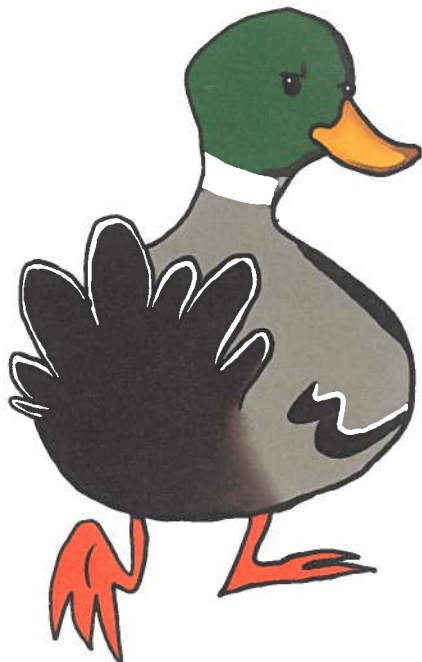


# THE COLLEGIAN

Willamette's Independent Student Newspaper Since 1889

*Your College, Your Paper, Your Stories*



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## What's Happening With Student Loan Debt?

ALAN COHEN  
STAFF WRITER

According to the Education Data Initiative, 42.8 million borrowers have federal student loan debt, which sums up to 1.617 trillion dollars in total. Borrowers are often saddled with debt for decades, many times risking their financial stability and quality of life to repay the cost of their education. President Biden has presented student debt relief plans, some of which are currently blocked by the Supreme Court and are pending further litigation. These controversial plans come with important implications in the short and long term. Among these are both positive and negative macroeconomic consequences, as well as an equity debate.

The average public university student borrows \$32,880 to attain a bachelor's degree, and the average debt of a private university student is more than double that amount. Students who attend graduate school often end up with debt of up to \$200,000.

Students and families have long pressured legislators to cancel student debt to make up for the increasing cost of higher education. In fact, studies have shown that federal debt relief is a popular policy, with 55% of Americans supporting cancellation of up to \$10,000 per borrower in federal student loans, and 47% supporting cancellation of up to \$50,000 per borrower.

One of the main platforms President Biden ran on in 2020 was financial relief for student loan borrowers, and access to affordable

higher education. On Aug. 24, 2022, the Biden-Harris administration announced new changes and proposals to student debt relief, including the pause of all federal loan payments until Dec. 31, 2022, due to the financial burdens caused by the pandemic.

In addition to the student debt repayment pause, the White House also announced amendments to the already existing Revised Pay As You Earn (REPAYE) plan. These new changes would include student debt forgiveness of up to \$20,000 per borrower earning less than \$125,000 annually, ensure full forgiveness after 10 years of repayments for borrowers with loan balances of \$12,000 or less, and capping monthly payments at 5% of discretionary (i.e. after taxes and basic expenses) income, among other proposals. The new amendments to the plan, nonetheless, are currently blocked by the Supreme Court, and further litigation is expected to take place in the following months.

Rohan Grey, a Contracts Law professor at Willamette University College of Law, explains that Biden's student debt forgiveness plans are currently blocked by the Supreme Court largely because of lawsuits that argue that the executive power didn't have the statutory power to create the debt relief plan. In law, this is referred to as the 'major question doctrine', and it is used to challenge actions of high political or economic significance when the statutory authority is unclear or not explicitly



Photo from Associated Press

stated. In other words, since Congress did not explicitly give the Department of Education legislative approval for the REPAYE plan, it is up to the federal court system to decide whether the plan is within statutory limits.

According to Grey, the outcome of this litigation depends on the interpretation of the text. Grey is afraid that ideological values, as opposed to an impartial decision, might influence the decision that the highly conservative court will make about Biden's student debt relief plans. "I don't think this is a question about principles. The question is about how many votes you have in a very small electoral body that happens to call itself a court," Grey stated. "President Biden certainly didn't make it easy for himself to win because he left this issue until very late in his term. In their attempts to be more incremental and mild, they actually ended up being weak."

In addition to Presi-

dent Biden's proposals, many members of congress have worked on proposing legislation regarding federal student debt, and overall higher education cost. Among them are the Student Loan Relief Act, which would cancel up to \$50,000 for each borrower, and HR.9558, which would expand student debt relief for Medicare recipients. Grey concluded by explaining that the major questions doctrine wouldn't apply to proposals in Congress because they are legislative actions, and Congress, within constitutional limits, has unlimited power to cancel student debt. Congress, nonetheless, most likely would not get enough votes to cancel student debt via legislative bills.

Laura Taylor is the Associate Provost for Academic Finance, and an Economics professor at Willamette University. "The general consensus is that we have a student debt problem," she stated. Taylor add-

Contd. on Pg. 3

## ASWU Clarifies Petition Process, Adds No Confidence Vote

On March 2, 2023, The Democratic Reform Bill created by Senator Zeke Druker ('24) was presented to the Associate Students of Willamette University (ASWU) in order to define the petition process for removing elected officials and add a Senate no confidence vote as an additional form of removal. The Democratic Reform Bill was tabled during the March 2 Senate meeting, but passed a week later on March 9.

Andrew Caruana ('24) introduced an additional petition to amend the ASWU constitution and Bylaws, stressing to the Senate that there is a need to define the petitioning process in ASWU as soon as possible. Caruana's petition proposed a campus wide vote of no confidence for ASWU Executive officers that could be triggered via petition.

After Caruana presented the petition, Druker motioned that the Senate should discuss the Democratic Reform Bill, as it would address Caruana's and many other students' concerns. When presenting the bill, Druker stated, "there is currently no instructions for how petitions should work. This has been a very major source of frustration for anyone who's tried to engage with that process. This petition process is referenced in section one of the bill. It also changes a few other language pieces, and clarifies definitions that are vague."

They later on discussed how the bill being presented is a "codification of the logical consequence of existing principles," as it "wouldn't actively change any amendments in the ASWU constitution." Rather, it would simply define the petitioning process

and how the Senate would be involved with this process, adding additional sections to define what the petitioning process would like within the scope of the Constitution. One of these additions would be a no-confidence clause, which would allow the senate to have a formal vote to indicate whether they are no longer in support of a member in the executive branch and remove that member.

After Druker presented the bill, many Senators were concerned with the use of jargon, stating that it was difficult to interpret especially because Senators were only allotted twenty four hours to read the bill prior to the meeting. Senator Adelaide Kemp ('25) stated that she, along with many other senators "hadn't gotten a chance to thoroughly read the bill [because of midterms] and create our own individual interpretations," leading some to want to table the discussion and wait until the next meeting on March 9 to have an in-depth discussion about the implications and repercussions of the bill.

However, public opinion was quite the opposite. Mitchell Everetts ('24) stated, "one of the biggest aspects about being a representative is that you have to have the trust of the people in which you represent. If you lose that trust for some reason, then you should not be a representative of the people." He continued on claiming that, "at this moment, we [students of

**GIA PATEL**  
STAFF WRITER

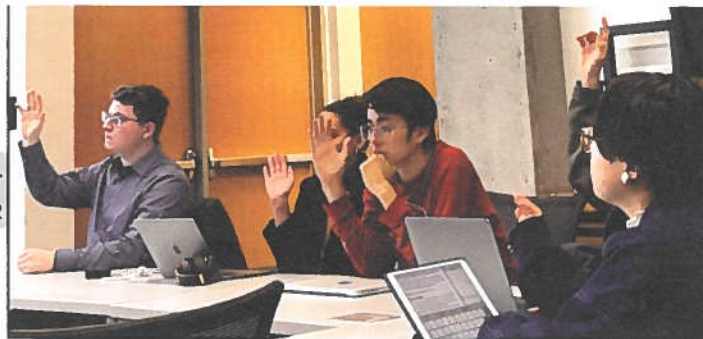


Photo by Anushka Srivastav

Willamette] have no legitimate way of expressing that total distrust in that person, and it is for that reason that not supporting this bill feels like not supporting the involvement of the student body in this student body council."

Both Druker and Carunana emphasized that these attempts to create a definition of the petitioning process were not aimed at anyone in particular and were to prevent situations where student voices didn't feel heard by ASWU. President Ian Curtis ('23) responded by stating he values the discussion and wanted to highlight a few topics, including the use of restructuring committee, which is chaired by Vice President Eliza Gonzalez ('25), and by foregoing a conversation without the involvement of the committee casts aside the purpose of why it was created-to restructure. He went on to address that, "If your cause for writing this bill isn't related to any specific person or allegations as folks have claimed tonight, I would recommend that we move to amend the enactment date to April 28th, which is the day following

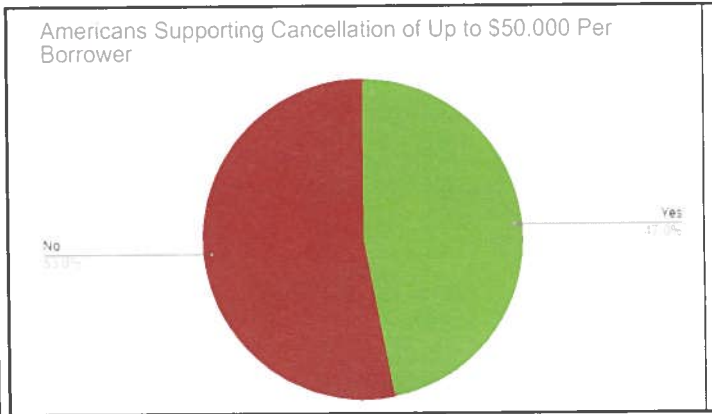
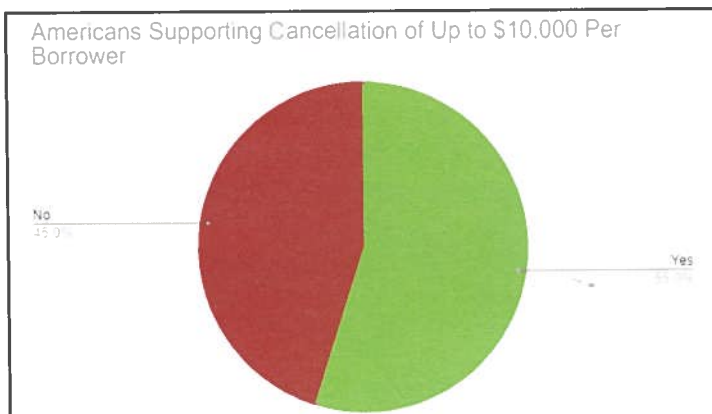
our last senate meeting," justifying that this would ensure that the remaining weeks in ASWU would be dedicated to the "important work we are doing."

In response, Carunana claimed that the bill had no relevance to the committee as it wouldn't allow there to be any public interaction or opinion. He additionally pointed out that Curtis' statement was disrespectful, emphasizing to "suggest that this bill's enactment waits until someone in this body is no longer at risk of losing their seat is incredibly disrespectful, because that tells me, that tells this entire student body that you don't care about their opinions, you care about protecting your seat. He went on, stating, "You should be ashamed of yourself"

Ultimately after a lengthy discussion about tabling the bill and split vote in the Senate, Gonzalez voted on tabling the discussion and waiting until the next meeting to vote on The Democratic Reform Bill. The bill passed during this next meeting on March 9th, 2023.

Photo by Anushka Srivastav





Contd. from Pg. 1  
 ed that the main positive benefit of student debt relief is that individuals with canceled or reduced student debt can spend more resources on buying assets, such as houses or cars, as well as being able to save money more easily. "It really does allow a generation of graduates to be able to spend that money in other, better ways," she stated.

In addition, debt can have negative effects on a person's mental health, and the lack of financial stability can increase the risk of untreated mental health issues or suicidal ideation. Taylor mentioned that another positive aspect of student debt relief is reducing the psycho-

logical and emotional pressure on those whose mental health is directly impacted by their financial situation.

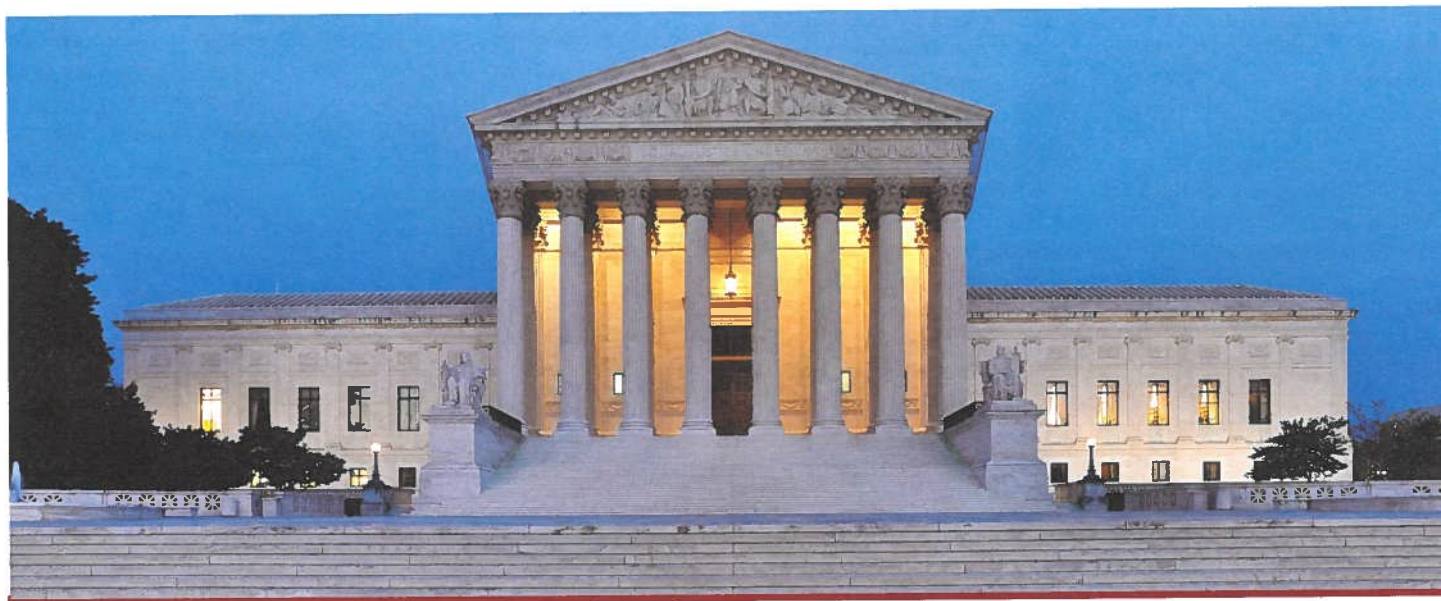
On the other hand, there are several arguments against canceling or reducing student debt. Among them, according to Taylor, is the potential spike in prices and inflation. Taylor points out that if a substantial part of the population is forgiven their student debt, they will demand products at much higher rates, potentially driving up prices, and negatively affecting those with less resources or other debts that have not been forgiven. In addition, the federal government would not receive back many of the funds it lent to students, which, according

to Taylor, could impact macroeconomic stability. That is, if the federal government does not receive back part of the funds that it gave students in the past, there could be a lack of public revenue or an increase in money printing, which would hence also increase inflation.

In addition, Taylor points out that this issue comes with a fairness debate. "Not everyone gets an equal chance to benefit from this particular initiative," she stated. For example, president Biden's initiatives only affect federal loans, so those who borrowed from private firms, or friends and family cannot have their debt forgiven. Nonetheless, she does not find this to be a

persuasive argument, since public policy cannot affect everybody equally, and that the fact that not everybody can directly benefit from this initiative doesn't mean that it inherently outweighs the benefits.

Students at Willamette University, as well as other higher education institutions in the country, remain attentive about the outcome of this plan, which will come with very important consequences for our country, our economy, and many people's futures. It is up to the Supreme Court to decide whether Biden will be able to fulfill his campaign promise and forgive federal student debt to eligible graduates.





**NED MARTIN**  
STAFF WRITER

## Take a Trip to Salem's Elsinore Theatre

On Saturday the 11th there was a huge event for the Salem Art Association. Their goal was to provide Salem a unique show, something people hadn't seen before. The Elsinore theater is a local venue that has been working to create a place for local and larger acts to perform in Salem's downtown. Inside the theater, a new world emerges. Well dressed people watch a stage surrounded by columns and curtains, settling in to watch the acts of the night. These acts took on vastly different approaches and musical influences. It felt like traveling through the world with each new performance.

Mosley Wotta was the show's emcee, or master of ceremonies. Putting on his best NPR impersonation, he worked the crowd and solicited donations. The Salem Art Convention is a non-profit organization and—despite the venue's upscale appearance—they do not operate with wide margins and they rely on donors. As Mosley said, "If you can give, give."

Mosley Wotta's name includes a layered meaning. When spoken it sounds like "Mostly Water." His message here is to remind all of us that we are all mostly water—no matter what skin color or body

size we possess, we are all the same on the inside. In leading his show, he sought to reinvent the spaces that we normally associate with old money, spaces often dominated by fancy old folks. Despite the Elsinore being one such space, the event traveled from setting to setting across the world, something unimaginable when the theater was created. The experience of seeing these vastly different acts felt almost like traveling the world through music, on a Voyage led by Mossley Watta.

The journey started close to home, with a land acknowledgment and Kalapuya traditional music by Jan Michael Looking Wolf and Robin Gentlewolf. They performed flute and guitar songs and discussed an array of current social and political divides. One song called "we are all related." commented on coming together in a divided country and world. The acknowledgment served to acknowl-

edge the building's history while also promoting the affected communities.

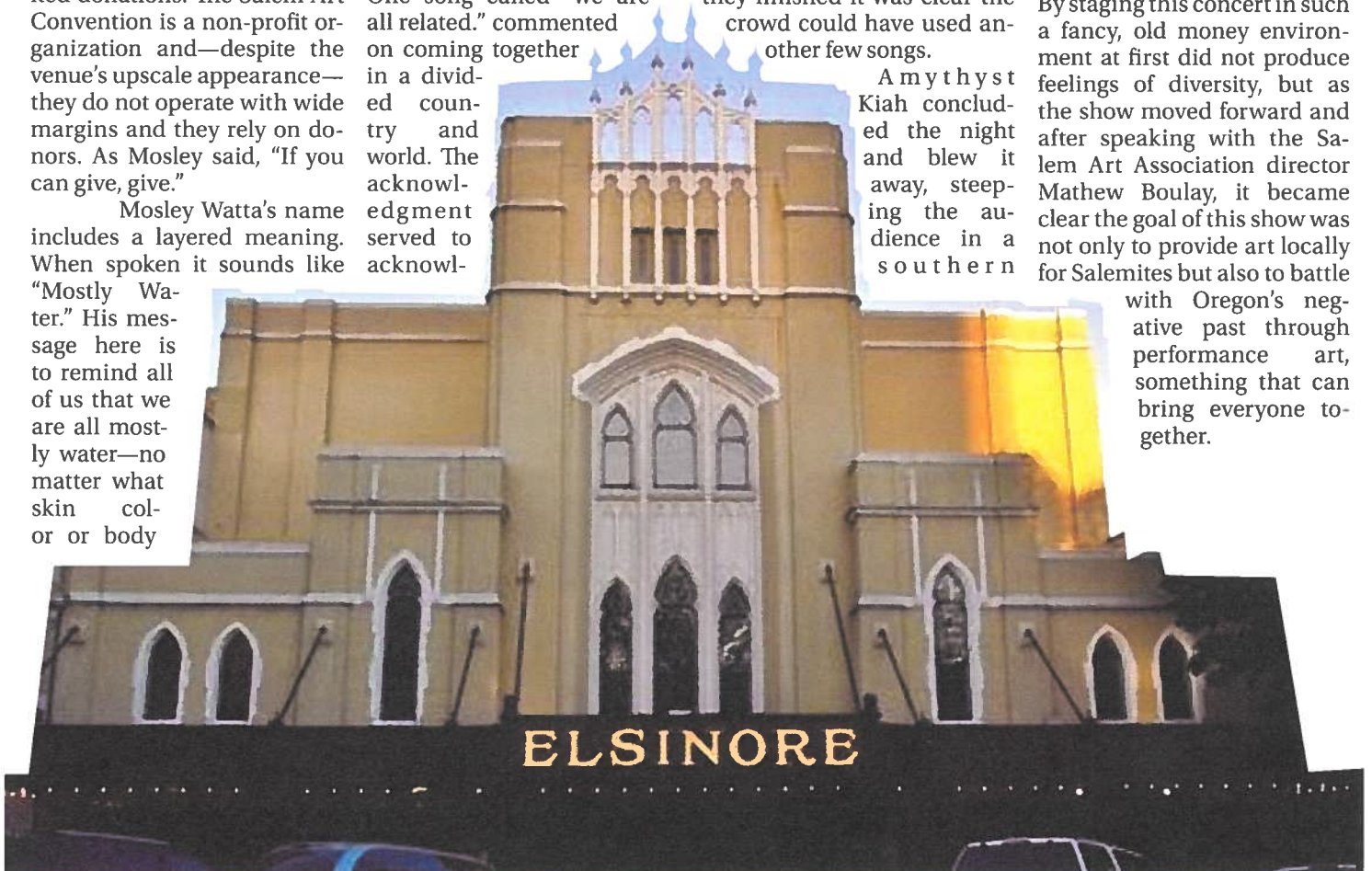
Next up to perform was an opera singer named Ellie Niver. Her vocal range was as breathtaking as the pianist's ability on the keys. Reminiscent of a ballroom in Rome, Italian opera filled the air.

Moments later, Pachaga came into the room and transported the audience to South America. The ten-person band lifted the crowd from their seats—at first just a few—but soon after the host began to engage the crowd and got everyone up to dance in the aisles. There was a mix of salsa dancing and the cha cha slide as the band provided a stellar atmosphere. It was very difficult not to move once they got on stage and when they finished it was clear the crowd could have used another few songs.

Amythyst Kiah concluded the night and blew it away, steeping the audience in a southern

city with warm air and cowboy boots. Songs like "Black Myself" and "Natural Blues" shook the crowd. It was clear after just a couple minutes why she was nominated for the best roots song at the 62nd Grammy awards in 2020. Her lyrics blended the insightful political commentary she wanted to promote while not sacrificing any artistic liberties. With her on stage were two great guitarists that stole the show on occasion by just shredding their solos. One of the best perks of seeing a live show, Amythyst even performed new songs that have not yet reached Spotify.

Overall the experience here was invigorating. Not only was the art displayed unexpectedly and constantly changing but it challenged the norms of physical spaces. By staging this concert in such a fancy, old money environment at first did not produce feelings of diversity, but as the show moved forward and after speaking with the Salem Art Association director Mathew Boulay, it became clear the goal of this show was not only to provide art locally for Salemites but also to battle with Oregon's negative past through performance art, something that can bring everyone together.





# LIFESTYLES

## An Analysis of Gen Z Aesthetics

MONTE REMER  
LIFESTYLES EDITOR

Most little things are probably forgotten. Most aspects of the way we go about our lives are too unnoticeable to take down on paper or—in recent memory—too much like individual atoms of a needle inside the haystack of biblical proportions that is the internet. When future generations look back on this time, they might wonder how people really lived amongst it all. For want of a clear snapshot of a place and time, they might wonder what we saw. Looking around at the aesthetics of students on Willamette's campus, this is what I see.

### Unabashed Zoomer

Speaking of the internet, here-in are the egirls, eboys, eNBs and so forth. This group—and these terms for those unfamiliar—define those who outwardly embrace the internet age. Sweaters, sneakers and comfy pants are common amongst them as if the body is but a vessel whose want of comfort must be efficiently dealt with to make time for the mind's digital stimulation. In constantly affixed earbuds or cat headphones, esoteric music is playing. Video games are hotly debated and memes are not so much currency as lifeblood. When someone of this aesthetic raises their phone and says "Hey, look at this," they are like an orchard keeper offering you their finest rose this spring.

### Jocks

There's remarkable consistency here. Shirts, shorts and merch from various sports teams have all been around the block and they walk it still. Someone in such garb might stop you and compliment your shoes. There is a deep re-

spect for shoes among Jocks. Earbuds here too are largely ever present, typically playing something popular like Bad Bunny or Kendrick Lamar. Jocks tend to be as steeped in Gen Z culture as Unabashed Zoomers, though far more earnest. Gen Z slang among them is less ironic, Jocks use terms like "fire," "on God" and "L" without fear of judgment.

### Alternative

Upon the death of Kurt Cobain or maybe the thirtieth birthday of Billie Joe Armstrong, the punk crowd must have split into two groups. One group headed out on their skateboards, the other to hitch hike with their guitars. The first group was assimilated into other aesthetics. The guitarists, however, traveled into music like spelunkers into a cave—thus the Alternative aesthetic was born. There's lots of things with any aesthetic to discuss, but music reigns supreme here. Gems from the cave's most obscure depths are highly prized—bands like Ghost and Youth Fountain—but some popular stuff is also beloved, from R.E.M. to Modest Mouse. Spotify playlists are impeccably curated and clothing is usually related to some band or another.

### Vintagecore

Maybe this one comes easier at Willamette. Eaton and Lausanne's Gothic architecture and the Hatfield Library's 70s design lend themselves to the smell of old books and the sounds of vinyl. So many students long to buy a Volkswagen bus and drive it to



Art by Isis Coyle

every thrift shop around Salem. Cottagecore and Dark Academia aesthetics come out of this general group, though more often people who generally prescribe to Vintagecore tend to have a broader mix and match romanticization of the past. Bell bottoms are coming back as students voluntarily read Greek mythology. "Stranger Things" and Stephen King adaptations have made Gen Z enamored of the 80s as the early internet of the 90s and 2000s have spawned things like analog horror and the weirdcore aesthetic. A teenager's knowledge of both Shakespeare and Revolutionary War Era America—particularly surrounding Alexander Hamilton—is nowadays surprisingly comprehensive. Such devotees of vintagecore stand on the shore and let the waves of past eras wash over them.

### Chill

Simply existing is a virtue

and a lot of people have a knack for it. "Chill" is a popular Gen Z word to describe a general sense of peace and goodness. Dorm rooms of the Chill aesthetic are likely to have a coffee on the counter next to some well kept plants. Lo-fi or something by Taylor Swift is playing in the background, Netflix on the TV. Posters of Pink Floyd and Prince line the walls. Places like these are ideal for being cozy in leggings or jeans, perhaps a sweater or just whatever feels comfortable. There's no upheaval of the world here. Why would there be? The world is a pretty cool place. While other aesthetics cultivate the perfect microculture within their rooms and lives, people in the Chill aesthetic remind everyone that they can always open up the blinds and take a minute to appreciate the simple beauty of existence, most of all being here to appreciate it.

## Spring Wanders into Campus

**SKEET STARR**  
**SPORTS EDITOR**

The equinox arrives in a few days, and some of the campus' natural features have finally noticed, (much later than the Californian students may have liked).

Drew Alexander ('26) finally breaks out the jorts as temperatures narrow in on 60°. (right)



The daphne near the botanical garden has been peering from last summer's grave for a couple of weeks, but now the first blooms have decided to show up. For those unfamiliar, daphne blooms have a scent that will make you envy the insects who are small enough to fit inside the flowers. (right)



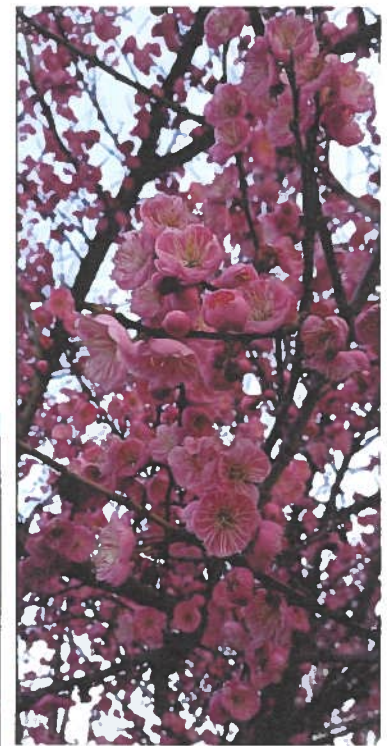
Reigning from the north of Europe, the daffodils don't mind the cold. They are in full bloom all over campus, especially on the west end of the quad. (above)



A perfectly arched rainbow demonstrates how the clash between forces results in beautiful colors. Explain this, so called "science students" (no I don't know what refraction of light is and yes I think rainbows are made by wizards).

Bearcats enjoy a day of sunshine by a high mill stream, conveniently the day before the first Bearcat Day

An early-blooming fruit tree near the Kaneko end of the walking bridge endures one of Winter's last mornings. (below)



Some younger rhododendrons near the mill stream bridge jumped the gun and bloomed before the cold finished having its say. The largest shrubs, however, are still biding their time alongside the roses.





## Opinion: Life in Willamette's Covid Isolation

### Dorm

**SKEET STARR**  
SPORTS EDITOR



Lifestyles Editor Monte Remer in his quarantine room in Terra house. Photo by Skeet Starr

According to Assistant Dean for Community Care and Inclusion, Justin Liebowitz, since the start of the spring semester, Willamette's Terra House has given refuge to 80 covid-positive students (around 5% of the undergraduate population). Through the winter months the virus steadily crept through the community at a manageable rate. "Case numbers on Willamette's campus have typically followed a similar pattern observable within the state," he stated through email. "We saw an increase in cases for around 2 weeks, though our most recent days' data represent a slowing in the rate of cases." In our post-lockdown university, Terra House stands as one of the last vestiges of the old pandemic, and one of the last true measures of case numbers.

Stepping into Terra House to begin an isolation period feels like stepping back in time, to the pre-vaccine days. Isolation, Netflix, strange dances around invisible six-foot barriers.

The dorms themselves are equipped with some light blankets, a set of towels, and sometimes a pillowcase. Contrary to common belief, Terra has hot water, but it takes several minutes to heat up. Food is standard Goudy (plus some miscellaneous snacks) which arrives twice a day unannounced from noon- 2 pm for lunch, and 5-6:30 for dinner. Sarah Jenner, a student isolated in Terra, ('25) remarked: "I think it's the same Goudy guy who comes here every time, so shout out to him. He's brave." Snack supplies seem to rotate often, but instant oatmeal, potato chips and apples are mainstays, and often constitute breakfast. General upkeep duties are carried out by an external cleaning staff, who should be avoided for obvious reasons. Rumors and reports of cloudiness in the drinking water have circled Terra House, but remain unrefuted and unsubstantiated by Liebowitz, or Don Thompson, the Associate Dean for Health and Wellbeing and Director of Bishop Wellness Center. For any concerned students, the fridge of Terra House should contain a supply of Box Water.

The primary concerns of a Terra resident are likely health and school (and unfortunately not necessarily in that order). Covid positive students should not expect to be checked on regularly or at all while staying in Terra, and should carefully self monitor symptoms. According to the CDC, covid patients experiencing: "trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone," should seek immediate medical attention. The official

Terra House isolation guide directs students toward campus safety in the event of an emergency. Furthermore, the guide states that the lobby of Terra has a supply of over the counter medications, such as Ibuprofen. Outside of physical health concerns, some may be worried about the effect of five days isolation on their mental state. Depending on who shares the hall at any given time, residents ought to expect to be alone for at least 90% of the day, and will be advised to only leave the dorm for emergencies. Alternatively, if cases are surging, Terra organizers may assign roommates. "I didn't know Sarah was going to be my roommate until she showed up," said Emily Taylor ('26), a recent Terra internee. Taylor's comments speak to an air of confusion which seems to hover around the Terra experience. Residents would likely benefit from a mid-stay check in phone call or email from a university health rep. In preparation for the isolation transition, Liebowitz does well to make sure that soon-to-be residents understand they are supported by the university through various programs. However, radio silence throughout the isolation period could lead to issues going unresolved. Considering the lack of familiarity many have with Willamette's health programs, residents might not feel comfortable calling Bishop or Terra organizers with concerns they perceive to be minor. A resident with a poor understanding of their symptoms, experiencing confusion for example, might never utilize Bishop. A check-in could offer the university the opportunity to discuss symptoms with the resident, and direct them to help. The strain of a new environment (especially

an empty white-walled dorm room) can be taxing. Thompson reminds students that "Even in isolation, students have access to Bishop through tele-health." In terms of keeping up to date with courses each student's experience will be individualized and based on their particular professors. Some offer Zoom, some do not. Most respond to email some do not.

In the early days of the pandemic, comparison of covid to influenza were political sedatives, and looked down upon by the medical community. Today, according to Thompson, considering a reported 96% vaccination rate on campus, the comparison has become more viable. When questioned via interview about the future efficacy of the Terra House isolation program Thompson stated "In December...we had the worst flu season that I can remember here. We had way more flu on campus than covid, and we weren't isolating anybody, or we weren't moving anybody; we were asking people to isolate. It's imagining that we're getting to that place with covid before long as well." He went on to specify that the health leader of the University would likely discuss a transition away from isolation dorms over the summer. Though this could leave students unable to isolate from their roommates "The things that will drive big decisions about closures and masks are going to be hospitalizations and deaths. Those things...are dropping sharply." In late August, the next class of Bearcats may find their way toward new homes in Terra house, unaware of its former purpose.

Case numbers are taken from February 1st.

# FEATURES



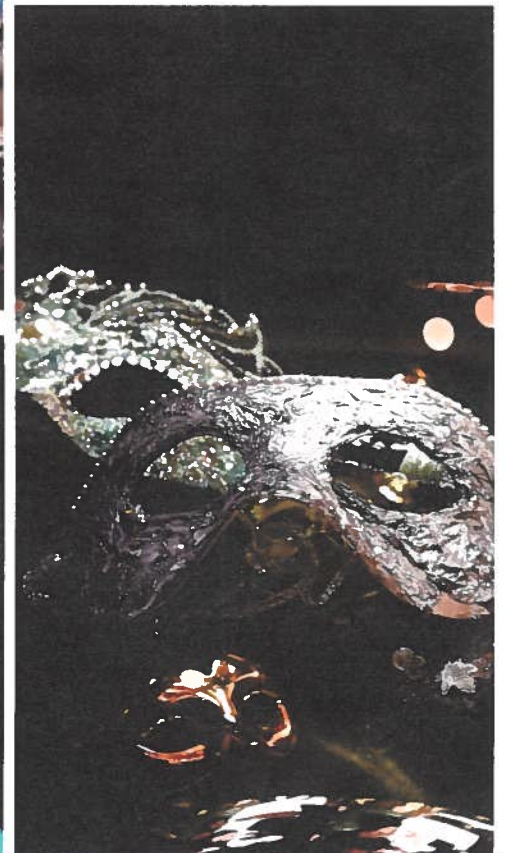
## A Black Tie Affair



ANUSHKA SRIVASTAV  
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Graphic from Willamette Events Board



## Opinion: Housing may feel Crowded, but is Actually Business as Usual



The 2022-23 school year has presented Willamette with a larger first year class than the university had seen since before the COVID-19 pandemic. First year students are normally dispersed throughout these different dorms on campus: Baxter Hall, Belknap Hall, Cascadia House, Matthews Hall and Northwood, Southwood and Westwood Halls. This school year, a new addition to this selection of allocated first-year-only dorms has been presented: Kaneko Commons. Contrary to popular belief, the reasoning behind this expansion of first year living spaces is not due to an above-average influx of new students; in fact, the university is no stranger to these larger numbers.

Dean of Admissions for the College of Arts and Sciences Sue Corner said in an interview that she likes to say that admissions is an imperfect science, but there are certainly goals: “Our goal is to have a very similar number to what we have this year... 525 first year students and about 30 or so transfer students for this coming fall. Our predictions are that we will, that we’re on target for that... but it’s hard to ever say absolutely until we get to May,” she said.

Many students currently on campus have never witnessed the pre-covid Willamette setting. The sudden push of new freshmen may be new to them, but not to the long-term faculty.

“In 2020, COVID kind of caused numbers to drop. So this is actually more normal than that would have been... enrollment dropped a couple of years before that as well. I’ve been at the University since 2004, so what I’m used to is an incoming class of 475 or more—that was the normal for us until about 2017-18,” said Assistant Director of Residence Life Tori Ruiz.

When asked about Willamette continuing to admit more freshmen, Corner described the incoming classes as not being larger, but being what the campus is really built for. It feels bigger, maybe, to those who have only been here a little bit but it’s really not growth. It’s just kind of a return to what is the norm, she said.

The first year experience at Willamette has been tailored over the years to help improve this very new journey for students.

“First years used to live in Lausanne and Doney as

well. But as numbers dropped, they created the first year area—Baxter and Matthews—since first years have different experiences. But now with rising numbers again, they will be expanding to Kaneko,” Ruiz explained.

Luis Marquez (‘26) made a dorm switch from Cascadia to Kaneko for the spring semester. “I really enjoy the space that it provides, and it’s really convenient that there’s a lot of things in there, like spaces to study, to hang out, it makes me not want to leave most of the time,” he said in regards to living in Kaneko. “Before, where I was at in Cascadia, there wasn’t a lot to do, and it was really secluded, so if I wanted to hang out or study, I’d have to move. But Kaneko makes it convenient... even just residential living—there’s a lot more movement in my hall [than Cascadia],” he explained.

Corner reiterated the aim for first year students to continue to be in large cohorts together. “There’s a benefit for first year students not to be sprinkled all over campus, but to be together as much as possible. So I think the goal is to have them in the west side and then kind of go kind of into large batches,” she said.

Marquez provided his first-year perspective on this subject: “I think it’s kind of odd that... the class is split up. When I was in Cascadia, most of my friends were living

**PRIYA THOREN**  
STAFF WRITER

in Kaneko, so I’d have to either hop over there or meet in a mutual space. So I think it’s a little bit inconvenient that [freshmen are] split up. Granted, there’s a big number of students, so I doubt they can do anything about that, but it is weird that they formatted it that way,” he said.

It appears that despite expansions, there is no need to be concerned about the university’s housing capabilities, even with the new freshmen classes to be consisting of 500 plus new students.

Director of Residence Life Heather Kropf is confident in the housing infrastructure and organization of students that the university has. However, making sure students understand the university’s housing policies has proved to be the only slight issue she has faced.

“...There has been a bit of a struggle getting folks to consolidate when we have two rooms next to each other and one student in each room. We like to open up one of the rooms and make it so that the other room is full capacity with two students in it... then the other room is available just in case we need a place for someone else to go who’s having roommate





**“Our goal is to have a very similar number to what we have this year... 525 first year students and about 30 or so transfer students for this coming fall. Our predictions are that we will, that we’re on target for that... but it’s hard to ever say absolutely until we get to May,”**

troubles or if they’re having other life troubles. And so we ran into a situation we tried to consolidate at the end of the semester, so that when we got into spring semester, we’d be all ready to go. But some folks didn’t want to move, and that’s understandable. I mean, if you’re in a single room by yourself and it’s kind of cozy, that’s where you want to stay. But you signed up for a double occupancy room. That’s what you’re paying for. And at the beginning of the semester this year, we ran into issues where we had no place to put some folks who really needed some emergency housing or a new space. And so if nothing else, I just want folks to realize that it’s important. We’re not consolidating just to make you move. We’re not consolidating just for whatever we’re consolidating because we actually do need those rooms and we do have folks who are in need,” she said.

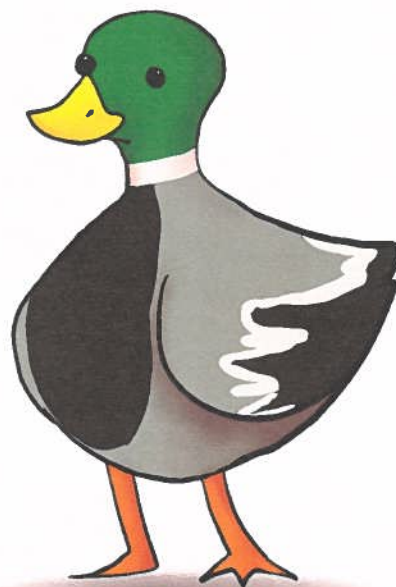
All in all, the university is on top of first year housing, but would like to make sure that current students are aware of a few things: “We will not be offering folks the opportunity to buy a double occupancy room [to be used] as a single. In the apartments in Kaneko and the whole university, if it’s a double occupancy room, we will require two people in it unless there is an ADA accommodation that tells us otherwise. That’s not

new to the university, but it is new to the current students; because we’ve been at lower occupancy, we’ve allowed people to buy out [double occupancy rooms] so that’s just a little bit of a different thing,” clarified Kropf.

With more students comes more opportunities for the university. “For me, it’s exciting to see the robust enrollment post COVID, because when you look at the number of things to do on campus—the number of student leadership opportunities, the number of clubs, the number of athletic teams, all of the things that there are to do—we need enough students to be able to fill all of those roles to keep all of this vibrant student life going. So I feel like that 500 or 525 number is such a good, sweet spot I’m very optimistic that we will enroll right where we’re hoping to,” Corner expressed.

The handling of the swift adjustment back to the usual, higher enrollment numbers has been well done with care and organization. The university proves to be a welcoming place for first year students, and though it may be a bit more crowded than some are used to, the lack of filled rooms and energy that the pandemic left it with is fading away, and campus is being revived.

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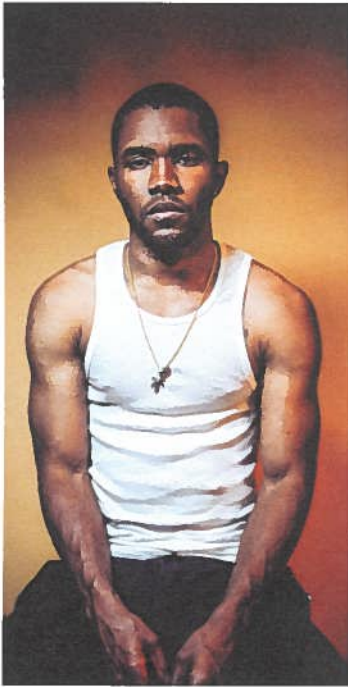
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## Opinion: Ranking Frank Ocean's Best Songs

JIMMY SIMPSON  
CONTR. WRITER



Widely regarded as one of the greatest singer-songwriters of this generation, Frank Ocean has produced some of the most gorgeous music of this century. Although it has been almost six years since the release of his most recent studio album, *Blond*, Ocean is set to headline this year's Coachella festival, and rumors are abound about a potential upcoming third album. These are, in my opinion, Frank Ocean's ten greatest songs.

### 10. Moon River

This may be a slightly unorthodox choice. Released as a standalone single in 2018, "Moon River" is actually a cover of a well-known song first performed by Audrey Hepburn in the 1961 film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. While not the first artist to take on this traditional pop standard, Ocean manages to bring something new to it. His vocals on this track are sad and exhausted, and the tune is almost lullaby-like.

### 9. Pyramids

Released as the second single from his debut LP *Channel Orange* (which, to some fans' dismay, I personally prefer to *Blond*), "Pyramids" is a musical epic that tells the story of a pimp who falls in love with a sex worker, who goes by the name "Cleopatra." Clocking in at almost ten minutes, "Pyramids" is a stand-out track in Ocean's discography. Starting off as a funk-infused dance beat but soon transitioning into a smooth R&B rhythm, "Pyramids" is laden with luscious synths.

### 8. Seigfried

On "Seigfried," Ocean ruminates on relationship difficulties. The song's echoing guitar hook, which repeats throughout, sounds ethereal and distant, like Ocean's lover. The mood is melancholy, at times haunting, and unflinching in its emotive power.

### 7. Sweet Life

Somewhat of a departure from his preferred subject of love and relationships, "Sweet Life" is a satirical commentary on wealth and idleness. On this track Ocean reflects on how money and privilege can shut individuals off from the rest of the world, targeting his critique at the Southern California lifestyle specifically. "You've had a landscaper and a housekeeper since you were born... so why see the world, when you got the beach?", he asks on the explosive chorus.

### 6. Ivy

We're getting into the really good stuff now. "Ivy," the second track from *Blond*, describes a love that is unexpected. "I thought that I was dreamin' when you said you love me/The start of nothin'/I had no chance to prepare, I couldn't see you comin'," Ocean softly sings over a gen-

tle, pop-infused guitar riff. The transition to distorted vocals at the end demonstrates some of the singer-songwriter's more experimental tendencies.

### 5. Pink + White

Beautiful and languid, "Pink + White" combines Ocean's sultry vocals with summer-y tones and psychedelic textures. The track opens with a bright piano riff, which gradually builds into a blissful wall of sound.

### 4. Sierra Leone

Displaying his trademark use of metaphor, "Sierra Leone" is a fictional account of Ocean getting a girl pregnant while they were both still teenagers. Ocean's crystal-clear vocals accompany a tropical, ambient sound.

### 3. Forrest Gump

"Forrest Gump" describes Ocean's infatuation with a male football player. Unlike in many of his other songs, the artist steers clear of ambiguity. He fantasizes about how "buff"

yet gentle his love interest is: "I know you wouldn't hurt a beetle," he sings. Though sweet and simple, it is nothing less than pop perfection.

### 2. Godspeed

An operatic masterpiece. The synth opening quickly fades into an abyss, into which Ocean cries "I will always love you." His voice in this moment is charged with sadness, desperation, and even fear. A lifetime of heartbreak and regret is wrapped up in this moving farewell to a lover.

### 1. Thinkin Bout You

Ocean's best, and one of my favorite songs of all time. No one comes close to Ocean in conveying just how painful love can be, and "Thinkin Bout You" captures this experience perfectly and elegantly. The singer's plaintive falsetto on the chorus never fails to give me goosebumps. His descriptions of crying and wondering whether his love is truly reciprocated are agonizing and sadly relatable.

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# SPORTS

## The Past, Present and Future of Willamette

ERNIE SAMORA  
CONTR. WRITER

### Sports Culture

Tailgates, flashing lights, packed stands, and the screams of masses of students as the Bearcats score another point: these are some of the things that new students may have been imagining upon their arrival to campus. However, upon attending a game, one will find these scenes aren't a facet of Willamette life. During my time attending sporting events at Willamette, I have heard many murmurs of disappointment regarding the current state of sports culture. In recent years, many sports fans seem to be asking the same question: "Does Willamette have a sports culture?"

"I noticed the sports culture here early on," said Daniel Plumer ('23,) who has been on the basketball team since 2019. "It's a lot different from what I came from." Willamette's academic rigor and D3 status places more focus on academics than it does on sports. The student-athletes at Willamette are students first, athletes second. At D3 schools, students do not receive scholarships for their sport, they play for the love of the game. As a result, some students may take the game more seriously than others, while some may want to prioritize their academics. Some student non-athletes arrive at Willamette with preconceived notions of athletes. Lucy Devlaeminck ('26), a first year student who described her relationship with Willamette sports as "non-existent" explained, "I notice a lot of people still have this idea of a 'jock' in their brain." This leads some students to feel intimidated upon seeing athletes together in spaces like Goudy, for example. "There's very much this air of 'oh, that's

the soccer boy table."

In order to see what sports culture could be, one must look at the sports culture of the past. Were sports more popular at Willamette before COVID-19 swept the nation? "There were definitely more fans in my freshman year than we've had the past few years," said Plumer. Aaron Swick, head coach of the baseball team, explained the culture in the years leading up to the pandemic. "Our group of seniors in 2018 and 2019 were not just close, but their families were close," he explained. Athletes traveling together, attending team retreats, breaking bread, and engaging in more team activities outside games and practice established a sense of camaraderie which created a fun atmosphere for the athletes and fans.

When the pandemic hit, suddenly spectators were unable to attend games and

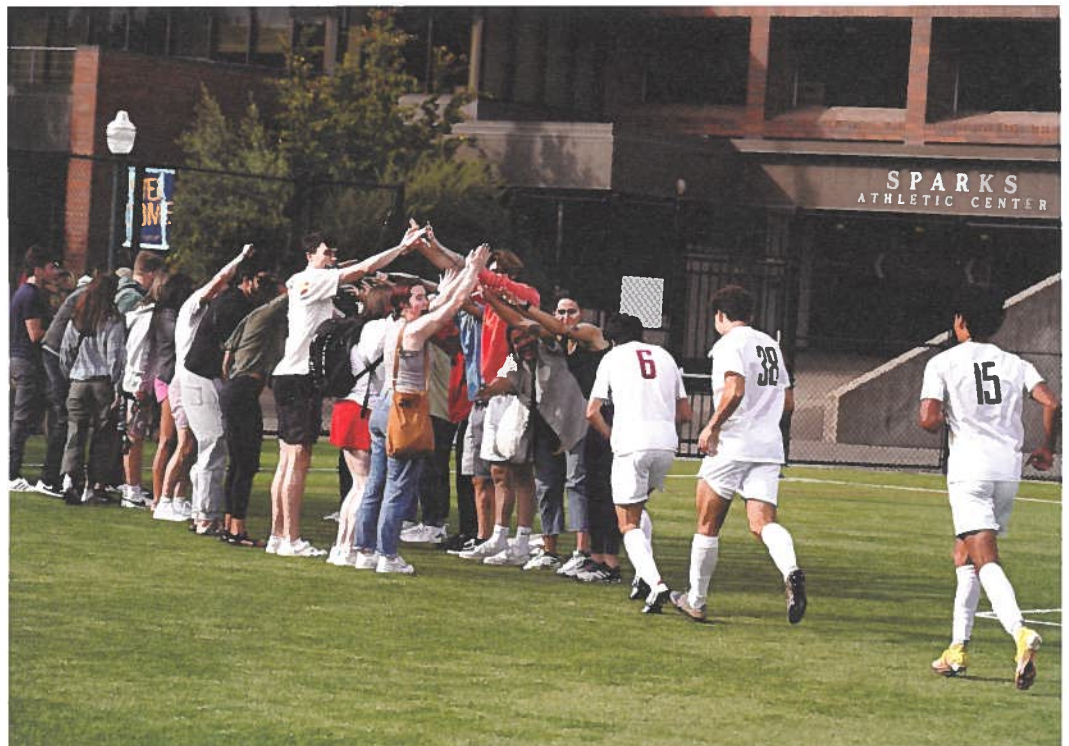
athletes had to keep their distance from their teammates. Teams could no longer eat indoors and had to take several buses to games to comply with pandemic guidelines, considerably impacting the team dynamic. The absence of fan culture and the distance between teammates meant that the sports culture was essentially reset. Now that COVID-19 is easier to manage on campus, sports are beginning to see a return to normality. "There are definitely more fans this year than there have been in the last few years," said Plumer ('23). The pandemic has also made athletes more grateful for the community that athletics provide. "You never know if it's going to be taken away," said Swick.

Despite this, the fan culture still struggles to grow. Devlaeminck ('26), like many students, questioned if it even exists. Most, although not all, games are still plagued with

small, quiet student sections. Swick, Plumer ('23), and Devlaeminck ('26) all agreed that sports culture should change. Inefficient advertising may be a contributing factor to the complaints. Lack of physical advertising paired with easy to miss social media posts and "Today At Willamette" emails leaves many students in the dark when it comes to sports information. "I would go to games if I knew where they were," said Devlaeminck ('26). On the other hand, if more athletes attended non-sport events, non-sporting students might feel more inclined to attend the games.

It has been just over a year since Oregon lifted its mask mandate. With sports still recovering from the culture reset brought about by the pandemic, current and future Bearcat sports fans have a prime opportunity to shape the culture to be what they want it to be.

Photo from Willamette Athletics website



## Fast Break Sports 3/20

SKEET STARR  
SPORTS EDITOR

Hello Bearcat fan! Last week's Bearcats days gave the campus a glimpse of the approaching onslaught of first-years. Pledge loyalty now... while you can. Let's go to the news!

Men's Golf shot their way to first place at SOU's Battle at Bar Run on Tuesday. In the women's division, Mallory Tolliver ('26), Anushka Srivastav ('24), and Kennedy Raphelt ('24) represented a partial squad. At the time this edition of the fast break is being written, results are still making their way in for the Willamette Valley Cup tournament. However, the men were in first place as of the end of Saturday.

Softball went 3-1 against Pacific, including a 12 inning nail biter. The wins helped widen the gap between the third place Bearcats and

the fourth place Whitworth.

Baseball stumbled, losing three games to Puget Sound over the weekend. All were low scoring affairs with the Cats losing by two runs in each. The squad will look to redeem itself this week against Linfield and Whitworth.

Rapid Fire! First place winners from the George Fox University Rich Allen Classic Field & Track meet are: William Hennem ('24, 1500m), Clara Thomas ('26, 400m hurdles), Whitley Stepp ('26, high jump), and Annabelle Smith ('26, long jump). The Willamette-Corban dual meet and the Willamette invitational take place this week at home.

A 7-18 loss to George Fox over the weekend has extended Lacrosse's losing streak to two. They will head up I-5 to take on the Loggers



Art by Minna Zhou

on Wednesday, then host the Chapman Panthers up from California on Saturday.

The Tigers of East Texas Baptist hunted down Women's & Men's Tennis, defeating them 5-1 and 7-2 respectively.

Consider in the com-

ing weeks: What off-campus sporting activities are available to the Willamette community and, alternatively, if you were told that you had to live your life exactly as it is, again and again for eternity, would you rejoice?

## Whitley Steps onto the Scene

Whitley Stepp ('26) has found herself in the top six of all time Willamette high jumpers reaching a distance of 1.62 meters or 5 feet and 3.75 inches. The first-year, who has just recently declared as a math major, shows major potential and already has her sights set on winning a conference championship. Along with her jumping success, she enjoys being on the track team and would love to see some fellow students at the upcoming meets. The Collegian got the chance to sit down with Stepp to see what she's about.

**Question:** When did you start track and how did you get into jumping?

**Stepp:** I started in eighth grade when my friends forced me into it. I played basketball before and I was just better at jumping than the other events.

**Question:** What drew you to Willamette? Did you get recruited?

**Stepp:** I reached out the summer before my junior year and stayed in contact with Jacob Graham who's the jumps and hurdles coach. I really liked the small size of the school and its close to Silverton where I live so I can go home. The team was so nice to me on my visit compared to other schools I visited.

**Question:** With your success here, would you ever consider moving up to a higher division school?

**Stepp:** No, definitely not. I really like it here. The girls on the team are great and the coaches have helped me

a lot. They are open to your thoughts and feelings with training and understand if you need to take a break.

**Question:** Would you say that you have improved since being here in terms of your performance?

**Stepp:** I definitely have gotten better. Especially muscle wise. I have muscles now. We have worked on a lot of high jump techniques and I can notice a difference even confidence wise. High jump is very mental.

**Question:** What are

JACKSON GARRETT  
CONTR. WRITER

your goals for the rest of your Willamette career?

**Stepp:** Lifetime goal is to jump 5 foot 8. This year my goal is to win the conference, just jump as high as I can.

The Willamette-Corban Dual Meet, The Willamette Invitational, and the conference tournament will all be held at Willamette in April, so there will be many opportunities to see Stepp and the whole track team.

Photo provided by Whitley Stepp



## What you Missed on the Last Season of Women's Basketball



Photos from Willamette Athletics website

Women's basketball ended their season on February 24th with a record of 14-12, a points-per-game average of 60.3 and a 51-37 loss to Whitman in the conference semifinals. Tournament qualification marks a steady improvement from last season, in which they earned a record of 12-13 and an average of 58.2 points per game. With several starters graduating, ((Sammi Riggs ('23) and Ashlyn Ascucena-Mercil ('23)) Bearcat

**MARY VICKERY**  
CONTR. WRITER

fans are left to wonder if the trend will continue.

Each of the starting five had glowing performances this year. Ashlyn Ascucena-Mercil ('23) led the team in rebounds with a total of 182, and Carolyn Ho ('24) was the points leader with an average of 11.2 per game. Ho also earned a career-high of 12

rebounds against the Blues on Jan. 21. At the free throw line Sammi Riggs shot 76.8%, Claire Bonnet ('23) shot 20.8% at the three-point line, and Megan River ('24) scored a career high of 23 points against Whitman on Jan. 21. Notable games included the 71-58 win against Montana Northern, and a 58-52 win against Whitworth which brought Willamette to the NWC Tournament. The Bearcats battled the Blues (who went on to win the conference tournament) three times, falling thrice.

Ashlyn Ascucena-Mercil recounts that the season went well, and that the NWC Tournament loss "was a good learning experience." She went on: "The team really came together in that game... and we addressed a lot of the issues we had." Both Sammi Riggs and Ashlynn Ascucena-Mercil shared similar feelings about the season. Ascucena-Mercil notes that she is "one-hundred percent happy [with the season]". Despite the loss, it was an ambition of the

team's to make it to the tournament, and to see that goal accomplished was fulfilling.

Riggs and Ascucena-Mercil both noted that the absence of starting post Ava Kitchin ('24) led to an increase in difficulties for the team. Ascucena-Mercil notes that they "had to make a lot of adjustments with (their) offense, compared to last year." Without Kitchin's presence in the post, the team was forced to rely on a five-out system which did not always suit their needs. Riggs mentions that with Kitchin back as a big next season, the court will look different.

With ten players returning to the team, including Kaitlin Imai ('26), Carolyn Ho ('24), and Megan River ('24), there is much deliberation on who the starting five will be. To make things more indecipherable, new commits are incoming. Whoever does end up on the starting lineup (if the next season is anything like this one), will make Willamette proud.



# BOOTS AND GIGGLES

## The Collegian Crossword: Spring has Sprung

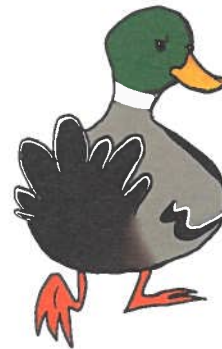
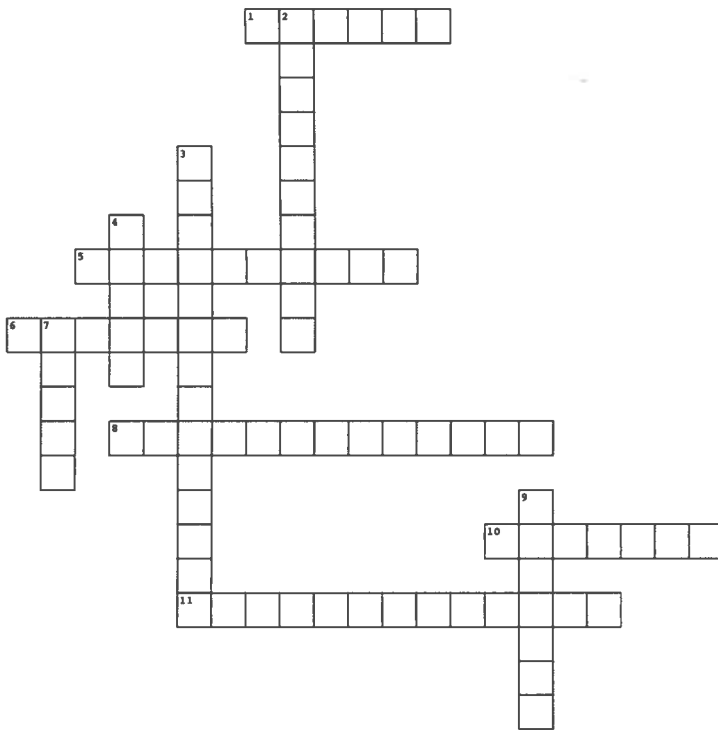
Crossword by Bella Montalvo

### Across

- [1] One of the Spring holidays
- [5] March 20th
- [6] Traditional St. Patrick's Day veggie
- [8] Flowers that turn WU pink!
- [10] Spring colors
- [11] One of two times when the sun rises in the east and sets in the west

### Down

- [2] March birthstone
- [3] Movie with Vanessa Hudgens, James Franco and Selena Gomez
- [4] Famous Disney deer
- [7] First Zodiac sign
- [9] Photos featured by Skeet Starr and Mary Vickery on the Collegian Instagram

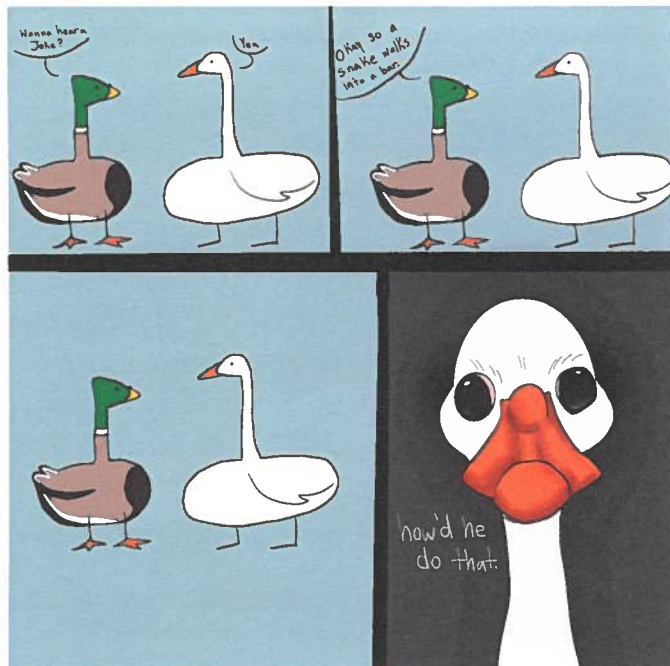
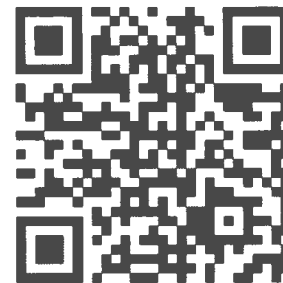


Cover Duck  
Art by Aissatou  
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Comic by Isis Coyle

Crossword an1. EASTER 2.AQUAMARINE 3.SPRINGBREAKERS 4.BAMBI 5.PAY-  
HOLIDAY 6.CABBAGE 7.ARIES 8.CHERRYBLOSSOM 9.RAINBOW 10.PASTELS  
11.SPRINGEQUINOX 12.MARCH