

Malfunctioning of elevators on campus poses accessibility and safety concerns

Joann Seow
NEWS WRITER

The malfunctioning of several elevators on campus has caused frustration among those frequently impacted and posed accessibility and safety concerns.

While it is easy to only see the negative side of the issue, light has to be shed on the many variables causing the elevator malfunctions, as well as the consistent efforts of the Office of Facility Management at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in searching for solutions to improve the issue.

Scott Hebert, the director of facility management, spoke on this matter and provided the latest information regarding the elevator repair works that the Office is working on.

At the current moment, the buildings with faulty elevators that are in the works of getting repaired include Coronna Hall, Baker Hall, Olivier Parking Tower, Moncus Hall and the Student Union.

According to Hebert, some of the main causes of operational failures in the elevators are hardware malfunctions, system glitches, weather elements and age.

The first problem, hardware malfunctions, is an issue that requires time to resolve. Hebert said, "If it's a circuit board or if it's a major hardware malfunction, those parts are not readily

accessible." Due to the intricacy in the process of acquiring new parts for repairs, faulty elevators may not be able to get a quick fix.

Next, while system glitches in the elevators may be a quicker fix with just a system reset, these problems occur frequently. Hebert said, "We go, we reset it. It operates perfectly fine. We'll stay there for an hour, two hours, it's working fine. As soon as we walk away, it seems like we get a call, like, within 10 minutes, saying the elevator broke."

"We just don't know. It's a sporadic thing," he added.

With regards to this issue, Hebert ensured that the elevator company, TKE, the contractor working together with the Office, is identifying deeper underlying issues within the software of the elevators.

In terms of weather elements, Hebert shared that the elevators in Olivier Parking Tower and Taft St. Parking Garage are especially vulnerable. He said, "Those are really difficult to keep up and running because they're located outdoors. They're open to the elements."

Hebert explained that the electronic system in those elevators often gets fried from moisture droplets accumulating inside the elevator shafts from condensation due to humid weather. The droplets drip onto the electronics, rusting and corroding the circuitry connectors.

Finally, the problem of age. Hebert

pointed out that the Office is working on getting elevators in the Student Union and Agnes Edwards replaced entirely due to old age. Commenting on the freight elevator in the Student Union, he said, "It's been there for, probably since the Student Union was built, renovated back in 2010 so it's past its lifetime."

Commenting on the elevators in Agnes Edwards Hall, Hebert shared that with deferred maintenance funding from the State, the Office is planning to bid on a project to have them replaced. He said, "The intention is to go ahead and completely replace all of the elevators in Agnes."

Reporting on the latest elevator maintenance activities, Hebert ensured that the Office is continuously working on getting all faulty elevators fixed. He stated, "Our intention is to always have at least one elevator functioning in a building."

Meanwhile, Hebert stressed the importance of students putting in work orders. "The more that we have everybody report the issues to us, the better we're going to be at being able to solve them and fix those problems," he said.

Dr. Patricia Cottonham, Vice President for the Office of Student Affairs, shared about a recent case where a student had reported the elevator issue to the University's staff with the intention of bringing attention to the matter. She shared that the student reported the matter not just for herself or her friends, but also for everyone else who are frequently inconvenienced by the breaking down of elevators, especially those with physical ailments or disabilities, temporary or permanent.

"The student was advocating for herself and advocating for other students," Cottonham said.

In response to the impact of elevator malfunctions on students, Cottonham commented, "There is a reasonable expectation that if there are elevators, then they should be operable." She added, "I don't think it's unreasonable that the students are frustrated. I do think that they have a right to have their questions answered."

Tariq Yarbrough is a junior majoring

in biology. In response to the problems caused by the elevators breaking down, he said, "The time, [...] waiting, [...] trying to get to class, sometimes people are late because the elevators don't work."

Amarion Venzant, a junior majoring in psychology, also faced issues with the elevators in Agnes Edwards Hall. He shared, "The most consistent issue would be just the scanner not working all the time, that, and the elevator taking a very long time to come up and down."

With elevator malfunctions, there are also safety issues posed. Yarbrough shared about his experience with an elevator in Agnes Edwards Hall dropping down a floor. He said, "I was just going down the elevator to go to class. And I think it [...], it felt like it kind of glitched out a little bit, and it slipped and fell down to the third and, like, reset, and then went back up to the fourth and opened."

From accessibility and safety concerns, to inconveniences caused in the daily lives of students, faculty and staff, the elevator malfunctions remain a persistent problem that impacts the campus community.

Cottonham shared that Student Affairs focuses on creating a positive living and learning experience for the overall wellbeing of students. Hence, they acknowledge that the problem with the elevators is indeed affecting that.

She stated, "We want students to know that they have a right to let us know when something is not up to the standard that they think that it should be and that their voice will be heard."

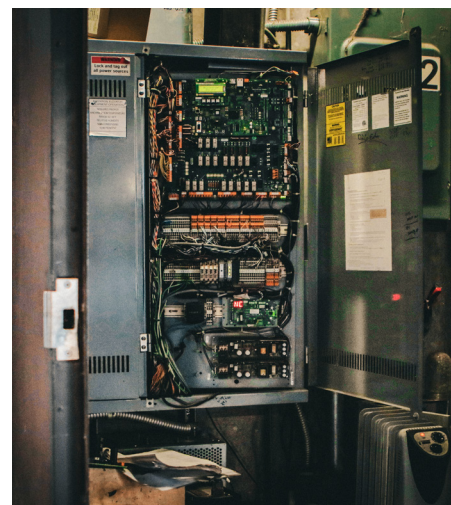
According to Hebert, besides an immediate-response maintenance crew on-call 24/7 and an elevator technician on-campus during the day, the Office of Facility Management has also requested additional support by bringing in more technicians so that work orders can be resolved quicker.

Students are highly encouraged to put in work orders as soon as a facility like the elevators are not operating normally so that the Office can be made aware of problems that require fixing. To do so, students should visit the Office of Facility Management website or ULink.



Photos by Alyus Dick

Closed off elevator and breaker box in Olivier Parking Tower



Mascot efforts are being shut down

Geonna Tipton
NEWS WRITER

The attempt to make Albineaux "Al" Boudreaux, the albino alligator mascot, the new official symbol of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette has been shut down and declared null and void by UL Lafayette's Associate Vice President in the Office of Communications & Marketing, Jennifer Stephens.

A former UL Lafayette graduate, Cory St. Ewart, created Al in hopes of him being potentially accepted as the new university mascot. Ewart has been working on the design and costume for the past two years, creating and promoting his idea through social media platforms for support from other University fans. He eventually decided to put in the remaining effort and work towards making a costume for the mascot through opening a GoFundMe account.

However, during his grassroots attempts to make Al the new face of UL Lafayette athletics, the University declared that they did not agree with the mascot or its idea. Once he opened a GoFundMe account, the University reached out to him, denying his idea of having Al the albino alligator the new mascot due to him not being authorized to use the University's brand.

Stephens, through an email to Ewart, stated, "As a courtesy, I am attaching a letter from our attorneys to The Mascot Company advising them that the University has not authorized the use of any of its intellectual property in the creation of a proposed mascot

costume. To be clear, and as I previously communicated with you on Jan. 24, 2024, the University has not endorsed this concept, nor does it intend to do so."

"While we appreciate your enthusiasm, this unauthorized concept does not align with the University's brand, its values or interests. Your continued promotion of this idea on social media and other platforms has the potential to harm our strong national reputation by creating brand confusion. Further, the University has a responsibility to say that it is not affiliated with, does not endorse and does not control any efforts to fundraise in support of the concept."

Even though Stephens replied to the mascot creation efforts, there was still a GoFundMe open and active. So, instead of letting the money go to waste, Stephens proposed that Ewart use the money to support scholarships and student programs, ending the letter by stating, "Supporting these areas will ensure the University's continued success and growth – an outcome all Ragin' Cajuns can surely endorse. All the best, and Geaux Cajuns!"

In response to the email Ewart received from the University, he stated, "This was always supposed to be a fan-led effort that's outside of the University...I've been open from the beginning, this is a grassroots campaign, I was never intending to use the University's intellectual property in Albineaux's creation."

Ewart's creation of Al the albino alligator was never with any ill intent,

he only wanted something students and alumni of UL Lafayette can have, look forward to and be proud of. In fact, Ewart was only trying to address the issue with UL Lafayette. The issue being that there is no mascot for students to love and support, especially during sporting events like football or on campus student-led activities.

Kerlsa Newton, a junior majoring in biology, when asked about how she felt not having a mascot at student events and sports, commented, "I think that a mascot would be more beneficial for our college campus. Because without one, our morale during sporting events is lower than other colleges that have mascots. I think that a mascot would give us something we could support to represent our university."

Of course, the University has the spirit squad to help cheer on the Ragin'

Cajuns in all that they do, but the University does not have that extra step. The University does not have a visual identity that represents UL Lafayette's values and qualities as a college campus. Not to mention, statistics have shown that university mascots usually increase student engagement, school spirit and pride as a whole.

University mascots serve a purpose more than one might think. In fact, university mascots make students and faculty feel more connected to one another and the school. They help create that unity between everyone on campus and highlights the positive energy and goals of that university.

University mascots are created for a reason and even though the University said no to Al the albino alligator, hopefully the University will adopt a new mascot in the years to come.



Graphic by Ellie Schmidt

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Student financial aid vs. freeze

Jenna Kimball
NEWS WRITER

Since President Donald Trump took office on Jan. 20, many important changes have been implemented. Due to the controversial areas in which former President Joe Biden spent large amounts of federal aid and grant money, the Trump administration placed a temporary financial freeze on federal grants and loans in order to discuss and determine where that money is truly needed. The financial freeze has been seen as a source of worry for many students, and despite the freeze being rescinded, many are unsure whether or not their financial aid will be affected. According to The Associated Press, Trump said that "...all foreign assistance

would be evaluated as to whether it makes the United States safer, stronger and more prosperous." According to AP News, on Jan. 29 "Student loans, Pell grants and other forms of student aid provided directly to individuals were not affected by the freeze." Despite this, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette sent out an email to all of the students in an attempt to keep people informed about the effects of the freeze. The email said, "University leadership is actively monitoring developments at the federal level to understand any potential impacts on students, faculty and staff members, and the University's programs and activities." The email concluded by saying, "The University understands the uncertainty

surrounding these developments and will continue to communicate with you as it gains more clarity on the situation." Students throughout UL Lafayette are stressed and afraid of how the federal financial changes may affect school funding and work studies around campus. Natalie Himel, a sophomore psychology major said, "I'm technically a student worker, but not employed through the scholarship job. I'm not worried about my employment, but I am worried about the employment of my friends or people that have a scholarship job." Himel continued saying, "I haven't heard of anybody that's been affected yet, per se, but I know that it worries people who are full-time scholarship recipients." Justice Hymel, a sophomore nursing major, was more worried about younger students at other schools outside of UL Lafayette. He stated, "Most people do need financial aid in college, but I'm really worried about public schools as of right now because a lot of people that go to public school can't even afford basic supplies. I just want public schools to have money because it feels like we're taking money away from public schools whenever they need the most money." Many people are still trying to determine just how these governmental changes will impact their daily lives and their ability to continue their education, but as of right now, tuition aid and federal grants for college students do not seem to be affected.

One area in which there have been budget cuts within the United States is the National Institutes of Health, also known as the NIH. According to BBC, "The NIH said on Friday that it would cap the rates grants pay for indirect research costs at 15 percent, half of the current average rate of 30 percent." These indirect costs consist of things like utilities and electricity. Many are worried that the lowering of the indirect research grants may hinder the efficiency of scientific facilities and upcoming innovations. BBC also said, "The move will 'diminish the nation's research capacity, slowing scientific progress and depriving patients, families, and communities across the country of new treatments, diagnostics, and preventative interventions..'" Others have come to the conclusion that the budget cut to the NIH will be beneficial in the long run. The thought is that by cutting down the amount of grant money given out for facility upkeep, more grant money will be available for direct research funds. With the change of President of the United States, the government as a whole is changing greatly and will continue to change in the future. Many citizens have concerns and worries about what these changes will bring and how they will affect daily life in America. Others are confident that the changes will make America more prosperous and efficient.



Graphic by Ellie Schmidt

Events

18th Annual Women's Leadership Conference is fastly approaching in March

Nyria Mustiful
ALLONS EDITOR

The 18th annual Women's Leadership Conference, created and hosted by the Office of Campus Inclusion, will take place on Mar. 13, 2025, at the Cajundome Convention Center. The theme of this year's conference is "Moving Forward Together! Women Educating and Inspiring Generations." The conference is open to all of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette students, faculty and staff, as well as community members of the Lafayette area. The purpose of the conference is to

provide "opportunity for personal and professional leadership development centered on the needs of women from various cultural backgrounds", according to the conference website. The conference is also purposefully held during National Women's History Month. The keynote speaker for this year's conference is Jan Latiolais Hargrave. Hargrave is a "renowned behavioral authority and body language expert," as well as the CEO of Jan Hargrave and Associates. She has attained degrees in education and business psychology from the University as well.

Hargrave has taken her expertise to many major companies and media outlets, such as the New York Times, ABC News, Starbucks, NASA and IBM. The conference also holds space for exhibitors, which are individuals who have the opportunity to showcase and market their products and services. These exhibits can be categorized under four tracks, "Educating to Elevate: Empowering Women through Knowledge and Skill-Building", "Illuminating Resilience: A Journey to Inner Strength", "Nurturing for Impact: Empowering Others, Strengthening Communities, and Protecting the Environment" and "Echoes of Wisdom:

Envisioning a Shared Future." Vendors will also be invited to the conference to sell their products and services to all of the guests. Registration is currently open and tickets are on sale for this year's conference. General registration for employees at the University is \$127 per person and \$47 per student. Registration will close on Friday, Mar. 7, 2025. Though the event is an event geared towards women, all are welcome to attend. The Office of Campus Inclusion hopes that all will come out to learn from and experience the conference.

Police Reports

Compiled by Ramudhi Kariyawasam

Feb. 14

- At 11:18 a.m., officers responded to a harassment complaint at Legacy Park Apartments.

Feb. 13

- At 2:44 p.m., an officer was dispatched to Zone 22 parking lot in regards to an injury report.

Feb. 12

- At 9:56 p.m., officers were dispatched to Coronna Hall in regards to online threats. An arrest was made.
- At 4:22 p.m., the Department received a theft complaint about property that had been stolen, which included a damaged Apple MacBook Pro and a Dell wireless mouse.
- At 11:22 a.m., an officer was dispatched to a parking lot crash at Cajun Village, involving a white 2015 Honda Civic and white 2017 Dodge Ram.

Feb. 11

- At 5:25 p.m., a disturbance at Coronna Hall was reported to the ULPD.
- At 3:59 p.m., an officer responded to a verbal altercation that was taking place at the New Iberia Research Center.

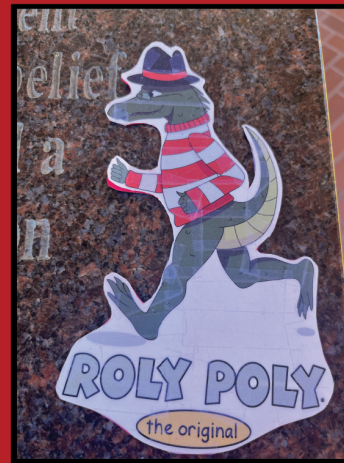
Feb. 9

- At 4:40 p.m., an officer was dispatched in reference to a suspicious person complaint. The subject was released on misdemeanor summons.

The Vermilion Staff

In the Feb. 13 issue of The Vermilion, Scott Hebert's name was misspelled. The Vermilion regrets the error and apologizes for the inconvenience.

WHERE'S ALLAN?



I come here to see the past and recall the memories that last. Where am I?

Last Issue's Answer: Rose Garden







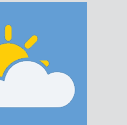
Last week's Where's Allan winner, **Madison Dressler**, a senior in Biology and Chemistry, shared that she has worked at the UL Lafayette Science Museum for three years and helped put on exciting science events for kids!



Win a free sandwich from Roly Poly

The first UL student to recognize where The Vermilion's mascot, Allan the Alligator, was photographed on campus will win a free sandwich from Roly Poly on Coolidge Street in Lafayette. The first UL student to email the correct location of Allan to **TheVermilion@louisiana.edu** will win. The Vermilion will continue this contest each week until the end of the semester. Participants cannot win more than once a semester, and must be attentive to their emails.

Weather

Thursday 2/20	Friday 2/21	Saturday 2/22	Sunday 2/23	Monday 2/24	Tuesday 2/25	Wednesday 2/26
 High: 47 F Low: 28 F	 High: 48 F Low: 38 F	 High: 53 F Low: 36 F	 High: 62 F Low: 40 F	 High: 70 F Low: 48 F	 High: 78 F Low: 52 F	 High: 80 F Low: 56 F

Ramudhi Kariyawasam
WEATHER WRITER

- Winter Storm Jett hit last weekend, taking eight lives in Kentucky and Tennessee.
- The temperatures in Louisiana continue to fluctuate between winter and spring.

- A new winter storm, Kingston, is causing concern as it challenges to bring heavy snowfall in the Northeast.

Politics

What does Marco Rubio's visit to Panama mean for U.S. Relations?

Gracie Cormier

NEWS WRITER

On Feb. 3, Secretary of State Marco Rubio opened the channel of discord between the United States and Latin America for his first official visit as America's foremost diplomat. He met with Panamanian president José Raúl Mulino to discuss how the United States and Panama intend to move forward with President Donald Trump's demands regarding the Panama Canal.

Rubio's message was clear: the United States will act if the status quo of the canal is maintained. He said this in line with President Trump's plan to acquire the important center of trade. Rubio claimed that the United States was concerned about Chinese presence in the canal and believed that it may violate a 1999 treaty, in which Panama gained control of the Panama Canal if they kept the waterway neutral.

Despite his opposition to the acquisition of the Panama Canal, Mulino reported that his meeting with Secretary Rubio was "respectful." Mulino said that Rubio made "no real threat or retaking the canal or the use of force."

Mulino has stated that, in accordance with the expectations of President Trump and his administration, Panama will not renew their participation in China's Belt and Road Initiative. Additionally, though their intent to keep ownership of the canal holds steadfast, it is possible that Panama will get rid of the Hutchison Ports company's operation of the canal. Hutchison Ports company is based in Hong Kong.

Dr. Brenna Armstrong, who is a political science professor at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, weighed in on the discussion. Her research is primarily in Latin American politics and the intersection of the

different branches of government, and her work focuses on gender and politics.

Armstrong provided background information on the diplomatic relationship between the United States and Panama. She stated, "So, the current political climate between the United States and Panama is kind of reflective of the overall political climate between most of Latin America and the US. Historically, we've been very involved in Latin America, but it's never really been the kind of focus of the executive branch or the Secretary of State."

She added, "I don't think [Panama was] prepared for the United States government to attack a series of treaties we signed in the 70s, especially because the president who negotiated those treaties just died, like, it's not like an old treaty. I think things are still very functional relationship."

"I do think, though, that the Panamanian government is looking directly to Secretary of State, Rubio, and not to President Trump, to dictate what's going to happen, because Rubio is the first Secretary of State to make his primary focus Latin America since 1921."

Armstrong commented on how the U.S. relationship to Central America will affect immigration. She said, "If you're someone who cares about, like integration, building the economies for Central America reduces the number of people who leave to come here, and we have seen a decline significantly, and the number of people like leaving for the southern border since Trump—President Trump was elected."

When posed with the question of how the U.S. acquisition of the canal would affect the geopolitical world,

Armstrong emphasized the severe monetary changes.

She stated, "Like, you can't change how fast or slow locks fill, in a way that's like, safe and functional. Mostly, that isn't like, more, like, we could do it, but it would cost a lot of more money than anyone is willing to put into the canal."

She also noted the significant change in policy regarding trade that would occur if the United States gained ownership over the canal. Because the U.S. is not bound by the same treaty stating neutrality, the country would have control over who is allowed to travel, how often and when.

Armstrong noted, "So, the idea of, like, we have control and can shut and open the canal as we would, like, please—which is the thing the Trump administration is accusing China of doing—because two of the main ports on the Pacific side of the canal are run by Hong Kong companies."

Secretary Rubio faced opposition from protesting Panamanian citizens during his trip, some carrying flags that called him by name. The protestors marched in the capital and were stopped short of the presidential palace.

The Panama Canal is a major center of trade in Latin America. Although President Trump has not yet commented on Secretary Rubio's visit, his response is crucial to how the countries will move forward.

Some fear that the withdrawal from the Belt and Road Initiative and other measures from China will not be enough. President Trump has expressed his desire to fully overtake the operations of the canal, so his reaction to the discussed cooperative measures is critical.



Graphic by Caitlyn Comeaux

Health

Measles outbreak in west Texas

Isabelle Brumley

BEAUCOUP EDITOR

Once again, as the bird flu continues in the United States, another problem has arisen in west Texas.

A measles outbreak has broken out, with cases doubling in size to 48 cases since they were first reported on Feb. 11.

As of Friday, Feb. 14, 13 people have been hospitalized.

State health officials have said that the cases are and have been focused on a "close-knit under-vaccinated" community in Gaines County.

However, they have also spread to the nearby counties of Terry, Yoakum and Lynn.

As of Feb. 15, the number of cases had reached 48, all unvaccinated or with an unknown vaccine history.

Most of the age ranges for these cases are children under the age of 18, but there are five cases with individuals over 18.

These measles cases are likely not all of them, with health officials telling NBC News that they are suspecting over 200 to 300 cases in the western Texas area.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that children get the first dose of the MMR vaccine at 12-15 months and another at 4-6 years old.

If the second dose is given at least 28 days after the first dose, children can receive it earlier.

Every dosage of the MMR vaccine lowers the risk of infection and, in the event that they do get it, the severity of the sickness.

According to the CDC, Louisiana has not reported any measles cases as of Feb. 6.

However, the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) has decided to stop promoting mass vaccination, according to a news release and statements made on social media by the state attorney general and his deputy on Feb. 13.

This raises concerns among health experts as a measles outbreak expands in West Texas.

Measles has become uncommon in the U.S., but there have been outbreaks in regions where vaccination rates have decreased (such as Texas).

Most children who contract measles either have not received their recommended vaccinations or are too young to be vaccinated against measles.

Health officials in Texas are working on educating schools on recognizing measles symptoms and vaccinating their children.

Texas legislation allows children to receive exemptions from school vaccinations for reasons of conscience (e.g. religious beliefs).

According to state data, the ratio of children with exemptions has increased over the past ten years, from 0.76% in 2014 to 2.32% last year.

When an infected individual breathes, coughs or sneezes, the measles virus can spread through the air or by contact with infectious droplets.

The virus can still spread through the air up to two hours after the infected individual has left the area.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, symptoms such as a high fever, cough, runny nose and red, watery eyes start to appear a week or two following exposure.

A few days later, a rash appears on the face as flat, red dots that subsequently spread to the rest of the body via the neck and torso.

A person is contagious between four days before and four days after the rash begins.

The MMR vaccine is available in Louisiana for both children and adults. Getting the vaccine is one of the few ways to prevent the spread of measles. This vaccine has proved to be mostly successful, with a 93% effective rate at one dose and a 97% effective rate at two doses.

If you have not received your MMR vaccine, they are located at any health clinic, doctor's office and pharmacy around Louisiana.

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Arts and Culture

Take time for productive leisure

Andrew Courville

NEWS WRITER

On Feb. 13, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette chapter of the Thomistic Institute hosted a lecture from Fr. Gregory Pine, titled, "The Importance of Play." He explained why it's important to plan leisure time with a busy schedule, using his personal experiences as examples.

Pine studied at Franciscan University of Steubenville. He traveled abroad to the University of Fribourg in Switzerland to receive his doctoral degree in dogmatic theology. Dogmatic theory is the religious philosophy of analyzing theoretical truths about God.

Growing up near Philadelphia, Pine experienced snow more often than the University's once in a lifetime experience earlier this semester, and got more days off of school and work.

Yet, by high school, the event's novelty had worn off for Pine. As an athlete on his school cross-country and track team, he would practice even on the coldest days and hope to gain an advantage against his competition.

In his adult life, snow days would become an opportunity to catch up on work. He later regretted turning what should be leisure days into commodities that were "judged on the standard of efficiency."

As a graduate student in Switzerland, he set up a strict schedule of working Monday through Friday. Pine's primary task was writing his graduate dissertation, which he intended to devote all his time to completing.

He woke up each day for an hour of prayer and the community church service, followed by office work, a 90 minute lunch break, prayer and work through the evening. Every day was often long and tiring. Sundays were unpredictable because the church often planned numerous community events.

One of Pine's work colleagues explained the cruciality of a leisure day because "when you have but one task in life, there's a way in which it can consume you if you permit it to

consume you." His natural choice was hiking through the Alps on Saturdays. Pines repeated that the mountains saved him by introducing an aspect to his life he hadn't valued before.

Pines explained that humans must deal with complex emotions and psychology. Animals don't have the capacity to understand anything beyond survival, while angels live only in service of God, and therefore have no concern with anything other than Him. Humans, meanwhile, live in between the lines.

Pines referenced an analysis from St. Thomas Aquinas that the two most burdensome, constant aspects of the human experience are "sadness and duration." People are so stressed with living that even the most trivial things are concerning like worrying about where you left your car keys or someone misinterpreting the tone of your text. Therefore, you must "create space between you and the inherently dread seriousness of life."

He said, "Nature reaffirms good operation with pleasure... Play is good operation." In order to devote yourself entirely to one goal, you must be able to take a break from it as well.

When discussing how to cultivate play, Pine explained that one must be careful to enjoy play with moderation. Culture creates art, but art eventually turns into entertainment, which turns into distraction, which turns into addiction. People are innately drawn toward addiction because we judge success impossible, and give up.

In order to combat that sensation, you don't need your leisure to be successful, but it doesn't need to be boring. It simply must be fun. Hobbies like reading, singing or hiking are great choices.

The reality of work is that you'll never be able to meet every deadline perfectly. So, when you schedule your study break during finals week, actually take a break. Even if only for 10 minutes, rather than scroll on social media, read a lighthearted book or call someone that you had been meaning to call for some time.

THE VERMILION

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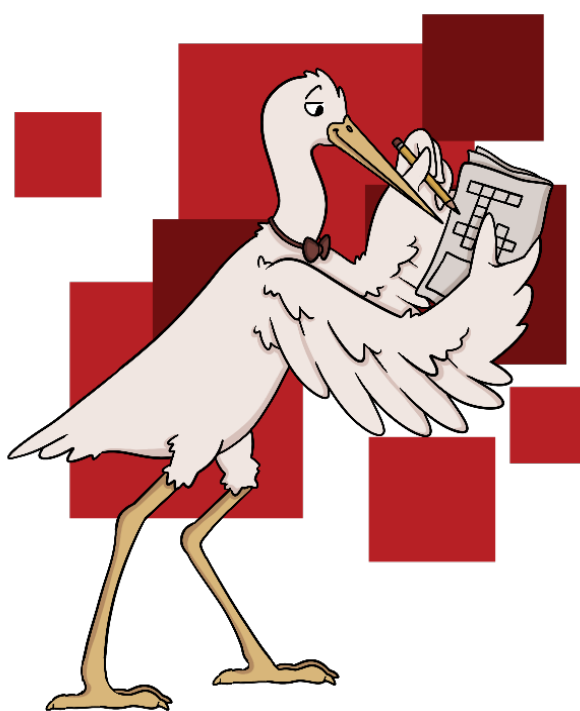
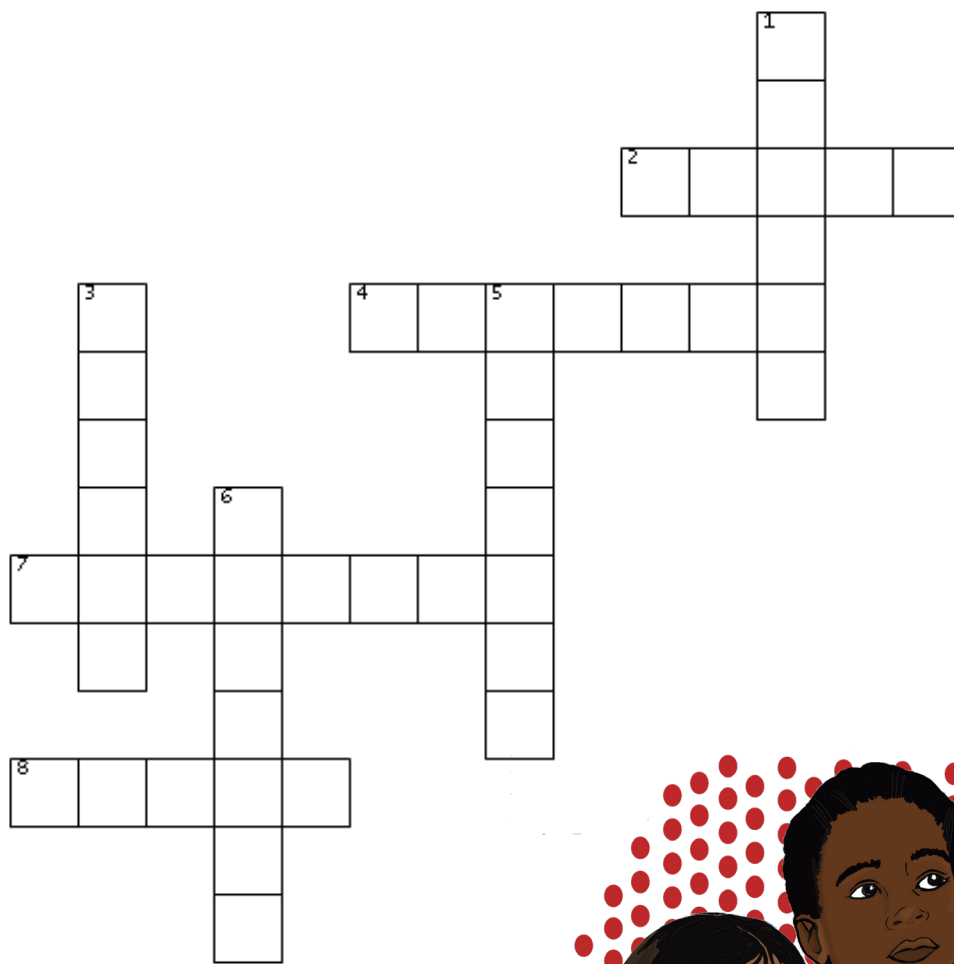
The answers can be found throughout the newspaper, so make sure to thoroughly read each story. Try to find all of them and see if you got them correct in the answers provided in the next issue's crossword search!

ACROSS

- 2. Ewart's efforts towards the new mascot was denied due to him not being authorized to use university ____.
- 4. The Current White House Press Secretary is Karoline ____ (last name).
- 7. Which Cajuns senior guard scored 18 points against the Texas State Bobcats (last name)?
- 8. Men and ____ were created in the image of God.

DOWN

- 1. Hebert explained that the electronic system in those elevators often gets fried from moisture droplets accumulating inside the elevator ____.
- 3. True Freshman pitcher from Lafayette (last name).
- 5. Fr. Gregory Pine studied a lot about St. Thomas ____.
- 6. What percent are the indirect research grants rates being cut to?



History Highlight Celebrating Black History on campus

Graphics by Caitlyn Comeaux

Kay Padilla,
Ramudhi Kariyawasam
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, MANAGING EDITOR

The month of February marks the official Black History Month, which commemorates and celebrates the milestones achieved by the African American community throughout the nation's history.

The tradition began in 1915, nearly 50 years after the establishment of the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery in the U.S. In 1926, the now known as Association for the Study of African American Life and History, began a national week to celebrate African Americans during the second week of February. Following the civil rights movement, the week grew to Black History Month, according to History.

In May 1956, Christiana Smith made history as the first African American to graduate from the then Southeastern Louisiana Institute (SLI). In her honor, in 1992, the Christiana Smith Alumni Chapter was formed, which has now grown to host several events, scholarships and social engagement to alumni. The Chapter dedicated a bridge in Smith's name located at the Alumni Center in June 2024.

However, the integration movement began in 1953, when four black students Clara Dell Constantine, Martha Conway, Shirley Taylor and Charles Vincent Singleton were prohibited from registering at SLI.

Constantine v. SLI (1954), a lawsuit the four students filed against the Institute for denying their entrance due to their race, was an integral part in desegregating southern colleges and universities. On Sept. 10, 1954, SLI became the first all-white, state-funded college in the South to integrate, admitting 80 African American students, including the four plaintiffs.

The Pillars of Progress, dedicated in 2004 located on Rex St., pay tribute to the four students involved in Constantine v. SLI (1954) for the principles of courage, faith, knowledge and justice that they displayed.

Each of the students were honored with a pillar: Constantine is the pillar of Courage, Conway is the pillar of Justice,

Taylor is the pillar of Faith and Singleton is the pillar of Knowledge.

In 2023, the ninth marker along the Louisiana Civil Rights Trail, was unveiled at the Pillars of Progress. The marker highlights Black students' efforts to attend SLI and lead the way to desegregate college athletics.

The Office for Campus Inclusion recognizes and supports Black History Month. Campus celebrations include the

Cultural Connections Board's "Afrofest: A Celebration of Music, Art, and Culture" that occurred on Feb. 19, Black Student Union Week, a week full of events such as Black history trivia, board meetings and karaoke night and more, and the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated Epsilon Beta Chapter's Hair Care Donation Drive.

The Epsilon Beta Chapter asks the University community to donate

edge control, bobby pins, scrunchies, headbands, hair moisturizer and other Black hair care products to the Epsilon Beta cubicle in the Office of Student Engagement by Feb. 26.

The Vermilion recognizes the contributions the University's Black students, faculty and staff have made towards the advancement of the campus community, Louisiana and the nation's history.



Sports

Cajuns embarrassed by San Jose Spartans on opening weekend

Charles Martin
SPORTS EDITOR

Opening day at M.L. “Tigue” Moore Field at Russo Park is a special one, where thousands of fans gather to watch the “Waterhose Boys” kick off the Louisiana baseball season.

This year, the opening series of the season was against the San Jose State Spartans. The first game of the series began on Friday, Feb. 14 at 6 p.m., with the honor of the first start on the mound going to Chase Morgan.

Morgan, a sophomore lefty, was named the preseason Sun Belt Pitcher of the Year. This comes after a freshman campaign that saw him named All-Sun Belt First Team and Sun Belt Freshman of the Year. He showed off why he deserved the honor in Louisiana’s 7–2 victory over the Spartans.

In 5.0 innings, the Ace from Cypress, Texas racked up seven strikeouts with only one walk. He allowed only four hits and one earned run. He could throw without worry as the fielders behind him played a perfect game, no errors being recorded and Morgan giving the defense easy ground outs.

Morgan was taken out of the game following the fifth inning after throwing 67 pitches against 20 batters. A solid performance for the first game of the season. He was replaced on the mound by redshirt sophomore James Trimble.

The six foot right-hander from Galveston, Texas pitched the remaining four innings, finishing the game out for Louisiana. He only allowed one run to the Spartans, a single home run shot to right field.

Trimble faced 15 batters, striking out five of them and only allowing four hits, finishing the game in the ninth with 57 pitches thrown.

While the pitching on the mound and defense for the Cajuns were amazing in the first game, there is still the matter of the seven runs scored.

While seven runs might show a good offense clicking right from the start, it was mainly the Cajuns benefiting from

the many mistakes from the Spartans on the mound and in the field. Those seven runs came off of only four hits, as most of the team’s focus came on small ball, meaning there were a lot of bunts and base stealing as opposed to solid hitting.

The scoring started in the fourth. Luke Yuhasz would get on base with a walk and would advance to second after Connor Cuff was hit by a pitch. It was here things began to slip for the Spartans.

Second baseman Sam Ardoin would bunt the ball to the third baseman who would easily gather the grounder, but the usually routine sac bunt would turn disastrous as he missed the throw. This fatal error would allow Ardoin to reach third while Yuhasz and Cuff would score the first runs of the game for Louisiana.

This was followed up by another error made by the San Jose shortstop who would overthrow the first baseman, allowing Drew Markle to reach second and letting Ardoin score, giving Markle an RBI.

Markle would steal third, setting up the final run of the inning. Lee Amedee would get Markle home with a sac bunt of his own, netting him an RBI.

Two more runs would be scored in the fifth. The first started with a single from Ardoin, advancing to second after a wild pitch. He would get home after Maddox Mandino hit a single through the middle of the infield, advancing to second on the throw to home.

Mandino would score thanks to two wild pitches from the San Jose pitcher, helping increase the Louisiana lead 6–1.

The last run in the eighth came purely off of walks, Louisiana benefiting from four walks in one inning allowing Mandino to walk home for Louisiana’s seventh and final run of the game.

Louisiana won this game thanks to solid pitching and defense, along with benefiting from the eight walks gifted to them by the six pitchers that stood on the mound for San Jose.

The next game of the series, beginning at 1pm on Saturday, Feb. 16, did not go so well for the Cajuns. San Jose would

roll the Cajuns 8–3, dominating the poor pitchers put on the mound.

The start on the mound would go to the right handed junior Blake McGehee. McGehee started five games in 2024, posting a record of 3–2 with a 5.12 ERA. It certainly is not anything to write home about, and not close to Morgan, and it showed in Saturday’s game.

McGehee started the game off well, only allowing one man on base in the first two innings with a walk, striking out a batter in the second. Everything went out the window in the third.

In the span of one inning, McGehee would give up five hits and four runs which would pretty much seal the game for the Cajuns by the end of the third.

McGehee would be credited with the loss despite being taken off before the fourth, replaced by senior Dylan Theut. He spent all of last season nursing an injury, making this the first time he had pitched in a game since the 2023 season.

Theut spent his 3.1 innings fairsing a little better than McGehee, not allowing any earned runs, as both runs scored in the fourth were off of errors by the fielders.

Theut would not allow any additional runs following the fourth before being pulled from the mound after throwing

57 pitches in his three innings on the mound.

Theut would be replaced by the massive 6’5” lefty Matt Gaither. The height did little for the two runs he allowed in his single inning of pitching. He was quickly pulled in the seventh for true freshman Wilton Taylor.

Taylor, a Lafayette native, did well his first time on the collegiate mound. He would finish out the game for Louisiana without allowing a single additional run.

Even though the pitchers were not on the top of their game, the batters are also to share some blame. The Cajuns recorded nine hits, five more than the night before, the main difference was that they were not benefiting from San Jose mistakes.

The Cajuns continued their bad play into Sunday where they were crushed 12–4 due to more poor pitching from the mound and four errors made in the field. The bats once again did not pull through, with the only consistent hitter being Brooks Wright who recorded three hits in four at bats.

Louisiana will be heading into next weekend’s game against (24) Nebraska in the worst form possible. It being early in the season should not be an excuse for the poor play from the team.



Photo by Joe Bozzelle
Jose Torres(47) rounds second during the fall game between Louisiana and LSU on Nov. 10, 2024.

Ragin' Cajuns rout Texas St. and Louisiana-Monroe on Senior Day

Isaac Henry
SPORTS WRITER

The Louisiana Ragin’ Cajuns women’s basketball team put together two of their most complete end-to-end performances at home last week, winning their matchups against the Texas State Bobcats on Wednesday, Feb. 12 and the Louisiana-Monroe Warhawks on Saturday, Feb. 15.

These wins drew the Cajuns to an even 12–12 overall record, and placed the team within striking distance of the top four teams of the conference at 8–6.

In both games, the Cajuns used their strengths on both sides of the ball to generate success, holding both opponents to 36% from the field with their defensive intensity and winning point points by a cumulative 74–36 with their driving ability and size advantage.

In Wednesday’s game, both teams kept things close throughout, playing a physical, low-scoring second quarter before ramping scoring up in the third.

Despite the home team taking great care of the ball and winning the turnover battle 20–8, the game was still very much in hand for both teams as the Cajuns entered with just a four-point lead.

It was in the last quarter that the team finally put together the finish that has eluded them most of the season, winning the period 25–13 to blow the game wide open, 71–54.

The team did a great job sharing the ball and finding great shots late. Starters Tamiyah Robinson, Erica Lafayette and Nubia Benedith all managed to score multiple times down the stretch.

Robinson in particular picked her spots well, managing to lead all scorers

with 18 points in the contest and record 3 assists and a steal as well.

Head Coach Gary Brodhead talked post-game about the detail that the team put into its gameplan to generate turnovers in this matchup.

“I thought we contained them pretty good. We’re doing a lot of jump switching and trapping,” Brodhead said. “We worked on it this week and I think that’s what we needed, to be able to see it in practice and kinda do it in the game.”

“The guards do a good job of hedging and also jump switching and all that, so that kinda got them off guard.”

Robinson and Benedith also spoke post-game about their approach to offense in the game.

“I think I was just taking what they were giving me, which was if I had an open block, I was getting to the open block, and if I had a pull-up, I had to pull up, and I think I did a good job at taking what they were giving me,” Robinson said.

She added that she had to be a willing passer throughout, especially to her bigs on the block.

When asked about her confidence to take tough shots on the court, Benedith said that it was just business as usual for her.

“A lot of times I just think about how I’ve been playing basketball all my life. It’s just a basketball game. I go out there and do what I’ve been doing for years, and I just let it come to me and flow, and my teammates do a great job of supporting me and always having my back,” Benedith said.

In Saturday’s Senior Night game, the Cajuns produced a much better second-quarter pace than the previous outing,

racking up a 21-point lead at the half, topped off with a beautiful step-through layup out of the post by Asia Sam with just a second remaining.

The Warhawks only really threatened this lead once, pulling back to within seven before the Cajuns poured on a 9–0 run, re-establishing the scoring gap and coasting to a 80–60 win.

A huge part of this blowout was the efficiency of Erica Lafayette, who put together another standout scoring performance.

She scored 22 points (leading all players), going 8–9 from the field, including 3–3 from 3-point range.

After the game, Lafayette talked about what shifted for her to get back to her usual form from the past few games.

“Just the energy. Just — I don’t know. I just play. I think a lot of times before the other games I had stuff going on, so I was like, ‘Today I’m just gonna play.’ I had a good week, Coach trusted in my everyday, but we just keep going,” Lafayette said.

Next up for the team is a trip to Fant-Ewing Coliseum for a rematch with the Warhawks, on Saturday, Feb. 22, then a drive back to the Cajundome to face the South Alabama Jaguars on Wednesday, Feb. 26.



Photo by Alyus Dick
Erica Lafayette (20) drives against the Miami (OH) RedHawks on Feb. 8.

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Allons

Christian philosophy: Analyzing and debunking misconceptions

Ja'lyn Braud

ALLONS ASSISTANT EDITOR

Christianity is one of the largest religions in the world. With many philosophical beliefs attached to it, it seems that the world easily confuses what Christianity is truly based on.

Many people understand the basics: the belief and following of Jesus Christ, but at the same time, this is the only thing they understand.

There are so many deep and beautiful beliefs surrounding this philosophy. However, the fundamental questions that Christianity is based on are quickly misinterpreted, and as a strong believer in this religion, I would like to clear things up.

Christian philosophy examines the existence of God through the teachings rooted in the life of Jesus Christ. When people first look at Jesus and Christianity, they assume that if you live like Him then you have earned your spot in eternity. Though this idea is very commonly perceived, it is, however, not the case. As Christians, we believe that it takes more than just doing good things in your lifetime to be able to enter the kingdom of Heaven.

A key to your salvation is not just your works, but your faith as well. The salvation we receive is a gift from God, which cannot be bought through our actions, but it is rewarded through our faith in Jesus Christ. With such faith, we produce good works as we live out our lives. So, in actuality, good deeds are more of a product of our faith and the action of following God, instead of being a guarantee of getting into heaven.

Another common misinterpretation concerning faith is the idea that faith and science cannot coincide with one another. When truly studying the word of God, one can realize that science backs up what Christianity has to say and vice versa. Many early scholars, when studying science, used the ideas and beliefs of Christianity to help determine significant parts of what is now our development of modern science. As a Christian, faith plays a substantial part in my life and the lives of other Christians as well, which, I feel, is what many outsiders mainly see in a follower of Christ – the strength and level of one's faith. However,

I also feel that it is important to note that Christianity does not just center around blind faith.

Blind faith is simply just believing in or following something with no reasoning behind it. What some people may view as contradictory, the majority of Christian teachings involve the practice of having a really strong and devout faith. This concept is one of the leading misinterpretations that quickly spread to the minds of others.

On the other hand, when you truly start to look deeper into the philosophy, it's clear that these false ideas are torn apart in the Bible. The Bible teaches its followers to explore evidence and learn the meaning and understanding behind the truths that are presented. For those to grow in their relationship with God, they must be able to ask questions along with being able to receive the answers as well, forcing Christians to stray away from solely following blind obedience.

When it comes to knowing the philosophy behind Christianity, the most heartbreaking misconception is the idea that Christianity oppresses women. This notion couldn't be further from the truth, but yet, somehow it's one of the most believed ideas. I think this tends to be that this is such a strong belief for outsiders because society calls on them to believe it. The culture today tends to pick and choose what exactly they want to take from the Bible and misconstrue it in so many ways possible, completely confusing it from its original truth.

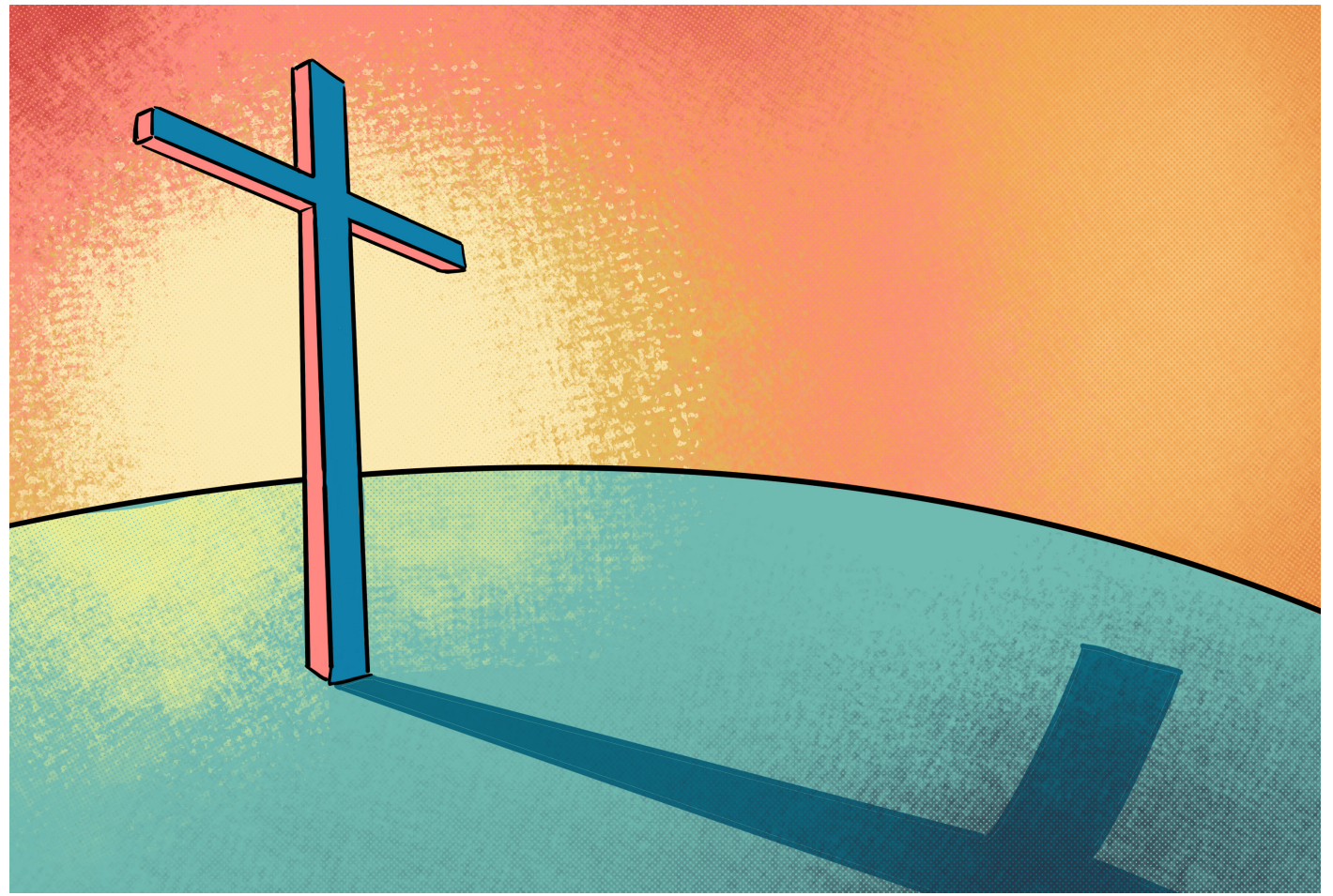
It is important to note that Christianity looks at humans as beings created in the image of God, which is truly an outstanding statement to sit in—the idea that God thought for so long and so intricately about you and how He wanted you created. The best part about this is that it didn't just apply to men but to women as well. Furthermore, when delving into Christianity, we see Jesus

openly respecting and encouraging the women in His ministry.

Thanks to the increase in interpretations of the Bible, it is easy for one to read certain verses and misguide them for different meanings, especially if you have no prior background knowledge of Jesus as a whole.

Yet, for those within the faith, it's our priority to understand what the Bible is trying to communicate. By understanding the history and linguistics of the Bible, one can truly comprehend its meanings pushing all falsehood aside, such as the idea that women are oppressed by Christianity.

Nonetheless, any philosophy is bound to have some form of disbelief or misunderstanding. However, whether you practice Christianity or not, I hope you can understand the fundamental topics that surround this religion and better educate yourself on the misconceptions of what Christianity truly is.



Graphic by Natalie Allbright

The Gulf of Mexico is no more

Andrew Courville

NEWS WRITER

On Jan. 20, 2025, President Donald Trump signed an executive order titled “Restoring Names That Honor American Greatness.” It officially renamed the Gulf of Mexico to the “Gulf of America,” and Mount Denali, the highest point in the U.S. and North America, to “Mount McKinley.”

In anticipation of the changes, I was constantly checking Apple Maps on my phone for several days, until I noticed last week that the Gulf of Mexico was no more, followed by Bing and Apple Maps. Mount McKinley hasn't been adopted yet. While reckoning that KATC meteorologist Rob Perillo may refer to the Gulf of America during hurricane season, I also researched the history of the region's name.

The designation “Gulf of Mexico” was given by Spanish explorers in the 1500s. Mexico is the Spanish translation of Mēxihco, the Nahuatl name the Mexica people gave to the Valley of Mexico and surrounding areas. The name stuck when Mexico gained independence.

Mount Denali in Alaska is the moniker given by the native Athabascan tribe

long before Americans arrived. In 1896, William A. Dickey, an American prospector, found the mountain. He named it Mount McKinley, after William McKinley, the Republican nominee for president at the time, who also happened to support the gold standard. When McKinley subsequently won the election later that year, the label stuck and became official in 1917.

In 2015, then-President Obama renamed it Mount Denali, following decades of pressure from Alaskan politicians and locals. The administration felt that it was more appropriate to give an Alaskan landmark an Alaskan name rather than a president who had never visited it.

Trump intends to respect the history of the U.S. Yet, I'm left questioning whether it does or not.

The “Gulf of America” has no effect outside U.S. borders because it's an international body of water. However, to the confusion of many, Google and Apple Maps label it as “Gulf of America (Gulf of Mexico)” around the world. Other navigation companies, like U.S. based MapXplorer and the European HERE WeGo, are keeping the original name. The U.S. isn't alone in this situation.

Similar name disputes exist over the Sea of Japan, Crimean Peninsula, Persian Gulf, Mount Everest and others. The listing one sees on digital services depends on location, language settings and app of choice.

One could argue that the name change refers to the North American continent rather than the U.S. However, Trump didn't say this was the case, and it begs the question: Why stop here? The Caribbean Sea should be renamed the “American Sea” and the Mississippi River become the “Great American River.” I think the first question is to answer a complicated question: “What makes something ‘American?’”

Most state and national park names are derived from Native American tribes or foreign influences. Louisiana is named after King Louis XIV of France. Numerous parishes honor French Catholic saints or native tribes, which definitely don't constitute a majority of the population.

Obviously, names carry weight in modern society. If that were false, parents could shamelessly name their children after serial killers, dictators or raunchy words. This might be a slippery slope argument, but standards are important. Most importantly, Trump's actions indicate his style of governance for his second term. The Associated Press was denied access to White House events last week indefinitely for continuing to use “Gulf of Mexico” in its articles with appropriate clarification about the name change.

As an independent international organization, the AP has a responsibility to its global audience, who associate with the Gulf of Mexico rather than the new name.

However, the government's actions have a vague hint of censorship that might abridge on the First Amendment.

The White House Press Office is in charge of issuing passes to those

entering the White House or getting close to the president, and any reporter is allowed into the briefing room. Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt defended the administration, asserting that it's a privilege to ask the president questions.

My conclusion on the issue is that Trump wants to assert American dominance around the world, which aligns with much of his foreign policy.

In the past few months, Trump has called for a new age of U.S. imperialism. He's enacted and proposed various tariffs on imports from Canada, Mexico and China to foster American business. He even threatened to annex Canada through economic or military force to create an exponentially stronger economy.

Trump also proposed buying Greenland from Denmark to provide the U.S. more natural resources. Given that both Canada and Greenland deeply despise the idea and the difficulty of exploiting resources in the arctic circle, it's severely unlikely.

Trump wants to take control of the Panama Canal, citing mistreatment of American vessels and Chinese influence. The country is expected to make changes to its Chinese relationship following a visit by Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

In a press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Trump suggested sending the U.S. military to control the Gaza Strip and turn it into the “Riviera of the Middle East” after relocating 1.8 million Palestinians into nearby countries. Netanyahu rejected such American influence in Israel's sphere of influence. Other nations, like Saudi Arabia, stressed the importance of an independent Palestine.

I'm inclined to believe that Trump is only trying to hold media attention until he finds popular proposals. However, I also have to remember that there are still three years and 11 months to go, so anything can happen.



Graphic by Caitlyn Comeaux

Beaucoup

Mental Health

The Beaucoup section expresses opinions on whether the University provides adequate mental health support for students.



Graphic by Natalie Allbright

Sadie Lynn Burrell

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

One campus resource I've found to be somewhat helpful is UWill. It is a telehealth website that lets you take calls with various mental health professionals. I like how you can choose how quickly you want to see someone and pick the gender, race, and specialties of the professional.

A downside of UWill is the pretty limited selection of people to speak to: I had a hard time finding a good match.

I've also had multiple appointments canceled at the last minute which discouraged me from scheduling new ones.

I haven't spoken to any face-to-face counselors because the one time I had the bravery to try, the line was long so I left.

That is the main problem with students accessing mental health support. Even if someone really needs it, they might not know it's there or they might struggle to work up the strength on their own to look for it.

Geonna Tipton

NEWS WRITER

Mental health can be a challenging aspect of anyone's life especially during those college years. Classwork piles up, some students have a job—not to mention social lives are still a thing. Trying to keep up with your health physically and mentally while managing everything under the sun can take a toll on anyone.

Luckily, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette does offer help for students struggling with mental health. There are

academic and housing accommodations, local and virtual therapists and more. In fact, students struggling significantly with mental health can even get emotional support animals if applicable.

However, the question is, is there enough mental health support on campus? Personally, I think there are plenty of options and help available whenever I need it.

I enjoy the flexibility the University's help services currently offer thus far and as a student I feel like there is adequate help for me.

Ramudhi Kariyawasam

MANAGING EDITOR

Mental health can be a monster, because, at times, we don't know if there is something wrong. Not all truly understand or will excuse you for the amount of panic attacks, tears or malaise that prevented you from doing your work, because plainly, no one ever saw it. At the same time, you know it is your obligation to address it, but what about the plethora of other obligations that just

don't allow the time to seek help?

I believe it is at moments like this when we must pay close attention and prioritize ourselves. I have never used the mental health resources provided by the University, but I encourage students to at least see what they offer. If those options do not work for you, I feel the best way to take care of yourself can be with simple techniques like meditating, going to the park, eating a healthy meal and talking to loved-ones and friends everyday, if possible.

Nyria Mustiful

ALLONS EDITOR

As someone who has made a few visits to Counseling and Testing Services here on campus, I would say that I do not believe there is adequate mental health care on campus for students. Most of the "professionals" that service students in that office are graduate students here at the University. I don't want to discredit their education, but these aren't licensed

professionals who have been practicing for years.

I think that since some eye-opening and culturally impactful events here on campus, the University has been trying to do more, in terms of providing students with access to proper mental health care and raising awareness, but there is still a considerable way to go. After my experience with the campus services, I decided to go and seek external help, and I think that was the best decision for me.

Food Review

Sushi Masa: Sushi lovers' paradise

Isabelle Brumley

BEAUCOUP EDITOR

Located at 3920 Ambassador Caffery Pkwy, Sushi Masa is a beloved Japanese restaurant, specializing in sushi. Many Lafayette locals and tourists enjoy its fresh, off-the-bar sushi and laid-back atmosphere. The restaurant also serves a selection of classic hibachi, fried rice, udon or soba noodles and tempura.

Some of their sushi specials include the LSU roll, I-10 roll, Shaggy Dog roll, Green Monster roll, Pink Lady roll, Double J roll and Rainbow Naruto Maki.

The story of Sushi Masa begins in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 2010. Famous for its all-you-can-eat (AYCE) special, the restaurant quickly gained popularity. They eventually opened locations throughout the South, including Lafayette, Pensacola, Beaumont, Metairie and many more.

The atmosphere was chill and laid-back, perfect for date nights, birthdays or family dinners.

The inside was decorated in greenery and ambient lighting, making me feel comfortable walking in. The sushi bar was visible, allowing customers to watch

the chefs create astonishing sushi rolls.

My colleague and I had the pleasure of visiting Sushi Masa on Monday, Feb. 10. As we walked in, we were greeted by the hostesses and a beautiful cherry blossom tree. We were seated at our tables immediately. We grabbed our menus and began to browse.

We both decided to purchase the AYCE option on the menu. For our appetizers, I got a house salad with ranch, while my colleague got mango salmon, cucumber roll and tuna tataki.

Our appetizers came out within 10 minutes.

My house salad was exceptional, and my colleague described her tuna tataki as very juicy. The cucumber didn't overpower the crab inside the roll and her mango salmon was just as good. The mango complemented the salmon very well.

For our next course, we chose some things from the entrée sections. I opted for the California Roll and chicken teriyaki with chicken fried rice.

My colleague decided on the salmon and masago sashimi, tuna, yellowtail, octopus and a Pink Lady Roll.

All of the sushi and sashimi came out

fresh. Both of our rolls followed soon after. The California roll was perfectly made and definitely one of the best I've had, while my colleague's Pink Lady Roll was equally as excellent.

Both of the rolls were visually appealing, with vibrant vegetables.

For our dessert, I decided on the classic cheesecake, while my colleague selected the fried Oreos.

The cheesecake was creamy and rich, as you would imagine, while my colleague's bold choice of fried Oreos proved to be a good idea. They were both a fun treat to end our AYCE extravaganza.

Each of our AYCE meals only costs \$32.95. Honestly, that is a good price for the amount of food you can choose to eat.

When my colleague calculated how much her food would have been if she had bought it separately from the special, it ended up being over \$100.

After our meal, I interviewed one of the servers/shift leads, Heather Dupree. She described her overall experience as follows, "It's a good time. It's just a chaotic good time, but we make our money when we come in...like the coworkers is why I've probably stayed as

long as I have. You're with these people every day and you bond with them and end up seeing them after work."

I also had the pleasure of interviewing the general manager, Andrew, "I have been here right at three months. My experience has been good. The staff is really great and they are all super nice. They were all really nice and patient, showing me how to get around and do things that we do here at Sushi Masa."

When asked if he recommends the restaurant as a workplace for college students, he said, "You know, it's fast-paced, high-volume and could be difficult...it's not impossible. Somebody who has at least a little bit of experience and who needs to make some extra cash on the weekend, I'd say this is a good place to do that."

Overall, I enjoyed my experience at Sushi Masa. The food was fantastic and the staff was happy to speak with us.

My colleague and I relished trying their delicious food and sharing their restaurant.

If you would like to dine at Sushi Masa, it is open Sunday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. and Friday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.



Photos by Ellie Schmidt

Entrance to Sushi Masa, fried rice, cheesecake, Pink Lady roll and a Philadelphia roll.

SOUNDING OFF

"If you could meet a notable African American figure, who would it be and why?"



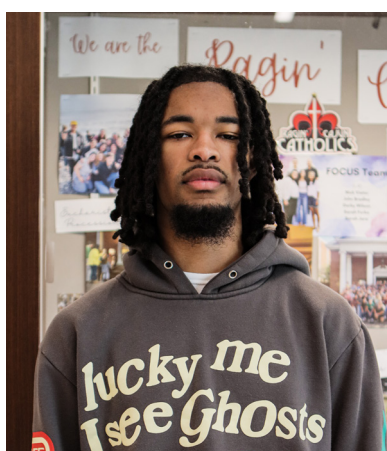
Cameron Robin
POLITICAL SCIENCE JUNIOR

"Marsha P. Johnson because she is truly an icon. I think, in particular, because of what she's done as a black trans woman."



Lauren Jones
NURSING FRESHMAN

"Maya Angelou because I hear a lot of her recordings, videos and quotes from her and I find this to be, like, very inspiring."



Tyler Martin
ENGINEERING AND TECH MANAGEMENT FRESHMAN

"Rosa Parks, because she sat at the back of the bus, you know?"



JP Ferman
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT JUNIOR

"I'd say Jackie Robinson, because I think he was a big part of whenever the movement kind of changed."



Ella Smith
PSYCHOLOGY FRESHMAN

"Cynthia Erivo, because she is such a strong woman. She is amazing, and I love her so much."



PJ Newsome
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS SOPHOMORE

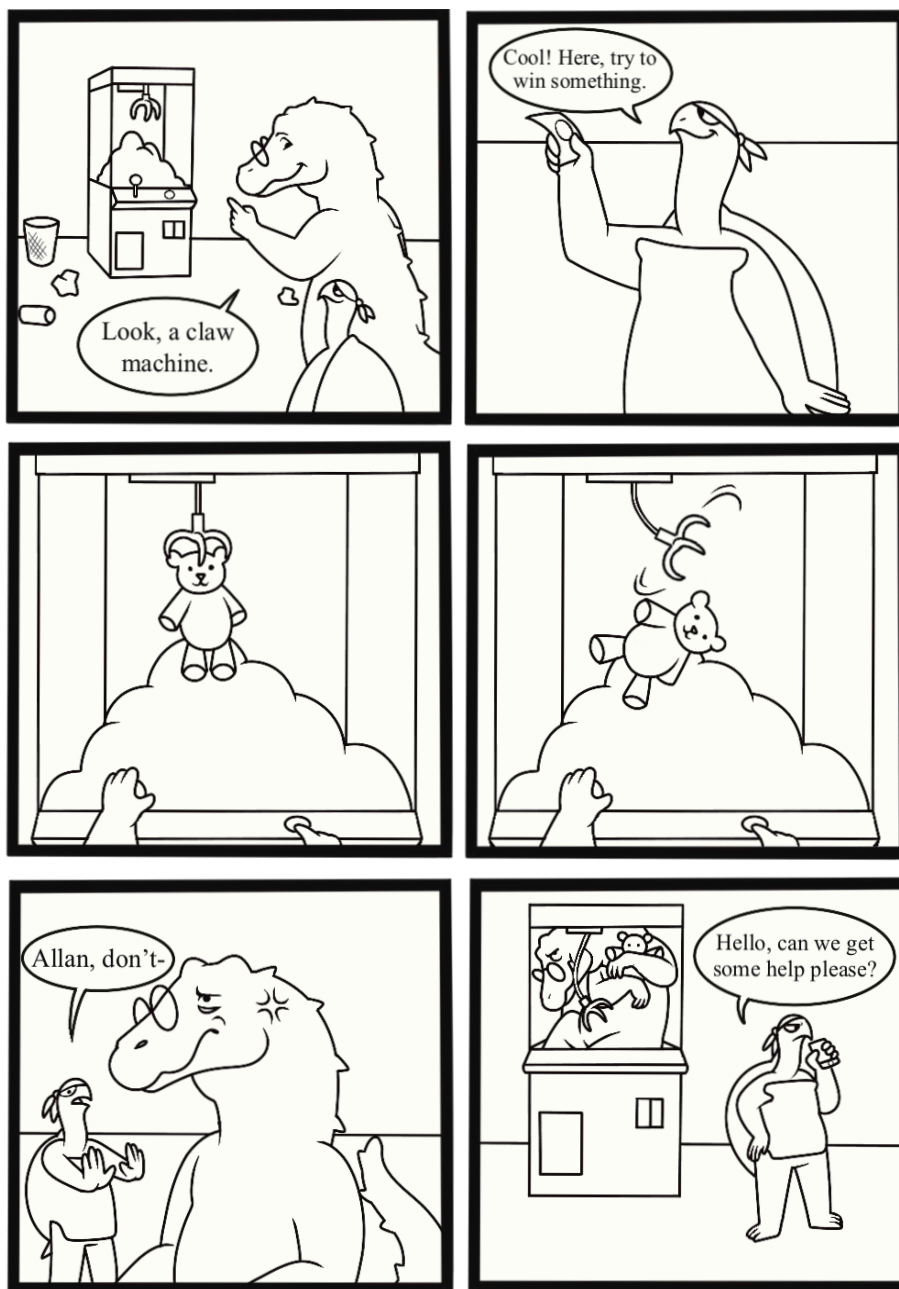
"Serena Williams. She's a trailblazer for the sport she represents. She's a role model for people on and off the court."

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 Nyria Mustiful and Alyus Dick.

COMIC

The Claw



Comic by Lauren Gerald

Have any leads?



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