

# THE VERMILLION

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette Student Newspaper 📍 September 5, 2024

## From dorms to hotels: UL Lafayette's decision behind its roaring enrollment

**Ramudhi Kariyawasam**  
MANAGING EDITOR

As the 2024-2025 academic year has begun and students have officially finished their first week at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, one lingering subject remains that of the unexpected residential student life some incoming students experienced.

Before the beginning of the semester, approximately 160 freshmen were assigned housing at two off-campus hotels due to record-breaking enrollment and shortage of housing for new students.

The Woodspring Suites, an extended stay hotel, and Wingate by Wyndham have been rented by the university for nearly \$5 million to accommodate the students in need of housing, according to News 15.

Previous guests of the aforementioned hotels were instructed to evict the property in order to prepare the locations to better accommodate the university students and make their residential experience similar to that of on-campus housing.

The reasoning and decisions behind the circumstances and a better perspective of the students living at the hotels come after the first week of courses.

Dr. DeWayne Bowie, vice president for enrollment management, further clarified on the rise in enrollment, decisions behind satellite housing locations and possible prospective solutions to the temporary inconvenience.

The freshmen enrollment over the recent years have been increasing with nearly two-thirds of the class living on-campus.

"Big demand for the university. We've seen over the last five years a 32% increase in our freshmen class. As your freshmen class is growing, so does our overall enrollment."

Bowie further elaborated on UL Lafayette's on-campus living, explaining that the university's intention during

the recent years have been to create an environment that mimics that of a residential college.

"The cost of improvements that we've made in our on-campus living have led to returning students staying on-campus longer, and then you have a larger freshman class coming in and demanding more housing."

Bowie acknowledged the situation as a bottleneck, but initiatives are underway to address the issue.

"We are having very serious conversations right now about the need to build more residential housing on campus. But until we have that, we need to utilize the resources we have in our community, which are the apartments and hotels, as we did this fall."

Bowie clarified why plans of building new residential halls are being established now.

"You have to have that kind of demand for several years before you begin to build new facilities. So we're at the point now where we feel we have enough evidence that there's need and secure funding for new housing."

The university began to see higher enrollment for Fall 2024 during the spring and sought ways in which the overflow students could be accommodated.

"We began to have conversations, about a year ago, with apartment complexes in our community."

Bowie further commented that apartment complexes near the university were contacted in hopes of accommodating student overflow, but all of them had no vacancy.

"We then reached out to several hotels in the local area and had conversations about what we wanted to do. We did not want to have a situation with a hotel where there were mixed tenants. We talked to hotels about us actually leasing the entire hotel and it being on-campus living in an off-campus environment."

Bowie concluded that closer hotel options with comparable rates to UL Lafayette housing costs were explored but none fully embraced the notion

of leasing their entire facility to the university. The only two hotels which agreed to fulfill that need were the Woodspring Suites and Wingate by Wyndham hotels.

Cade Roy, president of the Student Government Association (SGA) and a political science senior, described the organization's role and possible efforts to alleviate the concerns of the situation.

"We represent the student voice, general advocacy, symbolic advocacy, making sure that student concerns are represented to the university, so they know what students are feeling."

Roy elaborated on the satellite housing decision.

"It's a good, bad problem to have. Increased enrollment, there's a lot of students coming back to school after COVID, getting an uptick in people who want to get that college experience and live on-campus."

"There was a waitlist in the summer, and I think the university didn't want to have to turn away students that wanted to live on or near campus. This sort of band-aid solution, obviously is not going to be permanent, will be a temporary solution until a more sustainable solution can be found," said Roy.

One popular SGA committee, the

Student Life committee, was revitalized during the summer and Roy hopes it serves as a beacon for students to voice any concerns in which the university must be made aware.

"It's basically going to act as a catch-all for student concerns about everything that affects you as a student outside the classroom. I'm hoping to set the infrastructure in place so that every year the university knows they could come to this committee for how students are feeling."

SGA meets with the president of the university, Dr. Joseph Savoie, every week during the academic year, where Roy concluded that the organization can be a voice in sharing the students' concerns with housing and how that may advance into plans of developing more on-campus housing for students.

The Vermillion went to further observe the conditions at the satellite locations and speak to students living at the two hotels. While many expressed unique impressions, universally students shared that their current circumstance is much different from what they hoped their first year would bring.

➤ See **HOUSING** on page 8



Photo by Joe Bozzelle

Woodspring Suites is sold out after the University rented entire hotel.

## President Savoie announced 1.1 billion dollars worth of project set to transform UL facilities

**Bruce Tete**  
NEWS WRITER

While many students were away this summer, resting and getting ready for a new semester, the College of Engineering was busy breaking ground for the construction of a new \$55 million building. Most students have no doubt noticed the chain-link chateau now inhabiting the middle of campus and are probably wondering what exactly the college is up to.

In 2022, the College of Engineering at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette announced their plan for the Engineering Student Centered Collaborative Building, which serves to address the ever-increasing demands facing engineers. Scientific innovations, environmental challenges and industry needs means engineering education is

left constantly trying to catch up and keep students prepared.

Dr. Ahmed Khattab, the dean of the College of Engineering said, "So this state-of-the-art facility marks a significant milestone for the College of Engineering.

And this is not just the space, this is beyond the physical space. It's about opportunities for our students, about how we are covering or bridging the skills gap between what engineering education provides and what industry needs."

To give students the vital skills they need, the ESCCB will include an amenity of facilities and resources. Engineering majors of all classifications will have access to state of the art 5,000 square foot makerspace, smart classrooms, huddle rooms and countless other spaces for collaboration and socialization.

Changes are also being made to Madison Hall in order to convert the building into a space mostly dedicated for research and teaching labs and to make the building more accessible for students and staff with disabilities.

However, while students are excited about the new additions to campus, many also feel that other majors and departments are being left behind.

Leah Russ, a junior in political science said, "I believe that it's a nice addition to campus. However, I hope that if there's any funds left over from that, that we could fix buildings we already have, simply because there are issues and things that need to be fixed."

Across campus, there have been reports of faulty AC systems, poor accessibility and various issues, especially in the more historic buildings.

For example Izamary Lara, a junior in chemistry said "I'm just kind of jealous as a different kind of STEM major, like seeing the conditions that we have to do stuff in, I've noticed engineering students get better stuff than we do because they have extra funds and extra donors[...]"

She continued, "Honestly, in the chemistry building, like the bottom of the sinks are kind of biohazards, like you can't touch the bottom because there's broken glass and chemicals have eroded the sink and it's just disgusting."

With such an old campus, problems are bound to occur, making

maintenance an absolute must.

Fortunately, this summer, during the State of the University event, president Savoie delivered a speech in which he announced \$601 million worth of projects are either currently in the design phase or under construction.

Some of these projects include renovations to campus sidewalks as well as air conditioning, elevator, and security improvements for multiple buildings. Additionally, OK Allen Hall, Agnes Edwards, the Brook Street annex and the ROTC building are also set to receive new roofs.

President Savoie also declared that two of our oldest buildings: Foster Hall and DeClouet Hall are going to be fully revamped and renovated starting this spring.

These two historic buildings hold many vital resources for students including financial aid, work studies, federal programs that give support to first generation students and other underrepresented groups.

"We are now managing more construction projects than at any time since before World War II," said the president in his speech. But that's not all, the president also announced that \$535 million worth of projects are currently in the process of seeking approval and funding. Meaning in total, approximately \$1.1 billion worth of projects are either seeking funds, in the design process, or are currently under construction.



Photo by Kaydence Vital

Construction barricade located in front of Madison Hall.

### News

#### EAT MOR CHICKIN

The new Chik-fil-A has finally reopened! See all the new updates in comparison to the previous Chik-fil-A on campus.

PAGE 2

### Food Review

#### BLAZIN' HOT GOODNESS

Food reviewer Lili Nguyen gives her opinion on the food over at Blazin' Hot Chicken and her overall experience there.

PAGE 3

### Sports

#### CAJUN VICTORY ACHIEVED

A good start for Ragin Cajun football in their season opener defeating the Grambling State Tigers 40-10.

PAGE 5

### Beaucoup

#### BACK TO SCHOOL JITTERS

Vermillion writers discuss their first day feelings and the challenges of starting a new semester.

PAGE 7

# Chick-fil-A opens up after much anticipation with some updates

**Kayla Woods**  
NEWS WRITER

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette's new Chick-fil-A has opened after much anticipation for the popular restaurant. Though it shares almost all of the same qualities of off-campus locations there are some small changes that might stand out to students and staff.

Pat Mould, director of retail food and beverage operations at UL Lafayette, explained that the new Chick-fil-A was brought to campus through our food provider, Sodexo and is completely operated by them.

"Most of all the stores you see out on the street are corporate owned stores. Okay, so, Sodexo licensed Chick-fil-A to come to campus [...] it's run by Sodexo employees, Sodexo managers run it, so it's really a Sodexo operation."

Patrons might notice a slight change in the prices at the new Chick-fil-A. These prices can range from a 10 to 30 cent increase, depending on the item. Mould said the reason for the slight uptick in prices is so Sodexo can pay fees to the Chick-fil-A corporate office.

"Since Sodexo is [...] kind of like a franchisee, there's franchise fees. To the best of my knowledge, the pricing is very similar to the street pricing. Yeah, there's probably going to be a slight increase, but it's going to be nominal, because Sodexo is having to pay fees."

The payment process at the new Chick-fil-A also appears different from other on-campus restaurants. The food delivery service Grubhub can be seen at the very top of receipts and the logo is seen in various spots inside the actual restaurant along with three Grubhub kiosks patrons can use to order their meals.

When asked about the change in the payment process, Mould said Chick-fil-A and Grubhub are partners, so paying through Grubhub was a requirement for the on-campus Chick-fil-A made by their corporation.

"The Grubhub system [...] was a requirement of Chick-fil-A. They use that system throughout their stores. That's the system they feel works best for them, and that's the system [...] Sodexo is required to use."

Soon, Chick-fil-A won't be the only restaurant to use Grubhub to process payments. Mould said the plan is to have the other restaurants on campus, like Starbucks and Smoothie King, use Grubhub in their payment and ordering process as well.

Despite the high anticipation for the restaurant, a soft opening was implemented in lieu of heavy promotion. This choice was made to lessen the rush of traffic for the workers at Chick-fil-A, so as not to overwhelm them.

"A soft opening allows people to just trickle in, and the staff to kind of get their bearings and get their feet under them, you know. So that's why you don't really promote [...] usually with a soft opening the word gets out," Mould said.

Even with a soft opening, UL students were eager about the opening of Chick-fil-A, with the number of students coming through the restaurant increasing each day.

"The first day was [...] three or 400 people. Then it was 600 people, and then it was 900 and then, like I said, the other day, they served 1200 people."

Joie Dural, a freshman kinesiology major, explained what she noticed overall about the new Chick-fil-A is the ease of having kiosks that are provided by Grubhub.

"It's pretty nice. The kiosks, [...] I think

they are nice because I've been avoiding going in there because I don't feel like going up and talking to them, and so when I saw that was in there I was like okay I like that."

Keldon Johnson, a sophomore moving image arts major, appreciated the convenience of the location but is concerned about the ratio of staff to an ever increasing number of students.

"I think having it in the student union is pretty convenient. Of course, since it's new everybody has got to get adjusted to it because it's a lot of students and only a little bit of them."

Marissa Davenport, a freshman majoring in anthropology, described how, even with the aid of the kiosks, her experiences at Chick-fil-A were chaotic and unappealing.

"It's just a lot of extra work to get my food and it's a lot of chaos that I would rather not have to deal with. The chaos is not worth the price."

Though it's in a new location, Chick-fil-A is not new to UL Lafayette's campus.

There was a Chick-fil-A Express in the Agnes Edwards Food Court before it closed down for its updated replacement.

The biggest difference between the old and new Chick-fil-A is the amount of menu items on each. The new Chick-fil-A is fully operational, serving breakfast and lunch/dinner options, while the older one only sold certain items from the menu.

UL Lafayette's Chick-fil-A is located in the Student Union, at 600 McKinley St.. Its hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday and closed on Sunday.

Follow The Vermilion on Twitter  
@TheVermilion for more content



Photo by Joe Bozzelle

New Chick-fil-A on UL campus.

## Police Reports

Compiled by Kay Padilla

### Aug. 31

- At 8:06 p.m., an officer responded to a report made of a possible housing violation at the Windgate Hotel.

### Aug. 30

- At 2:49 p.m., officers were dispatched to Heritage Apartments in reference to a parking lot crash involving a 2015 black Nissan Altima and a 2012 black Honda Civic. No injuries were reported.

### Aug. 29

- At 9:40 p.m., officers were dispatched to Bourgeois Hall in reference to a stolen red and white Adidas track and field bag, tennis shoes, track spikes, running flats and a muscle roller. An investigation was conducted.

### Aug. 28

- At 9:30 p.m., officers were dispatched to Bonin Hall for reports of individuals hanging on doors.
- At 3:58 p.m., officers were dispatched to Oliver Hall in reference to a reported theft of a 13th Gen Intel Core I5-1335U Windows 11 Pro and a laptop cable lock.

### Aug. 27

- At 1:21p.m, officers investigated a private lot crash that occurred at Cajun Field between a 2010 silver Buick Lacrosse and a gray 2019 Ford Fusion.
- At 12:23 p.m., ULPD received a report of a stolen silver frame bicycle with black wheels and handle bars from the UL Baseball Stadium

### Aug. 26

- At 3:32 p.m., ULPD received a report of a student who had two bags of belongings that were stolen from the Student Union. Belongings included a Coursepoint E-book, Physical Examination Vol. 9 textbook and a UL Nursing white lab coat and nursing patch. The suspect was located and released on a misdemeanor summons. Property was recovered and returned to the owner.

### Aug. 25

- At 2:52 p.m., an officer responded to a hit and run in the Taft Parking Garage between a 2012 black Infiniti G37 and a 2022 blue Hyundai Elantra.
- At 3:38 a.m., officers were dispatched to Coronna Hall in reference to an alcohol related incident.











Scan the QR code on the right to share ideas, topics, and issues we should cover at The Vermilion, UL Lafayette's student newspaper. Scan the code on the left to be taken to The Vermilion's website.

**Student Publications**

#### THE VERMILION

A weekly student publication of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. The paper is distributed on Thursdays except on holidays and semester breaks. The Vermilion is supported in part by student-assessed fees. Views expressed in The Vermilion do not necessarily reflect those of UL Lafayette administrators, faculty, staff or other students.

#### EDITORIAL STAFF

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF** Kay Padilla  
**MANAGING EDITOR** Ramudhi Kariyawasam  
**NEWS EDITOR** Ramudhi Kariyawasam  
**LAYOUT EDITOR** Ellie Schmidt  
**SPORTS EDITOR** Charles Martin

**EMAIL** thevermilion@louisiana.edu **BUSINESS** 482-6110 **MAIL P.O.** Box 43721 Lafayette, LA 70504-4813 **LOCATION** 101 BOUCHER DRIVE LAFAYETTE, LA

**ILLUSTRATIONS EDITOR** Lauren Gerald  
**ALLONS EDITOR** Nyria Mustiful  
**PODCAST EDITOR** Nyria Mustiful  
**PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR** Alyus Dick  
**COMIC ARTIST** Lauren Gerald

#### SUBMISSIONS

All letters to the editor and guest editorials must include the author's full name and phone number and be no longer than 400 words in length. Submissions are edited for libel and vulgarity only. Editorial and columns reflect the author's opinion and not those of The Vermilion staff. All advertisements must be submitted by the Friday before publication at thevermilion@louisiana.edu. © 2024 Communications Committee of UL Lafayette. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

# Blazin' Hot Chicken brings the Nashville spiciness to Lafayette

Lili Nguyen  
FOOD REVIEWER

Blazin' Hot Chicken opened in Louisiana because a group of friends wanted to bring Nashville hot chicken to their home state. The restaurant originated in Lake Charles. It is conveniently located within walking distance to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette; a perfect addition to the food options for UL students.

They offer many food combinations that include their chicken tenders. From crunchwraps and sliders; they have it all.

I went around lunch time so it was really busy. The drive-thru was packed, but there was only one other person inside. The artwork on the walls was very vibrant and filled with chickens. The customer service was friendly.

Upon walking in, I was greeted by a male worker. After my order was placed, it wasn't long before I got it. I placed my order for dine in, but it was accidentally put in as if to go by the worker. I was a little disappointed and ended up taking the order to eat at UL Lafayette.

I got the Blazin' #2 and #6 with the hot spice level. The spice levels included country, mild, medium, hot, xtra hot and blazin' hot. To be able to get the blazin' hot spice level, there was a waiver you had to sign by the register. My drink of choice was a Gold Peak sweet tea. The drinks were self-serve and there was a drink station with many options.

I genuinely enjoy spicy food, but I don't think I could handle any other spice level above hot at Blazin'.

Blazin' #2 consisted of 3 tenders, waffle fries, pickles, sandwich bread,

honey mustard and Blazin' sauce. The flavor of cayenne pepper was prominent, but I could still taste the flavor of the tenders. The tenders were moist and not dry. I made a sandwich out of my meal by putting the chicken tender inside of sandwich bread and adding pickles, fries, Blazin' sauce and honey mustard on top.

Blazin' #6 is loaded fries that consist of fries, 2 tenders, mac and cheese, honey mustard, blazin' sauce and pickles. The fries remind me of Chick-Fil-A fries. This one is my favorite item on the menu and I've tried every one. The spicy and sweetness just balance each other out. I'd recommend eating it fast or it does get soggy.

Blazin' Hot Chicken reminds me of Raising Canes, but better. They have bigger tenders than Canes. The Blazin'

sauce reminded me of Canes sauce. The honey mustard sauce was a little too liquidy. I expected it to be a little thicker.

The prices are cheap. Both of my meals with a drink came out to \$28. The prices range from \$9-\$13. It is very feasible for a college student.

Blazin' Chicken is located at 1011 E University Ave Suite B, Lafayette, LA 70503. They are open Sunday to Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. and Thursday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3:30 a.m.

Blazin' Hot Chicken is a great addition near UL Lafayette since it is cheap and is open late. It will come in handy for late night classes, study sessions, a night out and finals week.

Follow The Vermilion on Twitter  
@TheVermilion for more content



Photo by Lili Nguyen  
Hot Blazin' Chicken



Photo by Lili Nguyen  
Blazin' #2 and #6

## Sports

# Soccer: new players bring in new promise through the early season

Isaac Henry  
SPORTS WRITER

The Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns soccer squad is off to its easiest start in years. The team's first five opponents have racked up an atrocious combined record of 3-13-4 as of Sept. 1.

The Cajuns have taken advantage of their strength over schedule well, earning a 3-0-2 record through those first five matches.

On top of that, the team has played every game at home since their first match in Lake Charles against McNeese. In a press conference on Monday, Aug. 26, Head Coach Chris McBride spoke about the benefit of starting the season with a home stand.

"I think it's nice to be home after being five in a row on the road last year, so it's nice to have them back. I think they're confident, but we're definitely not overconfident. They know they've got some things to work on," McBride said.

The team's +6 goal differential through these early matches is carried by a dominant showing against the Middle Tennessee Blue Raiders on Aug. 22.

The team got off to a scorching hot start that night, scoring inside of six minutes and extending the lead with a Adeline Nemeth goal in the 11th minute.

When the Raiders cut the lead to 2-1 in the 25th minute, the Cajuns pressed the issue, forcing a corner kick and answering the goal with a Sisley Stephens blast within two minutes.

"It was phenomenal. It was something that we had spoken about," McBride said.

"When we go down a goal, we have to have some resilience about us."

The Cajuns continued to completely lock down the Raiders through the second half, and the game would end 5-1.

"It's not game over as soon as an opponent scores, even if they score first or are trying to get some momentum back in the game, so I was really proud of the character, how they were able to stay composed and still stay driven. We made a couple of subs and those players stepped into their roles and really added to the attack," McBride said.

"Their energy levels were fantastic in the second half and I really think that's what propelled us forward."

Last Thursday's 1-0 victory against the Northwestern State Demons was defined by the team's new additions. Aila Swinton, a junior transfer from Kennesaw State, scored the lone goal of the match for the Cajuns.

"We've got a lot of people playing new positions this year along with some freshmen that are in the lineup as well, so it's gonna take some time for those guys to get used to the situations they're in," McBride said.

"People are in the right positions, they're just gonna have that little bit of composure that comes with experience, being in there, and understanding they have more time than what they actually think."

The Lady Cajuns' first real test will come this Thursday in Houston against the Rice Owls, who currently stand 4-0 at home, followed by the LSU Tigers in Baton Rouge on Sunday, Sept. 8.



Photo by Joe Bozzelle  
Megan Bradley runs the ball before kicking it to her teammate.

## ROLY POLY

the original

Rolled Sandwiches • Soups • Salads




ROLY POLY CATERING OPTIONS








GOT A GROUP TO FEED? WE HAVE GOT YOU COVERED!!!

WHATEVER YOUR TASTE...

Roly Poly has something for everyone! Not only great Sandwiches, but Specialty Salads and Soups. Reduced fat cheeses, dressings and spreads add an even lighter dimension to our menu. Not just delicious, but healthy and hearty too. We're not just the original rolled sandwich, we're the original healthy sandwich too!

Our sandwiches and a tasty cup of soup make the perfect All American lunch or light dinner! Shrimp and Corn Bisque, the Spring Asparagus, the Old-fashioned Chicken Noodle, the Loaded Baked Potato, the Broccoli Cheddar and the Baja Chicken Enchilada are just a few of our soup varieties to choose from.

THINK  
BEFORE YOU EAT

Bring this coupon to Roly Poly in the Oil Center for a

FREE COMBO

(chips & a drink)  
with purchase of regular sandwich

1004 Coolidge Street  
Oil Center • Lafayette  
(337) 234-3289  
Mon - Thurs 9AM-4PM  
Fri - Sat 10AM-3PM Sun: Closed

ROLY POLY

Rolled Sandwiches • Soups • Salads

1004 Coolidge Blvd.  
**337-234-3289**

Located 2 blocks from campus  
UL students get a discount with their ID

# Cajun Crossword

Compiled by Morgan Parker

No. 1

## INSTRUCTIONS

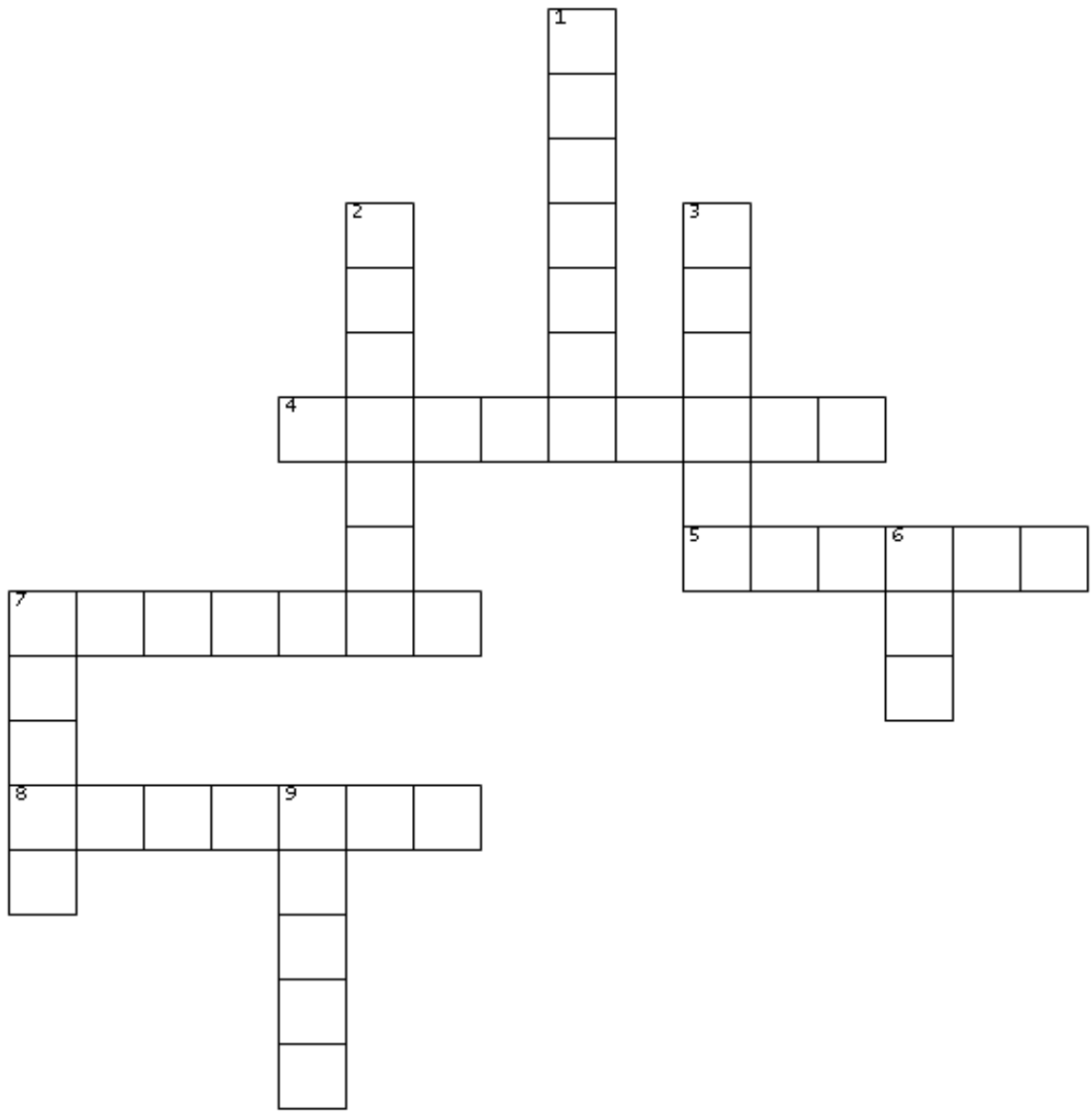
The answers can be found throughout the newspaper, so make sure to thoroughly read each story. Try to find all of them and see if you got them correct in the answers provided in the next issue's crossword search!

### ACROSS

- Enrollment at UL has \_\_\_\_\_.
- Who is the President of UL Lafayette (last name)?
- What is the name of the freshman setter who served three aces and one dig (last name)?
- How did Nyria Mustiful discover most of the books she read this summer?

### DOWN

- Which flavor was prominent in the tenders of the Blazin #2?
- Which Cajuns newcomer scored the lone goal against Northwestern last Thursday (last name)?
- What is in Chick-fil-A to help customers order?
- What is Kennesaw State's mascot?
- Who is the drummer for the Gorillaz (last name)?
- Which current presidential candidate survived an assassination attempt (last name)?



## Cajun Candids Get on Board Day

Photos by Alyus Dick and Joe Bozzelle



# The beginning of the UL Ragin Cajuns 2024 volleyball season



Photo by Darius Brooks

Cajuns reconvene after an intense play to debrief.



Photo by Darius Brooks

Jazmine Gaston preps to serve

## Kaydence Vital

SPORTS WRITER

Welcome back Cajuns, it's a new season of women's volleyball. The 2024 season has started with an exhibition match against Tulane University. It was held Aug. 23, 2024, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

At the exhibition, the Cajuns ended up falling short to Tulane with a final of 1-3 (12-25, 25-20, 20-25, 14-5).

Louisiana started off their regular fall season with the Sawyer Camilo Memorial Classic, on Aug. 30, 2024. They went into a thrilling head-to-head battle against Jackson State University.

Louisiana started off strong with a win in the first set with a score of 25-20. Though they lost the momentum from the start, Jackson State claimed a 3-1 (20-25, 25-19, 25-22, 27-25) win on Opening Night of the 2024 season.

Louisiana (0-1) raced out to a 14-5 lead from the opening whistle behind a balanced effort of two kills apiece from Cailin Demps, Lauryn Hill and Jazmine Gaston, then later fended off a Tiger's comeback to capture an early match lead.

Jackson State pulled itself out of deficits in each of the next two sets to flip the script. With the match lead hanging in the balance in the third set, a kill from Hope Briggs forged a 22-all and marked the first of four straight winners that provided the Tigers the advantage.

Louisiana repeated the quick start in Set 4 by building a 7-1 advantage and reclaimed the lead 22-21 when Cami Hicks was involved in back-to-back blocks—appearing to be on the way to evening the match.

A kill from Demps increased the lead to 23-21, however the Tigers won the

next two rallies which set up a back-and-forth tussle into extra points before a pair of kills ended the frame in JSU's favor.

The two teams battled through 22 ties and 12 lead changes over the three sets that decided the contest. JSU benefited from a 56-49 advantage in kills and a higher efficiency (.209 to .142 advantage in hitting percentage).

Louisiana entered the season strong, but with shortcomings. Being short-handed with all-conference setter Siena DeCamra having endured a season-ending injury and a 300-200 kills-dig performer Shiya Richardson sidelined with injury.

Leading the Cajuns, Demps and Gaston shined in their official debut, totaling 13 kills and 12 kills, respectively. With 10 digs added to her stat line, Gaston notched a double-double in her collegiate debut.

Hicks led the charge on the frontline with a match-high five blocks while libero Mio Yamamoto hauled in a match-high 20 digs.

Freshman setter Megan Hawkins served up three aces and was one dig shy of a double-double. She handed out 32 of the Cajuns' 48 assists.

This past Friday closed out the season opener, but the tournament commenced through Sunday, Sept. 1st. The 2024 women's volleyball season is starting off in a rough patch, but the determination and the drive of the players is not going unnoticed.

The execution in every play to the teamwork and individuality being shown and brought to life on the court is what is going to give the Cajuns their successful season.

Follow The Vermilion on Twitter @TheVermilion for more content

# Ragin' Cajuns demolish Grambling Tigers in season opener on Aug. 31

## Charles Martin

SPORTS EDITOR

Fall has not quite made its way to the swamps of south Louisiana, but that has not stopped the start of the football season as over 20,000 fans poured into Cajun Field to watch the Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns' season opener against the Grambling State Tigers.

Though it would not do justice to call it a game as the Cajuns steamrolled the northern Tigers 40-10, winning the game in such convincing fashion it may even give the most cynical of fans hope for the upcoming season.

The entire game showcased what Louisiana football could be when the team is at 100% and coaching is at its best. The Cajuns excelled in every part of the game for the most part, with a few minor errors here and there.

The most impressive player of the game was senior Ben Wooldridge who was starting his first game since being injured in a game against UAB in week three of last season.

Wooldridge was named the starter the Monday before the game after battling with Chandler Fields for the starting job once again. The Cajuns were the better for it as Wooldridge's play lit up the Grambling defense.

Wooldridge finished the game completing 25 of his 33 passes for 308 yards and three touchdowns. While some of those completions and yards came off of receiver screens, most of the damage was done with the deep ball.

Wooldridge throughout the game threw a number of beautiful deep passes including a 56 yard touchdown pass to receiver Tavion Smith. Wooldridge's other two touchdowns came from passes of 10 yards or more, and he would have had at least one more in the fourth quarter if it were not for a receiver dropping a well thrown back shoulder pass in the endzone.

Overall though the Cajuns receiving corps is as solid as usual, with sophomore Harvey Broussard leading the way, hauling in four catches for 76 yards and a touchdown. Other reliable receivers include junior Robert Williams who had four catches and sophomore tight end Terrance Carter.

The air attack was paired with an extremely efficient rushing offense carried out by a running back committee led by starting running back Dre'lyn Washington who ran for 25 yards and a touchdown on five carries. The other two backs were sophomore Zylan Perry who ran for 45 yards on five carries and freshman Elijah Davis who rushed for 35 yards off of 6 carries.

It was not just offense that was balling either as the Cajuns punished the Tigers as they tried their best to score, holding them scoreless till the third quarter.

The Tigers only managed a meager

241 yards of total offense and turned that little yardage into only 10 points. The Cajuns managed to even take points from the offense thanks to a pick-6 by junior linebacker Caleb Kibodi early in the second quarter.

The secondary only allowed a handful of big plays through the air, the longest being 35 yards. The rushing defense matched this by keeping the run under wraps, though a few runs slipped through for double-digit yardage, though they also recorded four TFLs.

It was a great start to the season, the kind that can easily build confidence and momentum for the team. The Cajuns are looking to build on that momentum next week as they travel to Georgia to play the Kennesaw State Owls.

The Owls were just promoted to the FBS this season and joined Conference USA, so they are relatively unproven at the moment.



Photo by Joe Bozzelle

Tight end, Terrance Carter (0) runs for a touch down.

Follow us on social media!

 @TheVermilion

 @thevermilion

 @The Vermilion

# Allons

## The summer heat gets the best of all of us, even our politicians

**Kay Padilla**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

During the summer of 2024, American politics have been...interesting. In late May, Donald Trump was convicted on 34 felony counts of falsified business records. This created shock and small hope to some that Donald Trump would not be allowed to run for president, but that did not come true.

In the United States, a convicted felon can have their voting rights revoked, therefore not participating in their civic duties, but they are more than welcome to run for presidential candidacy.

In early June, the election ballot seemed to be between President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump. There was no feasible sign of this changing because both candidates clarified that they would not be stepping down despite both being of advanced age.

Age was a big thing at this point. Donald Trump kept pushing the narrative of "Sleepy Joe" and accentuating Joe Biden's speech slurs and his seemingly

distracted demeanor in videos and speeches. This was only furthered with the presidential debate that took place on June 27.

During the presidential debate, they "debated" about topics such as inflation, abortion, foreign policy and immigration. But the public did not listen to that side of the debate because they were busy keeping up with Trump and Biden's bullying towards each other. They argued about who had a better swing at golf and who was a sucker and a loser.

Joe Biden also pointed out that the only person who was a convicted felon on the presidential debate stage was Donald Trump. That might have been the only good comeback Biden had that night. Trump then later commented that inflation was killing the Black and Hispanic families of America and that people crossing the border were stealing Black jobs.

The "Black jobs" statement made by Trump did not sit well with many Black voters. Many took to social media to poke fun at and question what Trump meant by Black jobs. This was a question that

both Republicans and Democrats agreed to be puzzled on because Black people work many different types of jobs from minimum wage jobs to the Vice President of the U.S. There is no set stereotype for "Black jobs", so we still do not know what Trump meant by that.

After this debate, Democratic leaders were left wondering if their candidate was going to be fit for another years of presidency. Many Democrats, including figures like Obama and Nancy Pelosi, urged Biden for weeks to step down and name another candidate. The support for Joe Biden did not increase, but Donald Trump's did.

The support for Trump continued to increase for about two weeks and then skyrocketed on July 13 when he survived an assassination attempt. Multiple shots were fired into the crowd at his rally in Pennsylvania, with a bullet skirting Donald Trump's ear and injuring multiple rally attendees, killing one. The last assassination attempt on a United States president was Ronald Reagan's in 1981.

Support for Trump increased as X and TikTok users granted Trump "hood status", and many Republicans celebrated his life. This then gave birth to rhetoric that the Democrats and the "liberal media" were trying to kill Trump to silence his campaign, therefore sending an assassin.

The next shocker that occurred in the very eventful summer months was Joe Biden stepping down from the presidential race and naming Kamala Harris as the Democratic presidential nominee, which in a sense stole all of Trump's thunder.

Donald Trump was mainly gaining popularity with swing voters because Joe Biden was very visibly not equipped to handle another four years. Swing

voters are essential to both candidates as they are typically a large portion of "undecided" voters. And with Biden's constant reassurance that he would not be stepping down, swing voters sided with Donald Trump who survived his assassination attempt.

Introducing Kamala Harris as the new Democratic presidential candidate gave new light to swing voters and Democrats that there could now be a better suited, younger candidate. "Sleepy Joe" no longer existed and Donald Trump was now the old, confused and tired man on stage.

Trump still maintains his popularity with his loyal followers but Kamala Harris now has overwhelming support from women, young voters and people of color, the same demographics Trump fails to appeal to. This is highlighted by

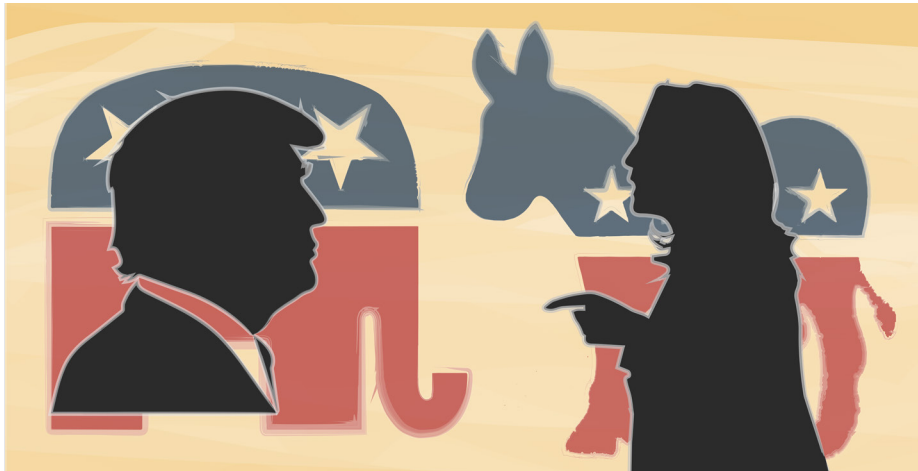
Trump recently questioning Kamala's name pronunciation, race and Black identity, criticizing her Indian heritage and stating she was just now deciding to identify as Black.

Trump and Harris have been answering each other's remarks over news outlets or media posts, which is sometimes hilarious but tedious to keep up with.

The age of social media has changed presidential debates, as there are no longer planned out media appearances or posts. Angry X posts and funny TikToks are how our current presidential candidates feud.

Commenting on the unseriousness of our current-day politics would have to be another Allons itself, but it is safe to say this summer has been eventful in the world of American politics.

I encourage everyone to register to vote because it looks like we all need to be informed about just exactly who we are going to put in office for the next 4 years of our lives.



Graphics by Ellie Schmidt

## What the Gorillaz' music can tell us about our image driven viewpoints

**Marie Ducote**  
ALLONS WRITER

In reading my articles you have learned a bit about what my interests are, such as my love of The Beatles, '80s music, cartoons, comics, record collecting and reading just to name a few. The band that combines a majority of my interests are the Gorillaz.

I started to get into their music in my teens when I was just beginning to carve out my own taste and not just what my parents listened to. What drew me to them was the sound and way the group is presented.

But first let's go back in time to the late '90s where roommates, Blur frontman Damon Albarn and comic book artist and "Tank Girl" co-creator Jamie Hewlett, were in their apartment watching MTV.

Both were bored with the music being played on the channel, noticing the abundance of boy bands that looked like they all came from the same factory. The guys came up with the idea of a virtual band as a response to this and the Gorillaz was born.

Hewlett, in a 2005 interview for Wired, went into more detail on what led to the idea of the band, "We were flatmates. One day, we were home watching MTV with our eyes just kind of glazed. Because if you watch MTV for too long, it's a bit like hell - there's nothing of substance there. So we got this idea for a cartoon band, something that would be a comment on that."

So with the concept created Albarn took charge of the music and Hewlett the visuals. Now, on the virtual band level, who are the Gorillaz? Well, the group consists of lead singer 2-D, bass player Murdoc Niccals, guitarist Noodle and drummer Russel Hobbs. Each album (eight as of now) are referred to as "phases".

What sets apart the Gorillaz from other cartoon bands like Josie and the Pussycats (Archie Comics), The Archies (Archie Comics) and Alvin and the Chipmunks is that they are not a part of an existing intellectual property. The fictional members of Gorillaz have

personalities and squabbles with each other.

As the years past the dynamics and appearances get slightly altered. One example is Noodle who during phase one is around 10 years old, but it has been over 20 years since their debut album. So now her character is in her early 30's.

The fictional group functions as if they are a real one. They have a backstory on how they formed and they have given interviews (my favorite piece of Gorillaz media is their "MTV Cribs" video).

Their social media presence has them posting pictures at their house and studio. The world of the Gorillaz is like our own, but slightly more absurd. In real life they have won a Grammy (2006 Best Pop Collaboration With Vocals for "Feel Good Inc." featuring De La Soul), and they have been nominated for many more over the years.

When I listen to their music or see an image of them, I wonder why someone is drawn to a particular artist. Did the listener come for the personality/image and stay for the music or vice versa? Why do we have such a strong connection to music? For example, why do some people feel a deep connection to Taylor Swift and others don't?

In the beginning of this article I explained that the Gorillaz combined many of my interests, so I came for the image and stayed for the music.

We live in an age where people have instant access to our favorite celebrities through social media apps like Instagram and X, but with this access, they are looking at highly curated lives where they can control how they are perceived through carefully picked photos that make it look like they are living a perfect life.

However a paradox occurs where, as the viewer, we ask for authenticity because we think we know the person, but we don't; we know the version they want people to see. Music especially can make the listener feel like they know the artist personally.

Listening to their songs and hearing their lyrics and the emotion in the singing makes us feel like we have been let in on a secret. To me music has the most artificial nature to it because the image is highly controlled, but it asks the musician to be the most vulnerable with their audience.

The Gorillaz image like many pop acts is meticulously thought out. Their image is integral to the music. The band asks the

listener to suspend their disbelief while listening to them. You are not listening to Damon Albarn singing, but 2-D singing.

One of my favorite songs is "Busted and Blue" from their 2017 album "Humanz." It is one of the more melancholy moments on the album. I have always interpreted the song as a commentary on our growing dependence on technology to make connections with people.

The second verse expressive these emotions perfectly, "I was asked by a computer/A shadow on the wall/An image made by Virgil/To rule over us all/ So amplify the sirens/And to find real amends/I'm through the echo-chambers/ To other worlds away."

In 2004 for the release of their single "Rockit", the band started their "Reject False Icons" campaign (the saying appears at the end of the song's music video) as the beginning of their second phase "Demon Days."

According to Noodle, "Reject False Icons means many things, one of them is to think for yourself." We should be able to enjoy pop culture, but we should not make gods out of the people who make it. They are human beings who make mistakes like the rest of us.



Graphic by Landon Fruge

# Should art be deserted due to its creator's complicated past?

**Nyria Mustiful**

ALLONS EDITOR

Recently, I've been trying to make it a point of reading more books. Reading has always held such an important place in my life and in my heart. When I was younger, all I had to do to feel safe was pick up one of my favorite books and allow myself to be transported many worlds away. As I got older, I began to miss that feeling. In college, I feel like I became less and less important to myself in comparison to school, work and other people.

Over the summer, I realized that that had to change and so naturally, the first thing I reinstated as a priority in my life and free time was reading. In true Gen-Z fashion, a pretty decent portion of my reading selections this summer came from the infamous "BookTok". I thought I knew about a lot of books, but the people who frequent BookTok have definitely got me beat.

An author that popped up quite frequently was a lady by the name of Colleen Hoover. She is a critically

acclaimed author who has written many series, including the "Slammed" series and the "It Ends With Us" duology.

In August, Hoover's novel "It Ends With Us" was adapted into a major motion picture, starring famous and highly decorated actors Blake Lively and Justin Baldoni. Lively is most known for her role as Serena van der Woodsen in the hit series, "Gossip Girl". Baldoni is known for his role as Rafael Solano in the hit American Telenovela "Jane The Virgin", as well as his directing efforts in the films "Five Feet Apart" and "Clouds".

I decided to try to read "It Ends With Us" first, especially since I knew there was a film coming out. I have a strict "no watching films first if there's a book" policy. I was excited to get into the novel, considering there was a bunch of hype surrounding it. To make a long story short, I stopped reading the book halfway through. I just couldn't get through it. The book made me cry and squirm at least 10 times within the first 50 or so pages.

Afterward, I researched Colleen Hoover and her purpose behind writing

such a novel. Hoover wrote "It Ends With Us" to process her troubling upbringing that involved watching her parents engage in domestic and emotional abuse. As someone who writes a great deal about what they've experienced or been through, I understood her initial thought process. It was still incredibly jarring to see it written so plainly.

I laid that book to rest in my collection and decided to pick up one of her other novels, entitled "Verity". I was hoping and praying that I wouldn't be so startled by this one. Unfortunately, I was terribly wrong. The two main characters fell in love and bonded over the fact that they met after watching someone get run over by a taxi. Some would call my previous statement an "oversimplified" premise of the book but I think it's just an accurately blunt one.

At this point, Hoover's mental wellbeing was heavily in question for me. To make matters worse, during the "It Ends With Us" press tour, both she and Blake Lively seemed to gloss over the impact that domestic violence had in the film and also seemed to be glamorizing the subject, while Justin Baldoni spoke frequently about the topic and expressed much support for those affected by similar circumstances.

After that, I was disgusted by Hoover. Yet, I ended up deciding to read another one of her novels, "Slammed". I actually enjoyed that book, despite its subtle implications of grooming, which still made me incredibly uncomfortable. She was definitely giving J.K. Rowling vibes at this point. It's weird because their situations are sort of different. To me, Rowling is a transphobic and homophobic bigot who simultaneously made characters a part of communities she hates.

Hoover just seems to not understand

the concept of oversharing and making her writing digestible, especially in a fictional setting. I personally feel like she might be better off writing nonfiction works so she can really release all that pent up trauma in a more transparent way.

In both situations, I enjoy the work that these women have produced. Does that mean that I agree with trans and homo-phobia, along with domestic violence? I don't believe so.

At this point, I began to ponder the long debated concept of "separating the art from the artist" and whether or not it can be done. I definitely feel like I've done it in the past with musical artists such as Chris Brown and R. Kelly. Before you all immediately begin to hate my guts, let me explain. I, under no circumstances, condone either of these men's actions.

In Chris Brown's case, since his domestic violence situation with Rihanna, his musical success has continued to take hits. I will not neglect the fact that he has also had multiple other instances of domestic abuse be uncovered since then, but I think we have to remember that we are celebrating the music, not the man.

I feel like society always makes it seem like if you enjoy the work of screwed up people, especially if their screw ups were public and horrendous, it makes you somehow as bad as them. I believe that's incredibly unfair. I also don't think that it leaves room for these artists to have any sort of character development or growth in the public eye, if they desire to.

Cancel culture has ravaged our society so much to the point where if a notable individual makes one mistake, they're immediately blacklisted, along with their work. Personally, I believe you can enjoy a body of work without celebrating the creator's misdeeds.

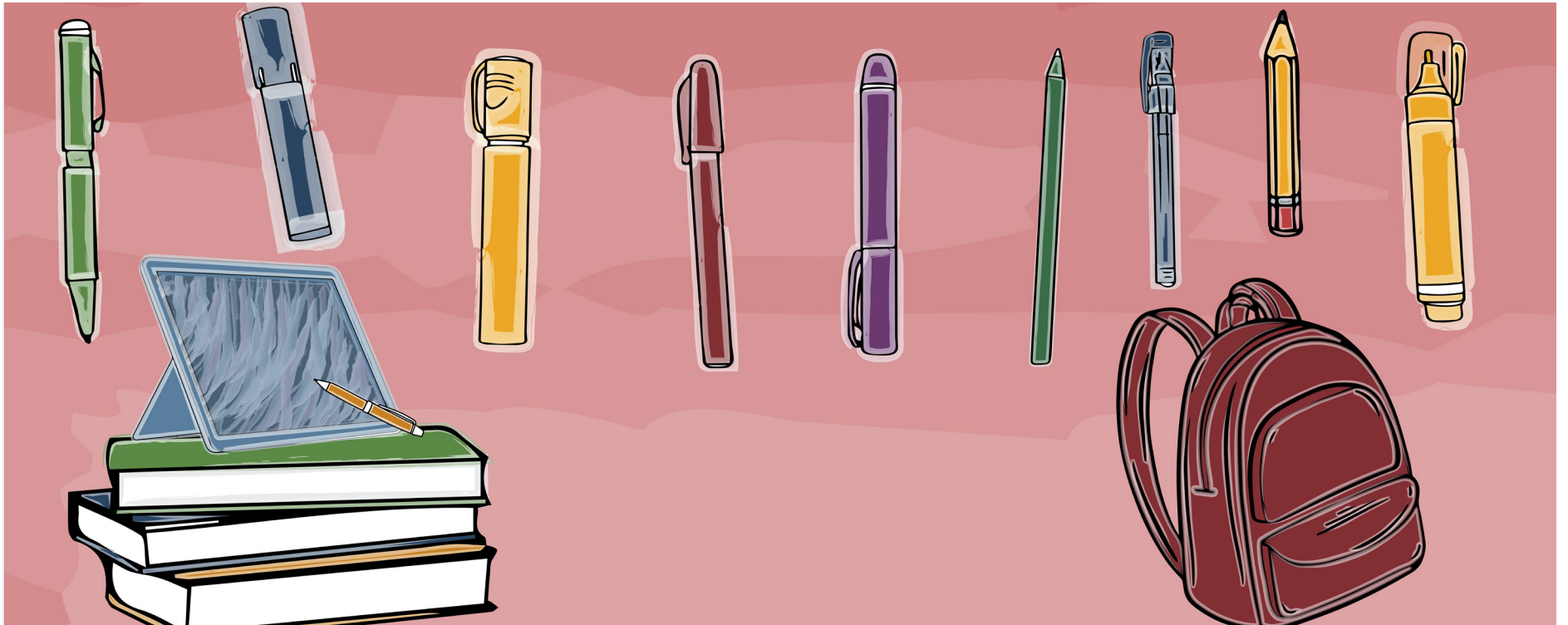


Graphic by Landon Fruge

## Beaucoup

### Fall Semester Feels

The Beaucoup section answer how their emotions are before the start of every semester. Below are their thoughts



Graphic by Ellie Schmidt

**Amare Auzenne**

ALLONS WRITER

While in some way alluding to excitement as the main thing I feel before a new semester starts would be expected, and not wholly inaccurate, the primary feeling I always get before the start of a semester is tightness. There are walls that a life has to fit within during a semester that are necessary for the performance that keeps within varying kinds of acceptable bounds. A tightrope

walked between productivity, relaxation, nourishment and sleep.

There's an encroaching ambient stress before fall semester starts. Different from the feeling before Spring semester if only by virtue of the fact there's less time to drop guard in three weeks than three months. There's a sense that I'm having to relearn the ability to function while every muscle in my body is cramping simultaneously every August. My big hope is that it doesn't spike my blood pressure and kill me one of these days.

**Nyria Mustiful**

ALLONS EDITOR

Typically, at the beginning of every fall semester, I feel incredibly anxious. However, it's more so in anticipation of the semester going well instead of it being very fear based. This semester, I was super pumped because this is the first semester that I have all classes that I'm interested in instead of having to worry about taking something that I only have to take because it's "required".

I've also put a very big emphasis on my personal health and well-being this

semester. Two of the biggest things I've been doing to keep that a priority are participating in things that make me feel good and actively developing a better relationship with God. I feel like I have tried to do these things in the past, but life would simply tell me, "Um, yeah no". Over the summer, I realized that if I really wanted to be better, I had to continue prioritizing these steps.

Obviously, as we all know, school will continue to hit like a Mack truck, but I have a pretty good feeling that the impact won't hurt much this go around.

**Marie Ducote**

ALLONS WRITER

The spring of 2025 will hopefully be my final semester and I will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in English (literature). But before that can happen I have to get through the fall semester and I would say before any school year starts I have some first day jitters.

I wonder if my professors will like me? Will I be able to keep up with the work and reading? But then I have to remind

myself, "Marie you have done this before and you have been fine." Then I listen to Gwen Stefani's "What You Waiting For?" (2004) to pump myself up.

But anyway I genuinely love the subject I am majoring in and can't imagine studying anything else. Is it challenging sometimes? Yes. But I like a challenge because it keeps me on my feet and I never get bored. In the end, the first day jitters is an obstacle one needs to jump over to succeed.

**Kay Padilla**

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The start of the semester for me is usually very chaotic. I usually have to pack my entire life in a few boxes, travel a few hours, unload and then start school a few days later. It can be very chaotic going from summer mode to school mode as well.

This semester was different. I thought it would feel chaotic and anxious during the move-in process and beginning of the semester but I didn't. I think it was

because I am closer to graduating now than I was in the previous semesters so, I'm just ready to get school over with.

I am now a junior, and hopefully, I will apply for graduation next semester. I'm over the halfway mark of my college academic career, so the next step is to finish. I'm no longer the anxious freshman who couldn't choose a minor because she wanted to do them all.

It felt very peaceful to know what my next semesters are going to look like, so I didn't need to overthink. I get to enjoy my last moments of college now.

# SOUNDING OFF

**"What are you most excited for this year?"**



**Jonas Schmidt**  
COMPUTER SCIENCE AND MATH SENIOR

*"I am most excited to be close to graduating. I am excited for all the courses I get to take now... and yeah I'm excited to see all the new faces on campus."*



**Micah Allen**  
BUSINESS FRESHMAN

*"Football games and trying new things."*



**My'Jha Holmes**  
PRE-DENTAL HYGIENE FRESHMAN

*"To explore, not just campus, but the Lafayette area as a whole. I want to experience the culture."*



**Brooklyn Money**  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY SCIENCE SOPHOMORE

*"I am most excited to learn ASL because that's one of the classes I'm in... I'm just really excited to learn how to communicate."*



**Samantha Wallace**  
BIOLOGY SENIOR

*"I'd probably say the football games."*



**Sara Moosa**  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS JUNIOR

*"I am most excited for being the secretary of the Arabic club here at UL."*

Sounding Off is a section devoted to the voice of students. Views expressed in Sounding Off do not reflect those of UL Lafayette administrators, faculty, staff or other students.

Photos and interviews by Morgan Parker, Makayla Walker and Ramudhi Kariyawasam.

## COMIC

# Summer Brain



Comic by Lauren Gerald

## HOUSING

Continued from page 1

The Woodspring Suites serves as a co-ed dormitory, with genders separated by floors as in some dorms on-campus.

Trey Turner, a freshman computer science major, shared his experience so far.

"When we first got here, it was cool. But then everything just started to go downhill. First it was with the WiFi, then the elevators weren't working, I'm trying to bring groceries to my dorm, so I had to walk up the stairs. But they got that fixed."

Benjamin Mouton, a freshman majoring in secondary education, who was currently moving out of the hotel to on-campus housing shared about his time there.

"It was pretty last minute. It was a few weeks before I moved-in that I found out that the hotels were even a thing. The room was pretty cool. I didn't hate it too much. They just emailed me that my housing changed and then I moved-in. I'm even more excited to be living in Bonin now."

The Wingate by Wyndham serves mainly as a girls' dormitory.

Haley Mendez, a freshman mechanical engineering major, shared she expected to begin her semester at a dorm on-campus, however, despite the sudden change, her stay has been well.

"It was a smooth move-in.

So far, I like it, it's so spacious. Housekeeping, I love them so much, they keep everything clean. The only thing is the buses, it takes them a bit to come pick us up."

Autumn Doubleday, a freshman psychology major, shared similar impressions but felt distant from the college environment.

"It's a nice place to live in. I feel a little bit detached, feel like it's harder because it's so far away. You have to time stuff. I'll wake up early to get on the shuttle, so I can go to campus and just stay there because I know I can't go back."

The university has ensured these students receive safety and as close to an on-campus living experience as possible with resident assistants, regular university police patrols, and night time security guards present at each location.

As unexpected as the experience has been, the university is actively working on improving such conditions while the students come together and support one another during this temporary setback.

The Office of University Housing & Residential Life was contacted by The Vermilion to speak more on the matter, but no comments were made.

