to do with personal beliefs, half of it is the tales that students have heard on Bearcat Days and through the campus tours. Really, it could just be propaganda spread by the administration to entice high school students to join the Willamette community.

Students don’t want to take the chance of failing their exams. They avoid the beaver by circling around the bronze Willamette seal. There’s no certainty that this superstition is real. This could all be a lie to keep the seal clean, as Gay mentioned. Is it really worth avoiding the seal based on gossip and a coincidentally failed exam? This all could be fictitious. Some students are more superstitious than others, but all the situation comes down to is personal belief.

*Photo by Keenan Yoshizawa*



# Letter to the Editor: Should You Run for ASWU?

**Mira Karthik**  
**Milo Greenberg**  
**Chris Olivia**

As you may know, ASWU executive elections are coming up! The filing deadline is on March 14, campaign days begin on March 18, and voting begins on March 20. Many of you may be considering running for President, Vice-President, or Treasurer. We are writing this article to highlight characteristics that we have found are important for our positions. If, when reading this article, you find yourself thinking, "Hey that sounds like me!" we encourage you to attend the Exec Election Info Session, fill out the election packet, and submit it to colivia@willamette.edu by 5 PM on March 14.

**What makes a good Treasurer?**  
**Consistency:** As Treasurer, you will have a lot of deadlines to hit. If you are good at making deadlines consistently, even when there are unexpected challenges, Treasurer might be the job for you.

**Riding the learning curve:** The learning curve to be the Treasurer is steep. It is important to be willing to make mistakes, redo work when you mess up and rely heavily on advisors.

**Building relationships with club leaders:** The most important part of this job is club funding, so one of your most important jobs will be establishing strong relationships with club leaders. This job is well suited for someone who has been involved with clubs on campus, and is passionate about their success.

**If you have any questions regarding the Treasurer job description, please contact mngreenberg@willamette.edu.**

**What makes a good Vice-President?**

**Compassion:** A big part of your role as Vice President is to connect with the senators and to make sure that your senators feel respected and welcome in ASWU. The ASWU VP needs to have compassion and care towards their senators to build a tight-knit ASWU community.

**Willingness to learn**

**(and ask questions):** There will be a few things in the VP roles that you might need help navigating, which is okay, as you will need guidance coming into a new role. Therefore, it is good to have an open mind, and not be afraid to ask questions or ask for help. Know that there are people who can support you in this role.

**Time Management:** As a VP, you will have the responsibility of chairing the elections and other things that require you to create a timeline and stick to it. Actively using Google Calendar is a good start to managing your time (for in or outside of your VP role).

**If you have any questions regarding the VP job description, please contact colivia@willamette.edu.**

**What makes a good President?**

**Curiosity:** In my experience, the best skill to bring to this position is curiosity. Rather than bringing to the position what I know, I have been able to embrace everything that I do not. Curiosity will allow you to ask the right questions, seek out diverse perspectives, and

maintain a dynamic and flexible understanding of our institution.

**Communication:** Effective communication has been key to this role. This position requires a willingness to communicate—both in consistency and kindness. You will learn how to articulate our vision and values to the community and will benefit greatly from being able to listen attentively as concerns and challenges arise.

**Team Player:** "Not unto ourselves alone are we born" is our university's motto, and it is embodied in the role of ASWU president by a commitment to the good of every student on campus. While this role carries the title of "President," effective leadership is not about dictating orders from the top! Collaboration is everything, and this role requires recognizing that ASWU and students are part of a larger team. You have to be ready to roll up your sleeves and do the work, be inclusive in building your team, and be ready to help out whenever possible!

**If you have any ques-**

tions regarding the President job description, please contact mkarthik@willamette.edu.

**What characteristics are important for any ASWU position?**

**Trust and respect:** Respecting and trusting your peers in ASWU is absolutely crucial. Working in ASWU can be stressful. It is a lot of work, and conflicts are inevitable. When they arise, communicating with your peers will allow you to resolve them positively, so that ASWU can continue to fulfill its responsibilities.

**Buy-in:** ASWU has had a difficult few years. We are proud of ASWU's work over the past year, and we believe that ASWU has the potential to continue to be a positive influence on campus. If you join ASWU, whether as an exec member or a senator, you need to believe that too.

**If you have any questions regarding ASWU elections in general, please contact colivia@willamette.edu.**

## Staff Picks: If you were famous, what would it be for?

**Compiled by: Priya Thoren, Opinions Editor**

**The Pick:** The Incident, 2007, 45.694355, 106.948480  
**Submitted by:** Isis Coyle, Media

**Manager**  
**The Pick:** The coolest, funniest, smartest, most attractive, and humble-est person ever.  
**Submitted by:**

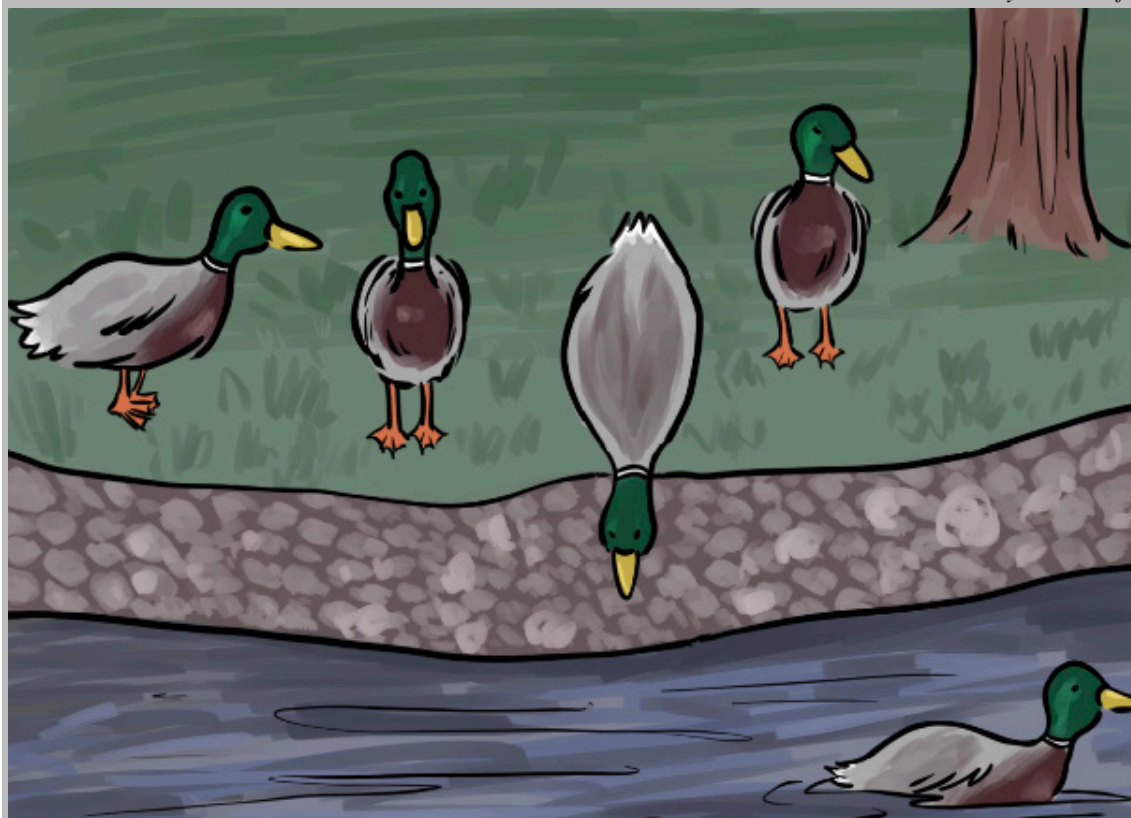
**Izzy Cornelison, Staff Writer**  
**The Pick:** Biggest nose in the PNW  
**Submitted by:** Pierluca Carnovale, Business

*Art by Eli Fukuji*

**Manager**  
**The Pick:** Something to do with an intelligence agency.  
**Submitted by:** Monte Remer, Lifestyles Editor  
**The Pick:** Grand larceny  
**Submitted by:** Skeet Starr, Sports Editor  
**The Pick:** Something completely accidental  
**Submitted by:** Caramia Christensen, Artist  
**The Pick:** Most stable life by the age of 20.  
**Submitted by:**

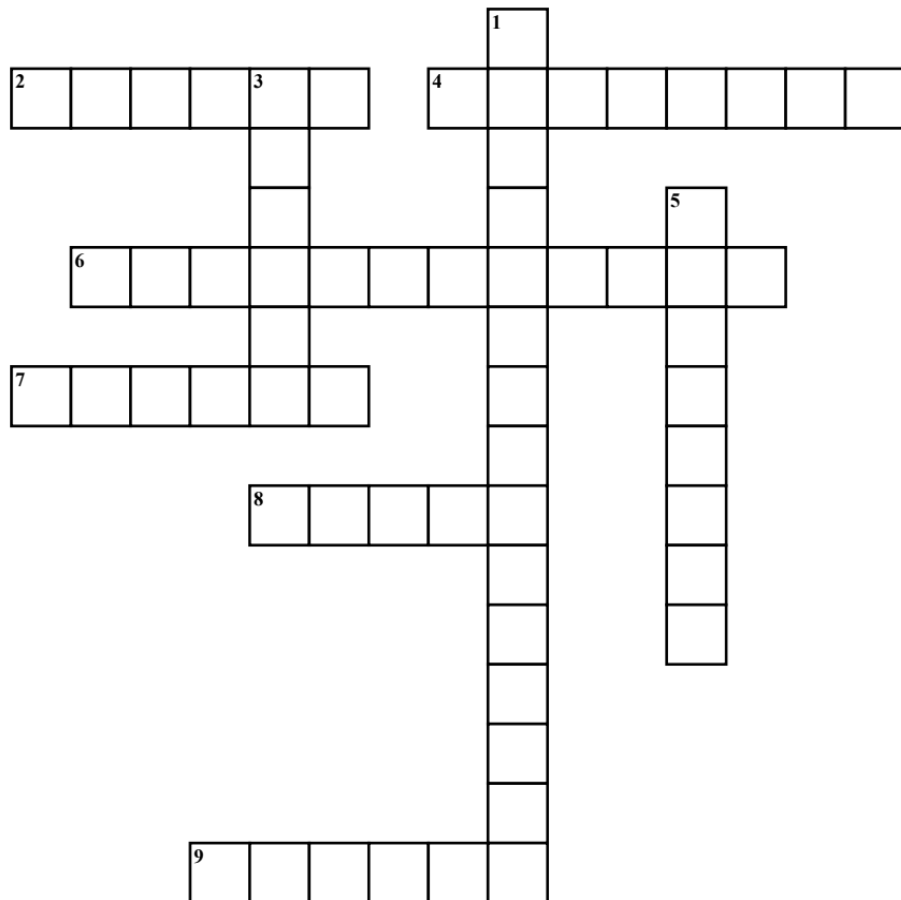
**Bjorn Domst, Copy Editor**  
**The Pick:** Being the hottest sexiest cowboy man at Willamette who is also the most fashionable and also alligator  
**Submitted by:** Ernie Samora, Staff Writer

**Disclaimer:** The views and opinions expressed are from the individual staff members and do not reflect the perspective of The Collegian as a whole. The submissions are unedited and unaltered from what was submitted by individual staff members.





# March Mad-crossword



### Across

- [2] March
- [4] St. \_\_\_\_\_ Day
- [6] This Canadian born singer was born on Mar. 1st
- [7] \_\_\_\_\_ training
- [8] This zodiac season begins at the end of March
- [9] International \_\_\_\_\_ Day

### Down

- [1] Jumping back one hour
- [3] The University of \_\_\_\_\_ is hosting the First Four on Mar. 19-20
- [5] Mar. 9th is National \_\_\_\_\_ Day

*“Procrastination” by Eli Fukuji*

