

# THE OBSERVER

Broward College Student Newspaper

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## “We Are Here Because You All Are Here:” President Dr. Barbara J. Bryan on Student Engagement and the Future of Broward College

**Keynaya Thompson**  
Managing Editor

In October of 2023, Broward College found itself looking for a new college president. Dr. Barbara J. Bryan who had the college-wide district registrar, associate vice president of student services, academic dean, business dean, provost, campus president, and vice president of strategic initiatives on her resume would assume this position shortly after, making her the first woman to do so. At the start of the Spring 2024 semester, The Observer’s Managing Editor Keynaya Thompson spoke with Dr. Bryan about her new position, student engagement and the future of college education with AI.

**K.T.:** It’s really an honor to be speaking with you, not only as the new president but you are the first woman president so it is just great to see that type of representation here at Broward College, which leads me to my first question: as president, how will you involve the diverse student body in decision making processes, which will promote student engagement and representation on all campuses?

**Dr. B.B.:** Our student board of trustee participants rotates from the student government officers. No one student is usually able to make it to those board meetings and represent the entire student body. So, what they’ve changed, and I endorse is a rotation. If you’re a student government leader on South you may attend the board meeting representing the student body and, if you’re on North then they may attend the meeting to represent the student body. So, you will always have a student board of trustee representing you all at those decision-making levels, which is crucial.

In terms of student engagement, I think the college has done a really good job making sure that there are safe spaces that students have an ombudsman to go to if they have issues. My cabinet,

we’re very active in participating directly with the students. We move our staff meetings around to all the campuses. I have an open-door policy. Students reach out to me, and I respond.

One of the things I’m really proud of is how we involved the students in the holiday cards. What I started when I was on North Campus was engaging the faculty with the art students. We ran a contest, and they submitted their work, and we were going to just choose one student. They were so great we created a box set like Hallmark of the student’s artwork and sent those to 4,000 employees.

**K.T.:** Broward College does a really great job with helping students get their work out there. With events like Springfest, I did that my first semester as a writer, and I was able to add that to the resume. Also with the Observer, I can add all the articles I’ve written to my portfolio. The college does a great job at helping students not only with engagement on campus but towards their future.

**Dr. B.B.:** Good, I’m glad to hear that. For me, I have a long history of being a student-centered leader. That has not changed. The reason we are here is because you all are here and that is my motto.

**K.T.:** You spoke about your previous years here at college as campus president. How has that experience prepared you for the position you now have as the College president and unique challenges and opportunities that you will come across with this leadership role?

**Dr. B.B.:** Preparation starts long before you get the big jobs and the big titles. So, for me and the message I really want to clearly convey to students is that nothing substitutes for preparation and then experience. On North Campus I was Provost and President, but when I took over that campus, I did not have an academic dean or a business dean. I performed all of those duties: business

dean, academic dean, provost and then they changed the title to campus president. But I saw an opportunity to make sure I had experiences across the entire spectrum, so I did all those jobs.

The other big piece is building relationships. Leaders are not successful if they do not have strong successful relationships with all the stakeholders. That includes the students, the faculty, the union, the faculty senate. I also started out as a very young leader at a different college, and I taught all of those orientation classes that prepares students. Nothing substitutes for rolling up your sleeves, learning your craft, being an expert and then if you’re lucky or divinely blessed, opportunities show up and you’re prepared to take advantage of them. As a female, I knew that I had to have all the credentials, all the degrees. I, in fact, have four degrees: a Bachelors, a Masters, an EDS. I never stopped even after having children and I earned my PhD.

**K.T.:** Broward College is kind of like a steppingstone for students as far as their college careers and then their future so decisions they make here as students can prepare them for what their next steps are.

**Dr. B.B.:** Absolutely, it is the beginning of the journey. It’s a long runway and the pathway should be clear for our students at Broward College. There is not one single individual who is successful on their own. There is a governing body of the institution I report to; five trustees that are appointed by the governor. They’re really community leaders who are volunteers and there are lots of opportunities for that governing body to support and help our students as well. I’m saddened when our students don’t take advantage of all the things that are available to them because they may not know. When I got back, there were all these kiosks on campus, and I said run those signs telling the students



Dr. Bryan at graduation.

Image courtesy of Broward College.

about free tutoring because I worked with the student alert system and the number of students who told me that they didn’t know we had free tutoring and were trying to find tutors really saddened me. So, that was one of the first things I did when I toured all the campuses again. I said “Listen, run that free tutoring everywhere.”

**K.T.:** BC has so many resources and departments that promote student. BC has made it clear that Student Success is a top priority, not only as a college, but you as president. Are you able to share any new initiatives or goals you plan to implement that will further support Student Success?

**Dr. B.B.:** I actually have a brand new strategic imperative that we have been working on as a team, the entire cabinet. And if you will give me grace and someone comes to the February B.O.T. meeting, I’m going to roll that new strategic imperative out. I can’t share it now because the board has yet to hear about it. But it is another effort to increase access. How it relates to student success is that it will not be a one-shot thing.

**K.T.:** My final question is kind of a hot topic. I’ve spoken with numerous professors about this and even written an article on this. In the new decade, education and the system of education has been transforming in response to the advance-

ments of technology. From post-pandemic students preferring to be fully online to the dominance of AI assistance, I know there have been multiple initiatives in response to AI at BC and in colleges nationwide. Do you have any plans that will lead the college in further adapting to the changes in a way that will prepare students for challenges they may encounter in college and in their future careers due to technology advancements?

**Dr. B.B.:** Yes. First of all, it is critically important that we don’t do what we, as a profession, and we, as a society, have done before and that is to focus on all the ways it can be a bad thing for us. I am in a couple of thought leader groups and part of the statewide council of college presidents and those discussions are going around statewide and nationally. I’ve taken the opportunity to work directly with a professor who is so excited about this. Professor Richard McCawley has taken a leadership role in making sure he’s informing the other faculty and running workshops. The faculty has already retooled through professional development and incorporated AI to their curriculum.

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# What's happening around campus

## FERPA: Privacy of Your Records

### FERPA and the Parent of the Student

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. According to Federal FERPA Regulations 34 CFR 99, and Florida Statute 1002.22, the parents of a student who has reached the age of 18

years, or is enrolled in a post-secondary program, no longer have any rights under the provisions of this policy, unless the student gives written consent to release the information.

Any student who would like to allow another person to access their education records must complete a [FERPA Release Form](#).

### FERPA and Directory Information

FERPA also allows Broward College to release "directory information" without obtaining the prior consent of the student. The following is what Broward College considers directory information: name, enroll-

ment status, degrees, and awards received.

Students have the right, under FERPA, to "opt-out" of the release of directory information by submitting a [FERPA Directory Information Opt-Out Form](#). Students who opt-out of the release of directory information will also be considered to have

opted out of the release of military recruitment information.

If you have questions related to FERPA processing, please send an email to [FERPA@broward.edu](mailto:FERPA@broward.edu). For more information, please review the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#).

**Student Life Welcome Weeks**  
-SOUTH CAMPUS EVENTS-

**Mon, Jan 8th** 12 pm  
**Breezeway Games**  
Challenge your friends to a quick game.  
BLDG 68 Breezeway

**Tue, Jan 9th** 10 am  
**Campus Continental: Breakfast in the Breezeway**  
Grab & go continental breakfast.  
BLDG 68 Breezeway

**Wed, Jan 10th** 1 pm  
**Midday Milk & Cookies**  
Treat yourself to a snack.  
BLDG 68 Breezeway

**Thur, Jan 11th** 11 am  
**Pop by for Popcorn!**  
Get popcorn on the go.  
BLDG 68 Breezeway

**Tue, Jan 16th** 12 pm  
**Spring Fling**  
Enjoy food, axe throwing, soccer darts, mini golf, & more.  
BLDG 68 Breezeway

**Wed, Jan 17th** 9 am  
**Student Life Open House**  
Ping-pong, video games, billiards, foosball, & more.  
BLDG 68 RM 191

**Thur, Jan 18th** 12 pm  
**Envision Your Mission**  
Create a vision board & visualize your success.  
BLDG 68 Breezeway

**Tue, Jan 23rd** 11 am  
**Resource Fair**  
Learn about the resources BC has to offer.  
BLDG 68 Breezeway

**Thur, Jan 25th** 11 am  
**Club Rush**  
Learn how to join or start a student organization.  
BLDG 68 Breezeway

**Mon, Jan 29th** 12 pm  
**National Puzzle Day: Puzzle Mania**  
Cube puzzles, word games, sudoku, jigsaw, & more.  
BLDG 68 Breezeway

**Tue, Jan 30th** 1:30 pm  
**Certified Leader**  
Leadership workshop. Open to all.  
BLDG 68 RM 191

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## Spring Fling journey: fostering growth beyond academic learning

**Swami Hinojosa**  
Editor-in-Chief

Personal growth and development should be part of a vibrant student community during college. Participating in clubs, events, and social interactions allows people to explore new experiences. By pushing themselves beyond their comfort zones, students improve their skills and develop effective communication and collaboration skills essential for academic and professional success.

Participation in social and recreational events is crucial to managing academic stress during college. It offers much-needed rest and helps improve mental well-being. Networking events, career fairs, and interactions with alumni are part of student life. Building a network during college can lead to opportunities, internships, and future career paths.

Balancing academic responsibilities with social and extracurricular activities teaches students essential skills, such as time management and prioritization. Being an active student community member helps create a sense of belonging on campus, crucial to student satisfaction and well-being. While academic



A student throwing axes at the Spring Fling  
Photo by Swami Hinojosa/The Observer

learning is significant, student life provides education beyond the classroom. It teaches life skills, values, and attitudes, contributing to a comprehensive education.

Central Campus becomes

more lively and energetic as the weather gets warmer. The college organizes many new activities after the holidays and the new year. One of the most important is the special Spring Fling event in the first

two weeks to welcome the new semester. The event has numerous exciting activities to suit different interests and passions, including ax throwing, dart football, soccer darts, pot painting, flower picking, and mini golf. All of these activities are enjoyable for both students and employees.

Students can also enjoy free pizza while having fun and chatting with each other, creating a happy and lively atmosphere on campus. This provides an excellent opportunity for students to make new friends and create lasting memories.

Soccer darts is a unique activity that combines two popular games. Participants play soccer on a giant target and earn points by hitting specific goals. This activity helps students bond across academic boundaries, develop teamwork, and have fun.

Participating in extracurricular activities can help students relax and connect with peers who share similar interests, thus forming a solid support network. The variety of activities offered during Spring Fling showcases the wealth of perspectives and passions on campus. These activities are carefully designed to meet different interests, and students

can explore new hobbies while having fun. Extracurricular activities are essential for building meaningful relationships beyond the classroom. It allows students to connect with their peers, develop teamwork skills, and create a strong support network.

As spring progresses, it is expected that more exciting activities will take place on campus, creating a vibrant and close-knit community. Students eagerly look forward to participating and making the most of the seasons opportunities.

Spring Fling and other extracurricular activities offer more than just a break from studying. They provide opportunities for students to explore new interests, form meaningful relationships, relieve academic stress, and develop essential skills. The ax-throwing experience was a highlight of the Spring Fling, where participants could channel their energy while learning a unique skill. Practicing ax throwing offered fun and the opportunity to develop concentration and coordination.

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## Laptops available to students through Seahawk Outreach Services

**Sara Fuentes**  
North Bureau Chief

Attention BC Students! Are you in need of a laptop? Look no further. The Seahawk Outreach Services (SOS) Loaner Laptop Program is here to help our students get through their studies without any setbacks. SOS understands the importance of having access to technology, especially in today's digital world. That is why they are restarting the program to support students in any way they can. Apply now and get the laptop needed to excel in your academic journey.

Rest assured; the requirements are straightforward. To be eligible, students must be actively enrolled in a degree or certificate program and have paid for credit courses.

"To get a loaner laptop, eligible students can visit Broward.edu/SOS and fill out an application. The SOS team will review the application, and if the student meets the eligibility criteria, they will get a notification of approval," said Harold Garcia, the Manager of Student Services at Broward College. "The notification will also include instructions on how



One of the laptops available through SOS.

Photo courtesy of SOS

to collect the laptop."

Did you know Broward College supplies a wide range of services to support students. Apart from the loaner laptop program, many other services can help students succeed in their academic journey. SOS aims to supply holistic support and wrap-around services to students.

Garcia has said that "the goal is to connect students

to key campus resources and community organizations. This will help to reduce financial obstacles, food and housing insecurities, stress/mental health challenges, and homelessness among the student population."

To better support students in need, they have partnered with Single Stop. Single Stop supplies a screening that helps students figure out if they are eligible

for many benefits such as education, healthcare, financial aid, housing, food, and tax preparation.

Garcia said that "once a student completes their screening, they will obtain immediate eligibility results for up to 21 essential federal and state benefits such as SNAP (food stamps), the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), several numbers of Tax benefits,

and different benefits that may help with healthcare costs".

"Besides this, SOS staff will also reach out to the students and help them with referrals to different benefit/service providers, client advocacy, document aid, and application help," said Garcia.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to access all the services offered to students in need, conveniently located at the three BC campus locations. Whether its academic help, financial assistance, or technology resources, SOS has students covered. However, time is running out.

The loaner laptop program is only available for a limited time, so act fast to take advantage of this incredible offer. If you need any help, don't hesitate to apply today.

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# Exploring sports emotions at Broward College

**Swami Hinojosa**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

**Recalling Last Years Triumph: A Look Back at Central Campus Intramurals**

As a Broward College student, I'm always looking for new activities to participate in. The upcoming intramural soccer and basketball season at Central Campus excites me. As a sports enthusiast, I love the environment of friendly competition. Last year's intramural sports season was a great success, and I eagerly await this semester's events. Once you know the teams, you can cheer for your favorite and compete with your fellow students. The intramural sports season is an exciting time for our community, where we come together to enjoy friendly competition and build friendships.

The previous year witnessed an exceptional turnout for the football and basketball intramurals held at Central Campus. The games were hugely successful, with students displaying remarkable enthusiasm and energy. The football matches were particularly impressive, with players and spectators showing a deep passion for the sport. The basketball games were equally thrilling and intense, with the atmosphere filled with camaraderie and healthy competition. The students' participation was highly impressive, creating a unique

bond between classmates through sports. The intramural events were a great way to unite the student community, foster healthy competition, and promote physical fitness.

As we look ahead to the new semester, we remember our good times last semester at Broward College. This semester, we are excited about sports like football and basketball. These sports bring students together to have fun and play games against each other. They also help us feel like we are part of a community and make us proud of our school. Besides sports, other events help us meet friends and learn new things. Broward College is a great place to be because we have many opportunities to learn and grow outside of class. When we play sports, we feel happy when we win and sad when we lose. But the best part is making friends and being part of a team. So, even if you need to improve at sports, come and join us, and have fun with us at Broward College.

Participating in sports activities while studying can be a wise and advantageous choice for students. It adds a new dimension to the academic environment and offers various benefits. Academic life can be stressful, but sports provide a

healthy way to cope. Engaging in exciting matches and friendly competition can act as an escape, allowing students to recharge and return to their studies with a refreshed mindset. Regular sports practice not only good for the body but also the mind. Physical activity releases endorphins that contribute to overall well-being, improving mood and reducing anxiety.

Getting involved in intramural activities allows establishing valuable relationships with fellow students. The bond that forms on the field often results in enduring friendships, fostering a strong support network within the student population. Sports not only focus on physical abilities but also on social skills. Working as a team, communicating effectively, and demonstrating leadership are essential qualities cultivated through sports participation that can be applied in everyday life and in a professional setting.

Sports events are more than just games; they provide an opportunity to strengthen the student community and enhance the overall university experience. Engaging in sports promotes physical growth and improves student life by fostering connections, reducing stress, and promoting well-



Intramural soccer on Central Campus. Photo by Swami Hinojosa/The Observer

being. This semester, Broward College is excited to host another thrilling intramural season where students can combine their passion for sports with their pursuit of knowledge. Let's kick off the games and celebrate the spirit of competition.

Intramurals will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday at 1 p.m. on Central. Tuesday is outdoor soccer in building 15 and Wednesday is basketball in the gym, building 10. On South, there is indoor soccer on Mondays from 3:45-5:45, basketball Tuesdays from 3:45-5:45 and outdoor soccer Tuesday-Thursday from 2-6 p.m. Indoor soccer and basketball are

held in the gym, building 65 and outdoor soccer is played in the grass field by building 99. Coming soon to North Campus will be pickleball by reservation on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10-12 p.m. and 1-3 p.m. For basketball and Tennis, students can come in and check out equipment. For flag football and soccer, they are taking sign-ups to determine the best time. Students should check in the Student Life office for more information or to sign up.

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*Broward College Student Newspaper*

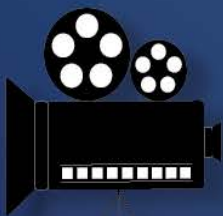
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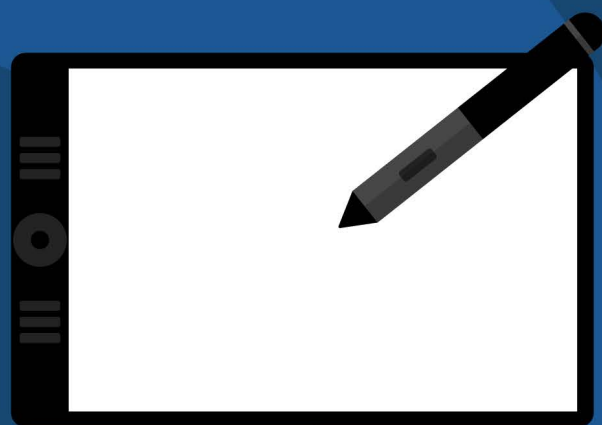
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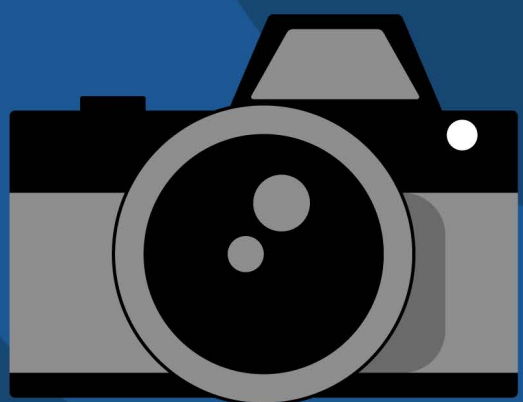
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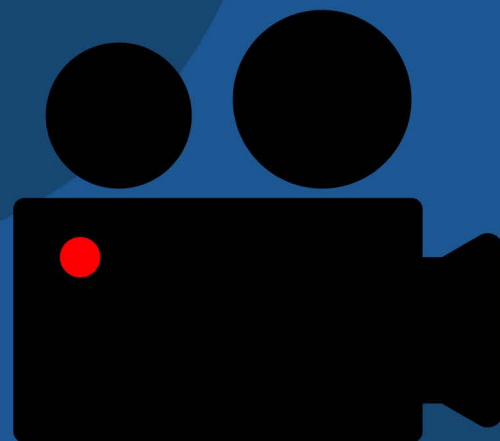
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# Creating a Vision Board: A Powerful Tool for Achieving Your Goals

Swami Hinojosa  
Editor-in-Chief

Unlock the power of visualization and materialize your aspirations with a vision board. Learn how to create and utilize this powerful tool to keep you on track and motivated.

To kick off the new year, creating a vision board is essential. This can be a photo, poster, or cardboard where you can list out your long-term and short-term goals. By keeping your goals visible, you are communicating to the universe what you want to achieve, and it can serve as a great source of motivation to keep you on track. Many life coaches recommend creating a vision board to help you visualize your dreams and aspirations.

It is basically a visual representation of your long-term and short-term goals. It helps you stay motivated by having your objectives visible in front of you. Creating one enables you to introspect and identify your deep desires. It

also encourages you to take the necessary steps to achieve those objectives by evoking the image of your “future self” and attracting what you want.

Activities to create vision boards were recently held on all three campuses. These activities have helped students better understand their goals and aspirations. One of the best things about vision boards is that they enable you to separate your goals into long and short-term objectives. This allows you to work on different things simultaneously. Each campus provided materials and talks on the importance of having a clear and specific vision. If you missed the activity, heres what you need to create a vision board:

1. Write down your goals briefly and objectively. For instance, as a student, you could write, “I aim to graduate with honors this semester.” This helps you focus on what you want to achieve.

2. Find images that demonstrate

your goals. You can use pictures from magazines or Pinterest that align with your objectives.

3. Include motivational phrases that inspire you, such as “You can do it!” and “I attract only good grades!” These will help you achieve your goals.

4. Write these phrases on cardboard or directly on the sheet, making them bold and as big as you want to attract.

5. To ensure that the final output is clear and presentable, it is essential to carefully assemble all the components logically and organized. This involves checking that all the photos are in place and connected correctly. Each element should be positioned in a way that makes sense and is easy to follow. This approach will motivate you to look at it daily and encourage you to get it.

6. Place the vision board in a visible spot where you can see it daily. This will

remind you of what you want to achieve in the future.

7. Update the vision board whenever necessary. Your goals and aspirations may change throughout the year, so keep updating your vision board to reflect your current objectives.

The goal of a vision board is to visualize and materialize your aspirations and goals. You can create an inspiring visual representation by carefully selecting images and keywords that represent your goals.

Organize and customize these images on a board to create a tangible reminder of your goals, which can help you stay focused and motivated. Place your board in a visible location and update it to reflect your evolving goals. This creative project can be a powerful source of inspiration and direction on your path to success!

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## NFL playoff matchups

**Jordan Stephenson**  
South Bureau Chief

This 2023-24 NFL season was definitely an extraordinary season of football, because of all the storylines and parity in the NFL, and the playoffs has assuredly already been even more intriguing to watch. The Wildcard weekend playoff games and the Divisional playoff games took place the past couple of weeks. In those Wildcard weekend playoff games and the Divisional playoff games, there were quite a few of upset alerts that were extremely unexpected and upset alerts that I called in advance before the games.

The Texans unexpectedly upset the Browns, by defeating them 45-14 in a surprising blowout win. C.J. Stroud threw 16-21 for 274 yards, with three touchdowns in his 1st playoff game, and became the youngest QB to win a playoff game in NFL history. Nico Collins had six receptions for 96 yards and a touchdown. Flacco played terrible and threw two costly interceptions, especially a pick six to Steven Nelson for a pivotal 82-yard interception return touchdown.

Tyreek Hill finally returned to ArrowHead for the 1st time to play against his former team for the 2nd time that traded him. The Chiefs expectedly defeated the Dolphins 26-7, in a top five coldest game in NFL

history (-five degrees). Patrick Mahomes threw 23-41 for 262 yards with one touchdown, rookie Rashee Rice had eight receptions for 130 yards with a touchdown, and last but not least, Isiah Pacheco rushed for 89 yards and a touchdown. Even though the Dolphins lost, Tyreek Hill in his return had five receptions for 62 yards. Also, I felt that if the Dolphins were more healthy on defense, they would've definitely had a better chance of winning, but all in all they made the playoffs again and Tua Tagovailoa had his 1st vital playoff experience.

The Bills vs Steelers game was postponed to MLK Day because of huge inches of snow, and the fans still had to bring their own shovels to shovel out snow from their seats. The Bills expectedly defeated the Steelers 31-17 in a typical playoff game. Josh Allen had a combined 274 passing and rushing yards, also with three total touchdowns. I don't judge the Cowboys in the regular season, but in the playoffs like the 76ers in the NBA, mainly because they always seem to fold and come up short in the playoffs. As me and other people predicted, the Cowboys folded and got utterly exposed again in a 48-32 egregious blowout loss to the Packers at home.

Jordan Love threw 16-21 for 272 yards and three touchdowns in his 1st playoff

with the youngest team in the league on the road. Also, Aaron Jones accumulated 118 scrimmage yards with three total touchdowns, and Romeo Doubs had six receptions for 152 yards with a touchdown. Prescott had "empty calorie" stats with 403 passing yards, and three touchdowns, but he had two pivotal 1st half interceptions, especially a pick six to Darnell Savage for a detrimental 64-yard interception return touchdown.

The Rams vs Lions game was extremely intriguing, because Matthew Stafford and Jared Goff were traded for each other a couple of years ago, and this was definitely an emotional homecoming for Stafford and his wonderful family. The Lions defeated the Rams in a close 24-23 win, that proved to be the closest and most intense playoff game that weekend. Amon-Ra St. Brown had seven receptions for 110 yards, Goff threw a touchdown and both running backs had a rushing touchdown. Stafford had 367 passing yards with two touchdowns, and rookie receiver Puka Nacua had nine receptions for 181 yards with a touchdown. The Buccaneers defeated the reeling Eagles 32-9 in a blowout win. Baker Mayfield had 336 passing yards and three touchdowns to carry them, even though DeVonta Smith had eight receptions for 148 yards.

Stroud and the Texans



Jackson's dominant playoff performance. Photo courtesy of ESPN.com

had to battle the best team in the league, in the Ravens, who ultimately defeated the Texans 34-10. Lamar had his best playoff game by far by accumulating 252 combined passing and rushing yards, with four total touchdowns. The 49ers defeated the Packers 24-21, in a close intriguing game. Christian McCaffery carried them by having 128 scrimmage yards and two rushing touchdowns, and Brock Purdy finally led them on a game winning drive, after being down late in the 4th quarter, but the Packers missed field goal definitely looms large.

The Lions defeated the Buccaneers 31-23, in another close game. Goff threw 30-42 for 287 yards and two touchdowns, even though Mayfield had 349 passing yards with three touchdowns and two costly interceptions. The Chiefs defeated the Bills

27-24, in another close and entertaining matchup between these teams. Mahomes had 215 passing yards and two touchdowns, even though Allen had 258 passing and rushing yards and three total touchdowns; the Bills chance to win was plummeted by a missed clutch field goal.

Both Conference Championship games will be on Sunday, January 28. The 1st game is Chiefs vs Ravens, and I'm picking the Ravens to win. The last game is Lions vs 49ers, and I'm picking the 49ers to ultimately win. So, I essentially think it'll be the Ravens vs 49ers battling in the Superbowl.

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## NBA 2023-24 season midway point

**Jordan Stephenson**  
South Bureau Chief

During the midway point of the 2023-24 NBA season, there have definitely been many intriguing games, players, teams, and storylines even before the All-Star break. Some of those storylines and things above include: the playoff and championship contending teams, the current best stars and superstars, the fluid MVP race, the current All-Star team voting results, NBA parity, the USA basketball player pool, etc. All these things that I have highlighted above, has assuredly led to this extremely entertaining NBA season. Some extremely important key dates coming up for the NBA

are the trade deadline (Feb. 8), All-Star starters announced (Jan. 25 on TNT), All-Star reserves announced (Feb. 1 on TNT), All-Star Weekend (Feb. 16-18), NBA Rivals Week this week, etc.

The top playoff and championship contenders teams are the Celtics (34-10), the Timberwolves (30-13), the Thunder (30-13), the Nuggets (31-14), the 76ers (29-13), the Clippers (28-14), the Cavaliers (26-15), the Knicks (27-17), the Pelicans (26-18), the Suns (25-18), the Kings (24-18), the Heat (24-19), the Mavericks (24-19), the Pacers (24-20), the Lakers (22-23), etc. All these teams have been trying to play complementary basketball, manage injuries, implement trades so they can eventually make a playoff run. The top 15 best stars and superstars are

Nikola Jokic, Joel Embiid, Giannis Antetokounmpo, Luka Doncic, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Jayson Tatum, Kevin Durant, Stephen Curry, LeBron James, Anthony Davis, Kawhi Leonard, Jimmy Butler, Devin Booker, Anthony Edwards and Paul George. All these players that I mentioned above, consistently play great in either the regular season or playoffs, but the majority of these players consistently play great in both.

The Lakers have not been playing complimentary basketball, since their In Season Tournament Championship win. After their win vs Tyrese Haliburton and the Pacers, the Lakers are currently 8-14 since that game, the 9th seed in the Western Conference. They recently just were defeated by the Clippers on Sunday 127-116, but I still think their complimentary basketball problems are still looming, even though Anthony Davis and LeBron James have played relatively healthy, and played the majority of the games.

Since the Lakers are essentially having the same season record-wise as last season, during the midway point, they have definitely inquired on a few players to trade for. Some of those players consist of Dejounte Murray, Dennis Schroder, Bruce Brown, Colin Sexton, Tyus Jones, etc. Speaking of the Pacers and trades, they recently acquired All-Star Pascal Siakam from the Raptors for Brown, Jordan Nwora, Kira Lewis Jr, three 1st round picks, and a 2nd round pick. They finally were able to pair Haliburton with an All-Star caliber player.

Speaking of the Clippers, after their slow start since the James



**BREAKING NEWS**

Harden trade, they have definitely been a top five team in the NBA, with Kawhi Leonard, Paul George, Harden all playing complimentary basketball. Russell Westbrook's sacrifice to being a sixth man off the bench, also played a role in their success, especially with HC Tyron Lue leading them. Leonard's and PG's relatively healthy and consistent season has the Clippers as a top five defense with a top 10 offense, which has them 4th in the Western Conference and a top five championship contender. They recently defeated their hometown rivals, the Lakers, Tuesday night on Rivals Week (127-116), with Leonard having his 2nd career triple-double by having 24 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists.

The top five MVP candidates are Embiid's historic season (36.1 pts), Doncic (33.6), Nikola Jokic (26.2), SGA (31.1), and Giannis Antetokounmpo (31.1). Four out of the five players are averaging 30 points per game, except Jokic who is close again to averaging a triple-double like last season. Also, three out of the five are averaging

double-doubles, except Doncic and SGA. This MVP race will definitely go down to the wire, like last season. Speaking of Embiid, on Monday night he dropped a debatable 76ers franchise record 70-point double-double vs Wemby and the Spurs. Later that night, Karl Anthony-Towns (KAT) dropped 62 points with 10 3's. ESPN Senior Writer Brian Windhorst (Windy) reported and wrote, the U.S. Olympics player pool, which only has a 12-man roster. The top 12 players from the player pool that should be selected barring injuries are: James, Curry, KD, Embiid, Leonard, JT, AD, Bam, Haliburton, PG, Anthony Edwards, and Kyrie Irving.

Adrian Wojnarowski (WOJ) reported as usual, some extremely important NBA news this week. WOI reported Breaking News Tuesday morning that the Heat acquired Terry Rozier from the Hornets for Kyle Lowry and a protected 2027 1st round pick (becomes unprotected in 2028). This trade definitely helps the Heat with their fixable offensive issues and solidifies them as a top four championship contender in the Eastern Conference. The Hornets will definitely look to trade Lowry and other veterans. WOI also reported another Breaking News that the Bucks fired their rookie HC Adrian Griffin, after achieving a 30-13 record, mainly because of their egregious 20th defensive rating. Then WOI reported Wednesday morning, that the Bucks hired Doc Rivers as their new head coach.

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WOJ reporting the Heat trade live.

Photo courtesy of ESPN.com



# The quest for the One Piece: the adventure of the strawhats

**Tabetha Martin-Howard**  
Social Media Editor

In July of 1997, Eiichiro Oda brought forth a manga and anime masterpiece that has become one of the most iconic tales of our time—One Piece. The narrative revolves around a young boy named Monkey D. Luffy from the East Blue, whose ambition is to ascend to the position of Pirate King. To achieve this, one must locate the elusive One Piece left behind by the previous Pirate King, Gol D. Roger.

Before embracing this dream, Luffy formed a friendship with the renowned pirate Red-Haired Shanks. Inspired by Shanks and his crew, Luffy aspired to join their ranks. However, Shanks, cognizant of the risks, rejected Luffy's request at such a tender age, causing frustration. In a pivotal moment, Luffy retaliated by consuming a mysterious Devil Fruit discovered during one of Shanks' expeditions.

This perilous Devil Fruit bestowed upon Luffy the Gum Gum powers, allowing

his body to stretch with rubber-like abilities. Yet, the curse associated with Devil Fruit use emerged—Luffy lost the ability to swim and faced the threat of drowning.

Following this revelation, Luffy found himself in a precarious situation with a hostile pirate who tossed him into the sea with a sea monster. Shanks came to Luffy's rescue, sacrificing his arm to the sea monster but gifting Luffy his iconic yellow straw hat. As time passed, Luffy, now of age, set sail despite lacking navigation skills,

a subpar education, and boat-handling knowledge, determined to fulfill his destiny as the Pirate King.

Throughout his odyssey, Luffy forged bonds with new friends like Koby and assembled one of the most formidable crews ever, including his first mate swordsman Roronoa Zoro also known as pirate hunter zoro, Cat burglar Nami the navigator, "God" Usopp also known as Sniper King the sniper, Vinsmoke Sanji also known as Black Leg Sanji the chef, Tony Tony Chopper also known as Cotton Candy Lover the doctor, Nico Robin also known as "Devil Child" the archaeologist, Franky whose name is Cutty Flam the shipwright, Brook also known as "Soul King" and Jinbe also known as The Knight of the Sea the helmsman.

Embarking on various arcs, from Baratie, Arlong Park, Drum Island, Arabasta, Skypiea, Water 7, Enies Lobby Arc, Thriller Bark, Amazon Lily, Impel Down, Marineford, Sabaody, Fish-Man Island, Zou and Wano, the Strawhat Pirates navigated challenges and created a legacy. Their journey led to encounters

with allies such as Princess Vivi, Kozuki Momonosuke, Kin'emon, Carrot, Trafalgar Law, and more.

In the most recent arc on the futuristic Egghead Island, Luffy seeks the elusive One Piece that will make him the Pirate King. Currently an Emperor of the Sea, Luffy protects Fish-Man Island and the Land of Wano. The Strawhat Pirates boast a grand fleet of over 5,600 pirates, and their combined total reaches over 8.8 billion berries.

For those who embarked on this adventure in 1997, it's been an awe-inspiring 26 years of continuous storytelling from Oda, encompassing 14 movies, over 1090 episodes, and 100 volumes of manga. One Piece remains a cherished and beloved masterpiece across the globe.



Image courtesy of byimdb.com

## Parallels between Medusa and Annabeth

**Janyne Langlois**  
Staff Writer

**Content Warning:** This article contains a mention of SA and spoilers for episode 3 and 4 of Percy Jackson and the Olympians

"Athena was everything to me. I worshiped her, I prayed to her. I made offerings... She never answered. Not even an omen to suggest she appreciated my love.

I wasn't like you, sweetheart. I was you."

~ Medusa, Percy Jackson and the Olympians, Season 1 Episode 3, "We Visit the Garden Gnome Emporium"

Over the years, the Percy Jackson series has garnered a lot of fans. With the first book being released on June 28, 2005, and the movie being released in 2011, Percy Jackson has taken the nation by storm. And just recently, Disney Plus released the new Percy Jackson series with a two-episode premiere on December 20, 2023.

While watching the show, I noticed a parallel between Medusa and Annabeth. But to start off, let me tell you



Image courtesy of www.disneyplus.com

the story of Medusa.

The story of Medusa. According to Greek Mythology, Medusa was a priestess for Athena. She devoted all her time and love to praising Athena. Then one day, a very powerful God came in and "broke the silence," as Medusa played by Jessica Parker Kennedy stated in Episode 3. That god was Poseidon, the God of the Sea. He took advantage of Medusa and ripped her of her innocence. So, Medusa called upon the goddess Athena—the goddess she's been praying to her whole life—for help.

But Athena didn't help her, she punished her.

She blamed Medusa for "letting" Poseidon come in and take advantage of her. So, Athena cursed her, turning her into a gorgon, giving her snakes for hair and a stare that turns people into stone.

Annabeth Chase. Annabeth—played by Leah Sava Jeffries—is a half-blood (more commonly known as demigods). She is the daughter of the goddess Athena and was chosen to go on a quest with Grover Underwood, played by Aryan Simhadri, and Percy Jackson, who is played by Walker Scobell. Annabeth loves her mother and defends and praises her at

all costs. Just like Medusa had. Annabeth even goes on to call Medusa a liar when she says Athena cursed her. Annabeth says that Medusa was rightfully punished for disrespecting Athena.

Now, fast forwarding to later in the episode, Percy manages to cut off Medusa's head with the help of Grover and Annabeth. Then Percy mails the head to the gods in Olympus. Then later down the line (in episode 4), the trio get attacked by the Mother of Monsters, Echidna and her Chimera. So, Annabeth takes them to an Athenian Temple, the Gateway Arch in St. Louis. Then she starts to explain some traits of the building when she says, "It's 630 feet wide, 630 feet tall, each side is balanced perfectly against the other. The arch is held up by symmetry. It's held up by math." Then Annabeth says, "This is how you show Athena your love. A monument to the power of perfection." As the trio hideout in the Arch, Annabeth reassures them that they'll be safe there. That her mother will protect them, and no monsters could get in.

But she was wrong.

Echidna and her Chimera came after the trio, so Annabeth took them to the altar, the highest point of the archway, thinking Athena would protect them. But she didn't. Athena let Echidna and Chimera in. All because Athena was upset with Annabeth. Annabeth was punished for Medusa's head being sent to Olympus—she was punished because Athena felt embarrassed. Percy didn't understand why Annabeth was being punished for something he did; but just the fact that Annabeth went along with it and let Percy do that was enough of a reason for Athena to punish her.

History repeated itself. Annabeth now understood what happened to Medusa, for she was living through it herself. Her mother, whom she's loved and praised her whole life, was punishing her due to her own embarrassment. And there was nothing Annabeth could do about it.

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# Fitter Happier: a generation disillusioned by curated content

By **Keynaya Thompson**  
*Managing Editor*

It is 2024, and it is a no-brainer that our society exists in fast-evolving digital realm where the internet, specifically social media is one of the biggest pillars in the landscape. Over the past decade and a half with the rise in multimedia profiles and sharing personal content, the ideal image of success and happiness have adapted new meanings. Gen-Z, the generation that witnessed the rise of social media is right in the middle of this adaptation; for better or for worse.

Shortly before winter break, a fellow uni student (and Gen-Z'er) recommended an album for me to listen to: Radiohead's OK Computer. The interlude, "Fitter Happier," eerily narrated by a synthesized voice on a 1990s Macintosh seems prophetic in the prediction of the internet's relationship with societal expectations. The lyrics, which read as an audio description of the average "it girl lifestyle" or "5-9 before my 9-5" TikTok videos that have garnered over millions of views, were a satirical commentary and dispelling of the 1990s glorification of the yuppie lifestyle. Today, it reflects a boomerang effect of an entirely new generation that has

## fitter happier more productive

Image courtesy of fitterhappiermoreproductive.com

become fixated on conformity and appearance.

Social media continues to be the keystone in moving the goalposts to what happiness looks like today. Ten years ago in 2014, which is unironically being pushed as the new 2024 for nostalgia, happiness looked like indie fashion, Tumblr and anti-capitalism. Today, there's many different forms of curated happiness from fitness gurus who carelessly lead cis-het men into borderline eating disorders, beauty creators who have fifteen-year-old freshman believing they need retinoids and acids as part of their skincare routine and overall lifestyle curators who have college students convinced they're not doing enough.

Gen-Z is trapped in a comparison game, measuring themselves against social media and the unrealistic standards it sets for everyday life.

Luckily for Gen-Z, there are many in the generation that embrace non-conformity, so they are opposing what is now considered traditional or expected ideas of achievement. And who can blame them? Amidst a decade of continuing trends of lifestyle curation on various platforms from YouTube and Instagram to Pinterest and TikTok, there is a cry for realism, authenticity and the need for individual definitions of fulfillment.

These nonconformists oppose this way of life and center the redefining of success on an

individual basis. Instead of subscribing to social media's pillars of happiness, they are prioritizing their own definitions of personal growth and finding purpose. Non-consumerism, passion over paycheck and self-identity are some major themes that are a part of this anti-curation sector of social media. Of course, this community of people found themselves through social media. Despite its many downfalls, social media is best at what it was created for, connecting with others and building community. Gen-Z'ers against conformity and pre-defined success use these platforms to create a safe space for those who feel less than the societal goal post and to dismantle the definition of happiness, fostering one that champions individualism.

"Fitter Happier," a late 90s interlude is a timeless commentary on conformity, societal pressure and the internet. Gen-Z has existed in a time where these things are all one with social media. There is a constant pursuit of perfection and what life should look like. These insistent propagated standards have led to a generation in disillusionment. There is a search for an elusive ideal of success and happiness which only leads to deep feelings of inadequacy. The digital

age is complex, and Gen-Z has been placed in charge of navigating the good and the bad.

That's why it is crucial that the generation continues to re-define happiness and reject the perfectionism model imposed by social media, shaping the mold for what it means to be truly "fitter and happier."

pacts us today and not on motivating divide, how can school faculties not be scared?

Teachers and students who filed a lawsuit against the Stop W.O.K.E act in March last year emphasized that "these laws are unconstitutional viewpoint-based restrictions on speech that regulate the speech of Florida teachers and business owners in violation of their First

Amendment Rights. These laws employ nebulous terms with vague definitions in order to chill protected speech."

If students are not taught about inequality in the classroom, they will not know what to do about it when they encounter real acts of oppression in their community. Not teaching the full scope of inequality is as if we are suppressing our past. And suppression is one step closer to oppression.

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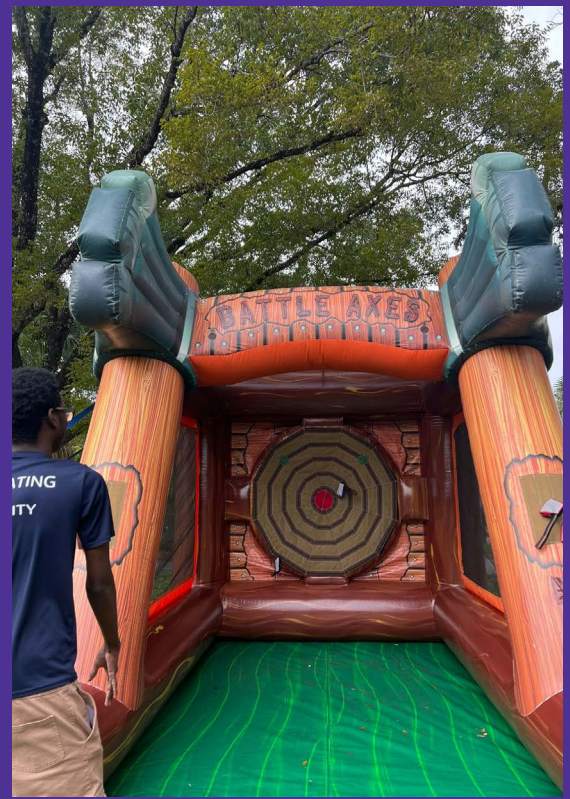
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# Spring Fling on Central Campus



Photos by Swami Hinojosa / Editor-in-chief