



used the VCU job as a stepping stone to “higher places,” Rhoades’ Richmond roots forestalls a sense of pride and stability Ram fans have yearned for.

Have we finally found our man? Is HAVOC cometh in earnest? Only time and results will tell.

“We’re gonna play fast,” Rhoades said at his introductory press conference. “We’re gonna play exciting, we’re gonna get after people — and we’re gonna win.”

The Rams recieved an early gut-check in the form of a charity exhibition loss at the hands of Liberty University.



CRIME LOG

Monday, October 23

- Trespassing
809 W. Broad St.
Closed
- Alcohol Violation
1300 W. Main St.
Closed
- Theft
Cary St. Gym
101 S. Linden St.
Pending
- Fine Arts Bldg.
1000 W. Broad St.
Theft
Pending
- Simple Assault
732 W. Broad St.
Pending
- Larceny
Johnson Residence Hall
801 W. Franklin St.
Pending
- Hit and Run
700 W. Cary St.
Outside Agency
- Fraud
937 W. Broad St.
Outside Agency
- Burglary
1522 W. Cary St.
Outside Agency
- Theft
1011 W. Marshall St.
Outside Agency
- Theft
21 S. Plum St.
Outside Agency

Tuesday, October 24

- Drunkness
400 N. Harrison St.
Closed
- Alcohol Violation
1200 W. Broad St.
Closed
- Shoplifting/Trespassing
7-11
1003 W. Grace St.
Closed
- Theft
Hunton House
810 W. Franklin St.
Pending
- Alcohol Violation
Brandt Residence Hall
710 W. Franklin St.
Closed
- Theft
300 W. Grace St.
Outside Agency

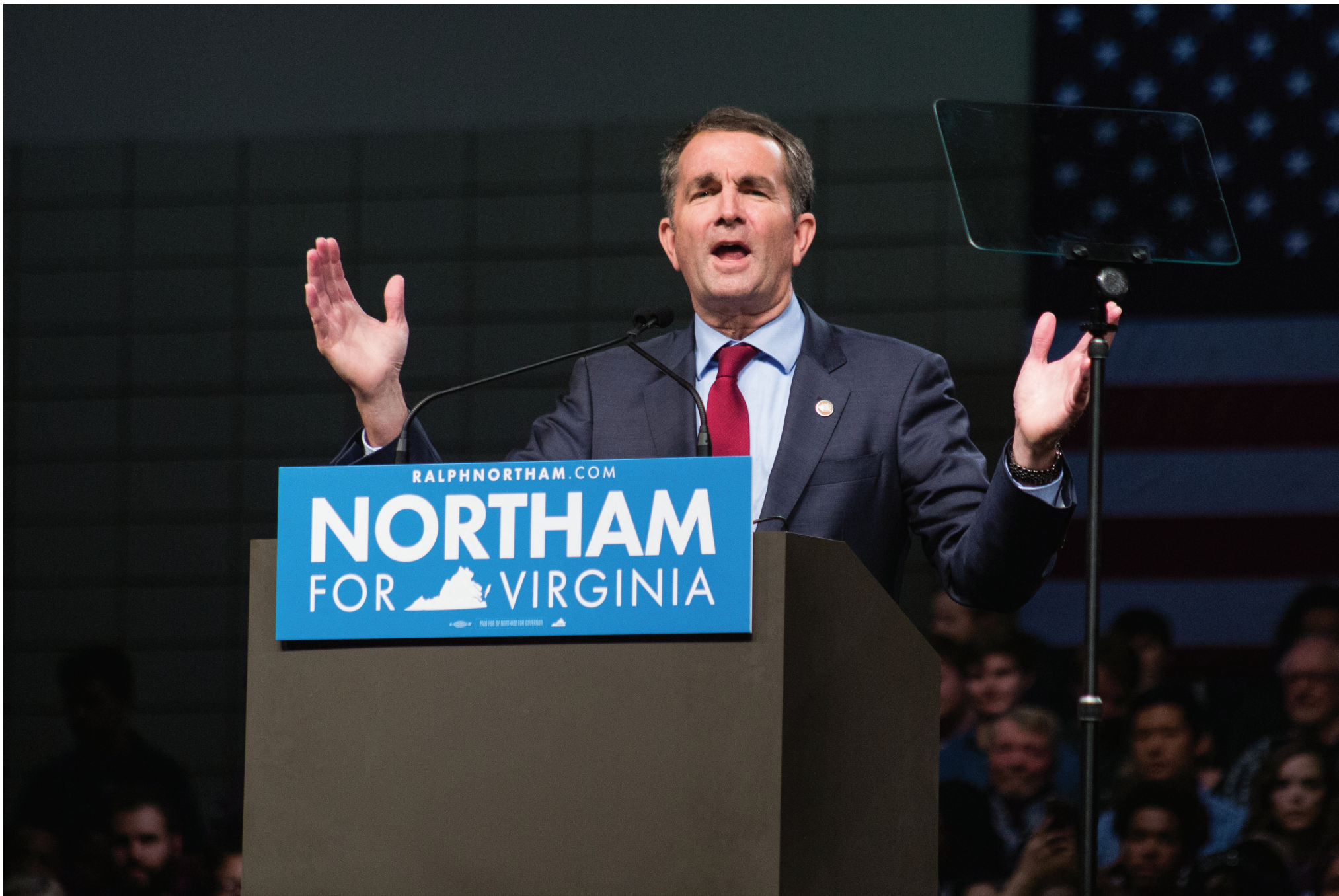
Wednesday, October 25

- Drunkness
400 N. Harrison St.
Closed
- Alcohol Violation
1200 W. Broad St.
Closed
- Shoplifting/Trespassing
7-11
1003 W. Grace St.
Closed
- Theft
Hunton House
810 W. Franklin St.
Pending
- Alcohol Violation
Brandt Residence Hall
710 W. Franklin St.
Closed
- Theft
300 W. Grace St.
Outside Agency
- Theft
Main Hospital
1250 E. Marshall St.
Pending
- Simple Assault
Visitor's Desk
529 N. 12th St.
Pending

Thursday, October 26

- Robbery
611 W. Cary St.
Outside Agency
- Robbery
Shafer/Franklin St.
Outside Agency
- Robbery
901 Park Ave.
Outside Agency
- Download the **VCU LiveSafe** mobile phone app to report crimes anonymously.
- To contact the **VCU PD:**
(804) 828-1196.
- For an **on-campus** emergency:
(804) 828-1234.
- For an **off-campus** emergency:
911.

VCU gave the contact information of more than 30,000 students to a Democratic political group



Virginia Tech, Radford University and James Madison University all released student information to NextGen, a group working to elect Ralph Northam.

FADEL ALLASSAN
Managing Editor at Large

A progressive political group obtained personal information of more than 30,000 VCU students through a records request, a university spokesperson confirmed. The group was given the names, emails and phone numbers of students in September, after asking the university for it via a Freedom of Information Act request. That information is considered public in Virginia, but students who opted out of disclosure were not included in the list. The group, NextGen America, is working to elect Democrats “up and down the ticket” in 2017, including Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam in Virginia’s upcoming governor’s race, a spokesperson for NextGen said. The spokesperson did not say if the information was used to contact students, but a number of VCU students said they received text messages with information on how to vote from people claiming to be associated with NextGen. A spokesperson for the Northam campaign said the cam-

paign did not receive any data from NextGen. NextGen requested directory information for students at all of Virginia’s 39 publically funded universities, according to the NextGen spokesperson, 18 of those 39 schools gave the information. The Roanoke Times reported earlier this month Virginia Tech, Radford University and James Madison University gave NextGen student records data. A spokesperson for George Mason University stated GMU did not give the group their students’ directory information. Although directory data falls in the category of public records, Virginia’s FOIA laws allow universities to withhold the information, according to Megan Rhyne, executive director of the Virginia Coalition for Open Government. That’s why some universities did not release the information while others did. “Twenty-five years ago, we had campus phone books with student names, addresses and landline numbers.” Rhyne said. “So, it’s not a new thing for commercial or political groups to ask for student

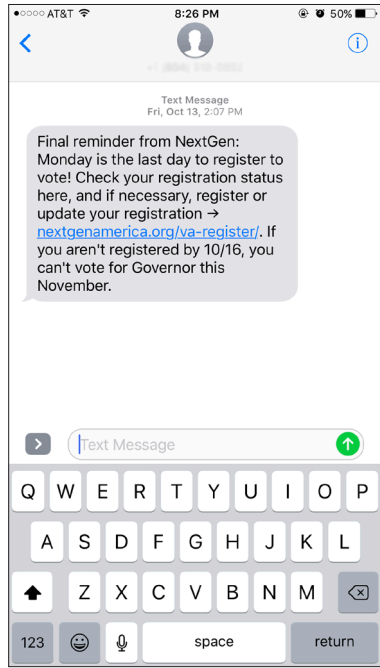
directory information and use it for their own purposes.”

“Students should not have to jump through hoops to protect their own personal private information.

Joseph Yost
House of Delegates (R - Giles)

A spokesperson for VCU said the university is reviewing its current practices for similar requests, but did not give additional details. House of Delegates members Joseph Yost (R-Giles) and Tony Wilt (R-Harrisonburg) announced they would pursue legislation to prohibit state universities from releasing di-

rectory information to third parties without students’ written consent. Yost said the idea universities could turn over directory information without a students consent is “shocking and frightening.” “Students should not have to jump through hoops to protect their own personal and private information,” Yost stated in a news release. “And that information should most certainly not be given freely to political groups seeking to exploit student’s personal information.” NextGen founder, hedge fund manager Tom Steyer, told The Washington Post in August he would spend at least \$2 million to elect Northam, with a focus on turning out millennials. The commitment paid for 70 paid staffers to register and try to turn out voters at 25 Virginia college campuses, according to the Post. Steyer is also funding an eight-figure TV ad campaign asking public officials to take steps to impeach Pres. Donald Trump. Trump called the Democratic mega-donor “wacky & totally unhinged” in a tweet Friday morning.



A number of VCU students said they received text messages and phone calls giving them instructions on how to vote from people who claimed to be associated with NextGen America. Some of the messages encouraged voting for Ralph Northam.

5 robbed, 3 assaulted on VCU’s Monroe Park campus

HIBA AHMAD
News Editor

Richmond Police have a suspect in custody after five students were robbed and three were assaulted at gunpoint on VCU’s Monroe Park campus early in the early hours of Oct. 27. Cyrus Z. Fletcher, 18 of Richmond, was arrested later that day. The robberies and assaults occurred on various locations on campus that are often well — travelled by students. He has been charged with one count of robbery and use of a firearm in commission of a felony. More charges are pending, according to RPD. The VCU Police Department sent out alerts shortly after they were notified of the robberies and again after they had a suspect in custody. RPD apprehended Fletcher on the 400 block of North Harrison Street at 4:22 a.m. Though RPD is handling the case, VCUPD sent out an email detailing the string of events.

The first incident happened on West Cary Street when Fletcher approached one student demanding property at gunpoint. The second incident occurred on Shafer Street and West Franklin Street where two students were approached, but one was struck with a weapon by Fletcher. Finally, Fletcher approached two more students on the 900 block of Park Avenue where he pulled out his gun while he asked for property and then assaulted the both of the victims. VCUPD announced they will increase their presence and patrol on the Monroe Park and MCV campuses to ensure student and community safety. “Safety at VCU is everyone’s responsibility,” said VCU Police Chief John Venuti. “Never hesitate to contact VCU Police. If you are a victim of a crime I encourage you to contact VCU Police immediately — do not wait.”



“Safety at VCU is everyone’s responsibility,” said VCU Police Chief John Venuti.

VCU’s engagement in the Richmond community is nationally recognized, new study shows

SAFFEYA AHMED
Contributing Writer

A recent study found VCU has one of the highest levels of engagement within its local community in the nation. The university joins a cohort of six universities that were examined by The Democracy Collaborative for Institutions.

An anchor institution is an entity supporting a large amount of the local economy. If that institution were to relocate, it would have drastic effects on the local economy and its community members. These institutions, therefore, are “anchored” to local communities.

Through partnerships with local organizations, VCU has used its status as an “anchor institution” to build relationships within the Richmond community.

VCU is a member of the Anchor Dashboard Learning Cohort, an effort coordinated by the DCI to use their economic power and intel-

lectual resources towards the betterment of the communities they are a part of.

In VCU’s case and its affiliates, they contribute greatly to the Richmond economy. If VCU or VCU Health Systems were to move elsewhere, thousands of people from the Richmond area would lose jobs.

Since anchor institutions are grounded in place, they work to fulfill their “anchor mission” by using any and all resources in their capacity to make the city and surrounding neighborhoods thriving areas.

Jennifer Early, director of Community-Engaged Research at VCU, said each university working as an anchor institution learns their role in bettering the social, economic and health aspects of the community.

As one of six members of the Anchor Dashboard Learning Cohort, VCU strives to address critical issues within the Richmond community as a whole, rather than focusing

issues only affecting the university.

The cohort is a collaboration between several universities who are each pursuing anchor missions to better the overall well-being of their respective communities. Focus areas include economic development, education, environment, community building, health and safety.

The other five participating institutions include SUNY Buffalo State, University of Missouri, Rutgers University, Drexel University and Cleveland State University. VCU joined the Anchor Dashboard Learning Cohort in 2015. The university’s work in the anchor cohort is facilitated through VCU’s Division of Community Engagement.

After joining the cohort, VCU has been all about boosting the local economy. Nationally, universities employ over 4 million people, spend over \$43 billion on goods and services annually and hold around \$515 billion in endowments.

Hiring, purchasing, and invest-

ing funds locally all play a huge part in a community’s positive economic development, said Jennifer Jettner, Assistant Director of Community-Engaged Research at VCU.

One of VCU’s hallmark initiatives started since joining the

“
This is the future I want to help create.”

Jennifer Jettner
Assistant director of Community Engaged Research

Learning Cohort was its Construction Workforce Development Pilot Project, a workforce development

initiative created in partnership with several other local organizations. VCU Health Systems, in partnership with VCU, CARITAS and Richmond R.E.A.L. created a construction jobs-training program for formerly incarcerated Richmond residents. The program was provided by ABC, Inc.

Early said people with backgrounds in addition, incarceration and homelessness largely made up the training program. Following the end of the program, every participant received a job offer, Early said. Rather than hiring construction workers from another state, the training program allowed for the time and finances be invested in local workers instead.

Another initiative planned out in hopes of fulfilling the anchor mission is a plan to employ more local community members with entry-level jobs in VCU Health Systems, with a similar goal in mind as the Construction Workforce Develop-

ment Pilot Project.

“This is the future I want to help create,” Jettner said.

Other anchor cohorts exist throughout the United States, working towards similar goals of institutions actively engaging in the improvement of their communities. The Anchor Dashboard Learning Cohort is one of many across the nation. In addition to the Learning Cohort, VCU and its affiliates are members of two other anchor cohorts — the Healthcare Anchor Network through VCU Health Systems and the Anchor Institution Task Force through VCU’s Office of the President.

VCU participates in additional community-engaged work including student volunteer opportunities and service-learning courses, involving teachers and students in community collaborations.

Rao and Rhoades, two of the highest paid employees in the state

HIBA AHMAD
News Editor

VCU President Michael Rao and Rams basketball coach Mike Rhoades are the two highest paid employees at the university, according to documents obtained by the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Rao is the second highest paid employee in the state of Virginia, which is a slight change from last year when he was the first.

Rao will make \$875,284 this year whereas Rhoades will make roughly \$1.2 million per year in a six-year contract with the university, according to a copy of the con-

tract that was released last spring.

This is Rao’s eighth year at VCU and Rhoades first year as head coach at VCU. Rhoades served as the associate head coach under Shaka Smart from 2009-2014. He rejoins the Rams after his time as head basketball coach at Rice University. He follows in the footsteps

of Will Wade, who left VCU to accept a position at Louisiana State University. Wade was paid roughly 1.4 million per year.

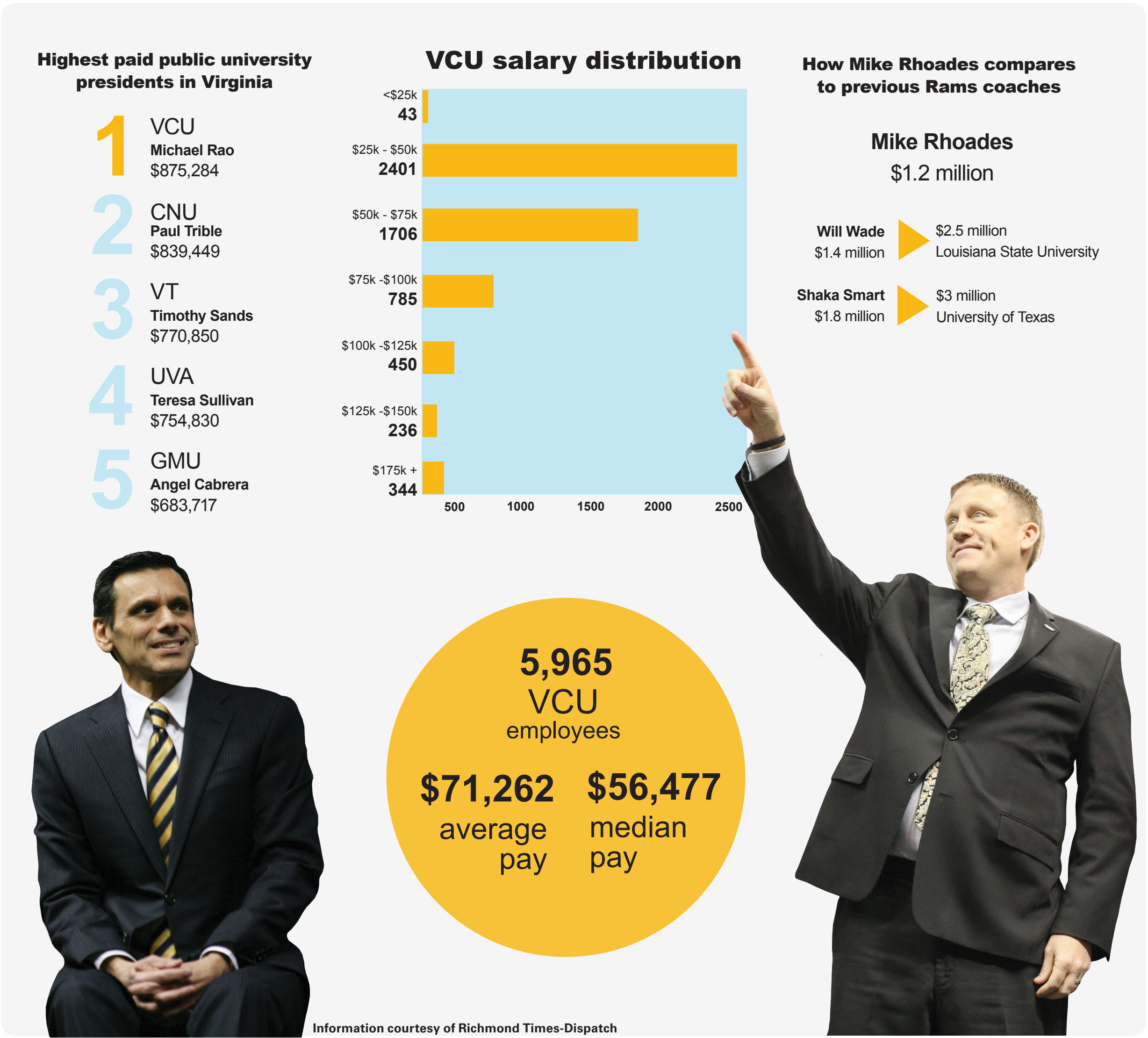
According to the contract, if Rhoades chooses to leave to take another position at another university or accepts an offer at a major television network, then VCU will

have to pay a \$1 million buyout to the university.

Other highly paid employees at VCU include Serge Nana-Sinkam, division chair and professor of internal medicine at VCU Health and Marsha Rappley, the vice president of health sciences.

Rao beats out all other public

university presidents in Virginia in terms of salary. Paul Tribble, President of Christopher Newport University, is the second highest paid president with a salary of \$839,449.





Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring, joined by over 40 state Attorneys General, reached a settlement of \$220 million dollars with Deutsche Bank.

HIBA AHMAD
News Editor

VCU will receive \$6 million after Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring negotiated a \$220 million settlement deal with the German-based Deutsche Bank for fraud.

The lawsuit was filed when it was found that the bank was manipulating an international interest rate index.

The bank has made donations to the new Institute for Contemporary Art, which is set to open in April 2018 and VCU School of Business.

Herring joined over 40 state attorneys general from across the nation to file a lawsuit against the global banking and financial services company.

“This settlement sends a strong signal across the country that my team and I take fraudulent conduct seriously,” Herring stated in a press release. “And that any company that uses manipulation and deceitful tactics to mislead Virginia’s entities and consumers will be held accountable for its actions.”

Other Virginia entities affected by the scheme include Virginia Retirement System and the Virginia Tech Foundation. They both are expected to receive \$6 million.

According to the lawsuit, government agencies and nonprofit organizations across the nation were defrauded of millions of dollars when they invested with Deutsche.

“I’m proud of the role my team and I played in investigating Deutsche Bank’s wrongdoing and securing this settlement,” Herring said.

“
This settlement sends a strong signal across the country that my team and I take fraudulent conduct seriously.
Mark Herring
Virginia Attorney General

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PHOTO BY ERIN EDGERTON

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Psychology professor recieves \$1.1 million grant to help minority communities



NIA TARIQ
Contributing Writer

The U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration awarded \$1.1 million to a psychology professor to help medically underserved communities in the Richmond area gain access to mental health services.

Heather Jones, associate professor in the School of Psychology received “The VCU Primary Care Psychology Training Collaborative: Expanding Services with Underserved Youth, Latinx Immigrants, and Refugees.” VCU’s Primary Care Psychology Training Collaborative currently provides free mental health services for patients.

The grant will expand the collaborative’s services with African American children, Latinx families and refugees in the greater Richmond region. It will also al-

low for more doctoral students to be trained in the provision of care, add doctoral clinicians to the collaborative’s existing sites and for supervisors to take part in inter-professional trainings.

Additionally, the collaborative seeks to increase the number of underrepresented mental health professionals who are trained to enter the behavioral health workforce. Students will be equipped to work in hospital and other primary care settings and gain an understanding of how to work with doctors, nurses, social workers and other members of the integrated health care team.

Stephanie Wilson, a third-year doctoral student and a behavioral health clinician with the collaborative, said she believes those are vital settings for addressing barriers to mental health treatment for underserved populations that would not otherwise seek out treatment from traditional mental health settings.

“It’s making a huge difference, not only for patients in primary care with mental health needs who have barriers to treatment such as cost and access,” Wilson said. “But also for doctoral student trainees on this grant who can learn how to deliver brief, short-term treatment for underserved populations.”

Jones said their hope is to be able to provide brief mental health care to those in need of targeted treatment, like behavior problems, sleep problems, anxiety and depression for patients who might not need to seek out more in depth care. For patients who need more services than what the collaborative can provide, they will be placed on a waitlist and continue to be seen by VCU’s representatives while they wait to be seen elsewhere in the

community.

“There is a significant health disparity regarding the mental health care of children and adults in the Richmond area,” Jones said. “Specifically, individuals who are lower income and racial or ethnic minorities are less likely to receive mental health care. Thus, by placing mental or behavioral health services in primary care settings, where they do go, we are reducing a barrier to mental health care.”

Montse Fuentes, the dean of the College of Humanities and Sciences at VCU, said the impact of this partnership will lead to improved patient outcomes and enhancement of the success of our students through community engagement learning.

“Dr. Jones’s collaborative grant ... is a leading exemplar of our commitment to our mission as College of Humanities and Sciences to both teaching and research, with a focus on impactful research that has a positive impact on our Richmond community,” Fuentes said. “This initiative is a testament of our wholehearted College commitment to our community and unreserved enthusiasm to provide our students with real world learning experiences.”

If VCU students obtain medical care at one of the clinics, they are eligible for the collaborative’s services. Sites that the collaborative serve currently include the Children’s Hospital of Richmond, Hayes E. Willis Family Medicine Clinic, CrossOver Healthcare Ministry and the Daily Planet and Health Brigade.



Press Box

Rhoades’ relief fosters community trust



DANIEL PURYEAR
Contributing Writer

Last Thursday, VCU basketball hosted the Liberty University Flames for an exhibition game with a special purpose. In a last minute schedule change, VCU and Liberty came together for an exhibition game fundraiser with proceeds going to the One America Appeal foundation, created to help victims from hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria.

Rhoades has clearly made a concerted effort to ingratiate himself into the VCU community through his humanitarian efforts.

The fundraising hit home for one Liberty player, Georgie Pacheco-Ortiz from Ponce, Puerto Rico. In an emotionally charged response at the postgame press

conference, Pacheco-Ortiz shared how glad he was to see such support and that it was very meaningful to him.

“It was great to see my family and friends here in Richmond, I lived here for three or four years,” Pacheco-Ortiz said. “I’d never played at the Siegel center and it was a great feeling.”

Pacheco-Ortiz has family in and around Richmond and Ponce. He mentioned the conditions in Ponce and said they do not have running water and go to their neighbors in order to eat and get resources.

“It meant a lot to me and my family back home,” Pacheco Ortiz said. “Just doing this I was a little emotional...it was great that the coaching staffs would put something like this together.”

VCU basketball’s effort to help those affected by the hurricanes can be attributed to Mike Rhoades and his former residency in Houston, his tenure at Rice University, and his effort to truly bring VCU basketball into the community, and vice versa.

In September, VCU basketball teamed up with the Richmond Flying Squirrels, American Red Cross and Minor League Baseball to collect five Hilldrup trucks worth of supplies, which were delivered to shelters in Houston. The effort by the Richmond and VCU community astounded volunteers and event coordinators alike.

Other than Rhoades and VCU basketball’s effort to help hurricane victims, Rhoades has also been an adamant supporter of the VCU organization RamTHON — a year-

round fundraising effort to help patients and families in the VCU Children’s Hospital. Rhoades has been a supporter through video, announcing his support at the Black and Gold scrimmage and flying through campus with a red cape on. With three children of his own, Rhoades has been a model of how to support those in need locally and abroad.

Although Shaka Smart left VCU in high regard with the vision of building his name, Will Wade’s unceremonious departure left a bitter taste in the mouth of most VCU fans and players.

The team and fans were already in despair by losing some of our most beloved players — Mo Alie-Cox, JeQuan Lewis, Doug Brooks, Jordan Burgess and Torey Burston — so having the coach leave in a

time when we needed to rebuild the program...it hit hard.

Mike Rhoades was quick to realize this somber mood. During his transition period into the new role. In Rhoades’ introductory press conference, he gave the Rams some hope of having a coach that would be with us for the long-haul. Rhoades repeatedly stated how good it was to be “back home” and having his family with him to show their support. Rhoades relayed the sentiment that VCU basketball was just a new edition to the Rhoades family.

These community outreach efforts are another way of showing commitment to VCU and wanting to do more for the program than just get an NCAA tournament credit on his record or another 24-win season. Smart made

an impactful effort to bring the community together through the FRIENDS Association for Children in Church Hill or trips to the Children’s Hospital. Not to mention Maya Smart’s effort in being a Christmas Mother.

A noticeable difference in this trend emerges when you Google Will Wade and volunteering and scroll for pages to find something. I guess to Wade’s credit, he was here such a short amount of time he could not really get his heart into anything.

The magnitude of effort Mike Rhoades has shown to be a community partner and outreach advocate — even if it means running through campus with a cape — fosters hope, trust and grows admiration for the man and the program.

Continue for extensive coverage
of the VCU men’s basketball team



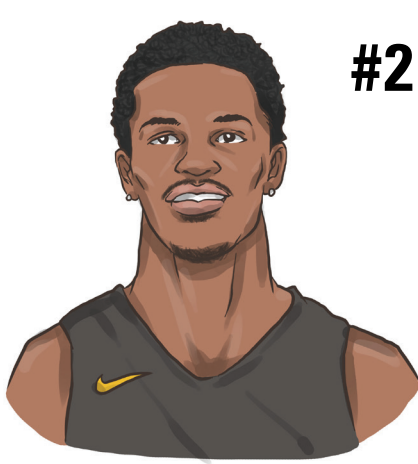
2017-2018 Rams



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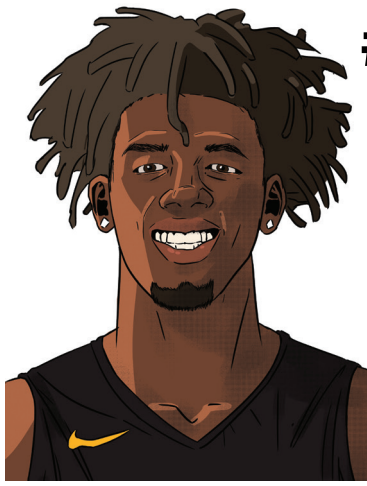
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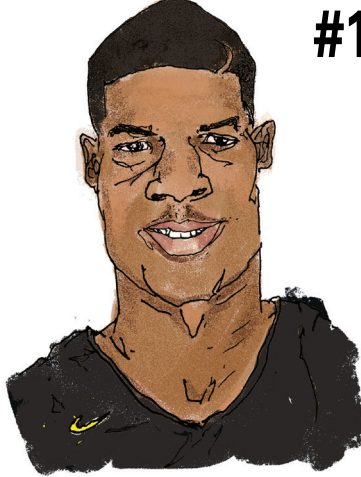
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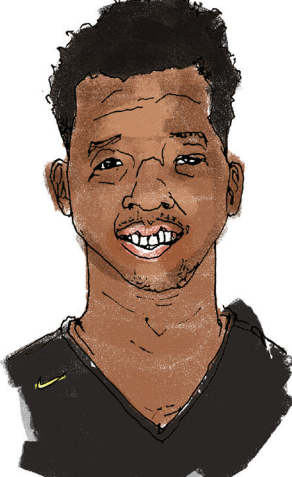
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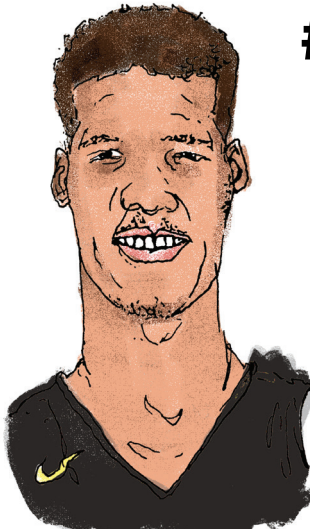
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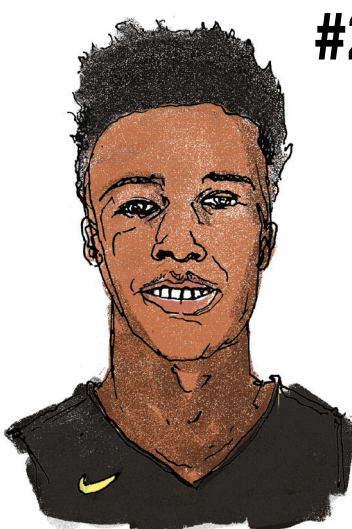
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#25

Meet the players

ILLUSTRATIONS BY IAIN DUFFUS, JOSE DAVILA AND STECK VON

NICK VERSAW, GABE HAUARI
Staff Writers

De'Riante Jenkins - 0 -
Sophomore G

One of just four players on this year's squad to have previously donned the Black & Gold, Jenkins looks to play a significant role for the Rams in 2017-2018. Although he was sidelined for nearly two months due to a foot injury he sustained in January, the Eutawville, S.C. product averaged 4.5 points-per-game last season in 20 contests while shooting 50 percent from the field and 45.5 percent from deep.

The sharpshooting sophomore has come out to a strong start this preseason after scoring 12 points in both the Black & Gold Game and Thursday's exhibition against Liberty University. Jenkins looks to be a key player for the Rams in the upcoming campaign.

Mike I Simms - 1 - Sophomore
G/F

Part of a pair of junior college transfers brought in by Head Coach Mike Rhoades over the offseason, Simms joins teammates Jonathan Williams and Khris Lane to form a trio of hometown Rams. The Highland Springs product averaged 14.4 points, 4.4 rebounds and 1.2 steals-per-game for Kansas' Cowley Community College last season, earning the Richmond native second team all-conference and all-region honors in 2016-2017. Down the stretch, Simms averaged over 25 points-per-game in Cowley's final eight contests.

The 6-foot-5-inch, 225-pound wing has the ability to score on all three levels, as evidenced by his 44/36/82 shooting splits last season. Simms averaged five points and six

rebounds in the Rams' first two pre-season exhibitions and looks to pick up steam as the season progresses.

Marcus Evans - 2 - Junior G

Evans may be one for the future, but the former Rice University standout has Rams fans salivating. The highly-sought-after guard averaged an impressive 20.1 points, 3.6 rebounds and 3.3 steals-per-game in his two seasons under Rhoades at Rice. A product of nearby Chesapeake, Evans has had quite a distinguished career. The 6-foot-2-inch combo guard has been twice named First Team All-Conference USA in addition to his 2016 C-USA Freshman of the Year Award. Evans set school and Conference USA freshman and sophomore scoring records after taking just 49 contests to rack up 1,000 career points.

Evans will sit out the upcoming campaign due to NCAA transfer regulations, but has two seasons of eligibility remaining. He will surely be one of the Black and Gold's key players in the 2018-2019 campaign and beyond.

Justin Tillman - 4 - Senior F

The fuzzy-haired fan-favorite has big shoes to fill in 2017 following the departure of fellow big man Mo Alie-Cox. However, if last season is any indication, Tillman will accept the challenge with open arms. The 6-foot-8-inch, 220-pound forward nearly averaged a double-double last season with 12.2 points and 8.7 rebounds-per-game, earning the Detroit product Third Team All-Atlantic 10 honors. Tillman came on especially strong down the stretch, racking up 11 double-doubles and three 20-plus point performances against A-10 opponents.

After sitting out the Black and Gold game due to a sprained foot, Tillman put up 12 points, 3

rebounds and a block Thursday against Liberty. The high-flying forward will join fellow senior Johnny Williams as one of the Rams' focal points in the upcoming campaign.

Sean Mobley - 5 - Freshman F

One of just two remaining Will Wade recruits for 2017, Mobley is a dynamic forward with the ability to score on multiple levels. The 6-foot-8-inch, 240-pound forward was a four star recruit by ESPN after leading Florida's Montverde Academy to a 26-2 record and a place in the Dick's Sporting Goods High School Nationals as a junior.

A stereotypical "stretch four," Mobley provides a unique skillset fans of the Black and Gold have not seen in some time. His ability to nail the three-ball will give Rhoades another option down low to pair alongside seniors Justin Tillman and Khris Lane. Mobley may not feature much to start the season, but is surely one to keep an eye on.

Jonathan Williams - 10 - Senior
G

Johnny Williams is another in a long line of fan-favorite point guards at VCU. Taking on the role of team leader following the departure of backcourt mate JeQuan Lewis in May, the Richmond native looks to have a big year for the Rams. Known for his acrobatic finishes, the speedy guard averaged 8.3 points and 3.1 assists-per-game as a junior. After turning the ball over just 48 times last year, Williams' ability to pull the strings is a coach's dream.

Through two preseason exhibitions, the 6-foot-1-inch floor general is averaging 9 points, 5 assists and 3.5 rebounds. Like fellow senior Justin Tillman, Williams looks to be one of the Rams' focal points in the upcoming campaign.

Issac Vann - 11 - R-Sophomore
F

After sitting out all of last season due to NCAA transfer regulations, Vann is one of the more interesting pieces of this year's squad. The Bridgeport, Conn. product had a prolific career at the University of Maine after averaging 16.4 points en route to America East All-Rookie honors in his 2015-2016 freshman campaign. The high-flying forward excels at getting to the rim and drawing contact, as evidenced by his nearly six free throw attempts-per-game as a freshman.

In the Rams' first two exhibitions, Vann has been a focal point for the Black and Gold after averaging 13.5 points and 4.5 rebounds this preseason. With his unique ability to score from anywhere on the floor, Vann looks to play a key role for Rhoades' Rams.

Dylan Sheehy Guiseppi - 12 -
Freshman G

A freshman walk-on, Sheehy-Guiseppi likely won't get much significant playing time this season, however he is one to keep an eye on for the future. He is athletic and has good size at 6-foot-1-inch. He's a capable scorer and rebounder, and has a chance to develop into a nice piece for VCU in the coming years.

Malik Crowfield - 13 -
Sophomore G

The sophomore guard from Louisiana was one of the Rams' best shooters from beyond the arc last season shooting 35.6 percent

and he'll look to continue that this season. He figures to get significant playing time in a backcourt that lost JeQuan Lewis and Doug Brooks. He has added some moves to his offensive game this off-season and has sneaky athleticism, so this could be his breakout year for the Rams.

Marcus Santos-Silva - 14 -
Freshman F

One of the holdovers from Will Wade's last recruiting class, Santos-Silva will add much-needed depth to VCU's frontcourt. He's a big body who can rebound and displays solid footwork. He's also a great passer with good court vision, which can help lead to some easy buckets for the Rams. The Vermont native will likely see a decent amount of playing time for Coach Rhoades this season off the bench.

Xavier Jackson - 15 - Junior G

The junior college transfer from Sheridan Junior College in Wyoming, Jackson led his team in scoring last season and adds versatility and depth to the backcourt. He averaged 13.2 points and shot 36 percent from three, while also scoring 20 points six times. He'll likely come off the bench for the Rams this season and add some scoring and shooting to the team.

Khris Lane - 21 - R-Senior F

The Richmond native is home, and his arrival couldn't come at a more perfect time. With VCU losing Mo Alie-Cox to the NFL and Ahmed Hamdy to a transfer, Lane's

arrival will give Mike Rhoades plenty of options when it comes to potential players to pair up with Justin Tillman. Not only did he average 12.7 points and 6.7 rebounds for Longwood last season, but he also shot 35 percent from beyond the arc in his Lancers career and adds versatility to the Rams' frontcourt.

Lewis Djonkam - 22 - Freshman
F

The freshman forward is the tallest player on VCU's roster, coming in at 6-foot-9-inch. He'll likely earn playing time this season alongside Justin Tillman, Khris Lane and Marcos Santos-Silva, and has been lauded by the coaching staff for his motor, toughness, and work in the weight room. Djonkam, who originally committed to Duquesne, will bring much-needed size to a relatively short VCU frontcourt.

Tyler Maye - 25 - Freshman G

Maye is an explosive freshman point guard who will fit in perfectly with Mike Rhoades' system. He averaged 36 points per game, that's right 36, during his senior season in high school, and will likely earn playing time behind Johnny Williams at the point guard position. While he's a bit on the lighter side in terms of weight, his speed and explosiveness will help him tremendously this season and beyond.

Johnny and Justin — VCU through and through



Starting senior forward Justin Tillman was named to the A-10 All Conference First Team this preseason. Both he and fellow senior Johnny Williams are on their third coach at VCU.

RODNEY ROBINSON
Contributing Writer

Following the hire of Mike Rhoades in March, this marked the third head coach for the Rams in four seasons. With yet another coaching change, the Black and Gold will look to veteran leadership from senior guard Jonathan Williams and senior forward Justin Tillman to guide them to an eighth straight NCAA tournament appearance.

“On the court, I’ve gotten a lot better with my leadership,” Williams said. “I’ve learned from some of the best to come through here

about leadership.” Williams has nurtured his leadership capabilities under other strong willed VCU floor generals such as JeQuan Lewis and Briante Weber. During his junior season, Williams set career highs in points (8.3) and assists per game (3.1) on nearly 45 percent shooting. Williams will be taking on a bigger role offensively this season with the departure of former floor general JeQuan Lewis.

Shooting was a focus for Williams during the summer.

“I feel like some teams still play me under a little bit,” Williams said. “But if I get better at shooting,

people are just going to be scratching their heads on what to do.”

With his athleticism and ability to attack the rim, a consistent jump shot from the field would render Williams an imposing opposition to guard and will add another weapon on offense for the Rams. Williams gives the Rams an impressive inside-out threat with Tillman working down low.

The journey for Tillman and Williams while at VCU has been similar.

“It’s been great because he’s been through everything that I’m going through right now,” Williams said. “He’s been through the change

from not playing a whole lot sophomore year to playing a lot junior year and that’s the same thing that happened to me.”

Tillman averaged career highs in his junior season with 12.2 points per game on nearly 60 percent shooting and 8.7 rebounds per game. Tillman elevated his level of play against conference opponents. In the A-10, the dynamic forward averaged 14.5 points per game on 60 percent shooting and 9.6 rebounds in 18 conference games last season. Tillman posted 11 double-doubles last season, all against A-10 opponents, and he hauled in 17 rebounds in the A-10 Confer-

ence Championship against Rhode Island.

Tillman’s superior rebounding and ability to finish plays around the rim will be important this season with the departure of Mo Alie-Cox and the transition of new coach Mike Rhoades. Tillman’s A-10 dominance earned him a selection to the A-10 preseason first team this year.

According to Williams, the goals for the upcoming season haven’t changed for the Rams.

“We want to win the A-10 regular season outright,” Williams said. “We want to win the championship and make a real deep run in the

NCAA Tournament.”

Rhoades was an assistant for the Rams during the 2011 Final Four run and throughout the four straight NCAA tournament appearances under Shaka Smart. Rhoades led Rice University to their first 20-win season since the 2003-2004 campaign last year and brings valuable experience to a young, untested VCU roster. In his first season in charge, Rhoades will look to Tillman and Williams to lead his raw youngsters.

Rams get early gut-check in charity exhibition



Starting senior point guard Johnny Williams set career highs in points (8.3) and assists (3.1) per game last year.

ZACH JOACHIM
Sports Editor

Despite five VCU players scoring in double figures, Black and Gold fans left last Thursday’s charity exhibition for hurricane relief against Liberty University dumbstruck after watching the Rams fall to the Flames in the vaunted Siegel Center by a final of 85-69.

Liberty took its first lead of the game with 13 minutes remaining in the first half and never looked back. LU junior forward Ezra Talbert led all scorers with 23 points on 5-5 shooting from beyond the arc. The Flames shot 50 percent (11-22) from outside as a team. VCU’s 24 fouls allowed their opposition to spend ample time at the charity stripe, where Liberty knocked down 24 of 28 free throws.

VCU coach Mike Rhoades said the loss will serve as a wake up call.

“This was a good dress rehearsal for a lot of reasons,” Rhoades said. “Sometimes you need to get a slap in the face to realize where you’re at and where you need to go. This was exactly what we needed. I told the guys our record is still 0-0, but we’ve got a lot of work to do, particularly on the defensive end.”

Scoring distribution was a bright spot for the Rams in an otherwise

disheartening performance.

Sophomore starting shooting guard Malik Crowfield led the Black and Gold in scoring with 14, followed closely by starting senior and sophomore forwards Justin Tillman (12) and De’Riante Jenkins (12). Starting senior point guard Jonathan Williams chipped in 11 points and five assists.

Sophomore forward Issac Vann poured in 13 off the bench and showed off his diverse playmaking ability with an array of outside shots and penetrating drives. Vann, who was allotted significant time on the ball to facilitate his creativity, also committed seven turnovers in a polarizing showing.

Williams and Crowfield led the Black and Gold in minutes with 32 and 33, respectively. The starting guard duo figures to maintain a high playing time threshold in what is a thin backcourt rotation for Rhoades to work with.

“You’ve gotta hold everybody accountable [for the loss],” Crowfield said. “We need to make sure we have more discipline. You can’t just show up when the lights come on.”

“[Coach] told us it doesn’t count, but it’s a wake up call,” Williams said. “You get away with certain things in practice that show up in a game. We’ve just gotta get everybody to buy in...it felt the same

as last year. We’re gonna be fine, we’ll bounce back.”

Williams is referring to the Rams’ preseason exhibition home loss a year ago at the hands of Division II Queens College, an even more jarring result, but a comparable gut-check for a VCU side looking to mature as fast as possible.

“The biggest thing we’ve gotta do is gain experience quickly because of our schedule,” Rhoades said. “This helped tonight. Now look, we’re at VCU, we hate the result. I hope it bothers our guys... it bothers me. I think that’s when you grow the most though, when things don’t go your way. You’ve gotta accept the challenge.”

The final scoreline marred an otherwise positive evening at the Siegel Center. Liberty and VCU activated an NCAA waiver to put on the event, from which net proceeds will go toward a charity of each school’s choosing. The Rams selected One America Appeal, a charity founded to support relief efforts in the wake of hurricanes Irma, Harvey and Maria.

“It was great that the NCAA made this decision [to play the game] because it’s benefiting a lot of people that need it,” Rhoades said. “I’m glad everyone came out because they supported something pretty awesome.”

Rams dominate in the pros

JESSICA WETZLER
Contributing Writer

The former Black and Gold hoops stars have stayed busy since leaving the VCU court — recent 2017 graduates JeQuan Lewis, Mo Alie-Cox, Doug Brooks and Jordan Burgess all signed professional contracts as they continue their athletic careers.

After ending his collegiate career at VCU with 1,444 points, 54 assists, 259 rebounds and 205 steals, Lewis — an undrafted rookie — signed with the Milwaukee Bucks in July. Lewis spent four years as a Ram and went to the NCAA tournament each season, including a trip to the round of 32 in the 2016 NCAA Tournament.

Former 6-foot-7-inch forward Mo Alie-Cox traded the court for the gridiron after signing a NFL contract with the Indianapolis

Colts in April. NFL.com’s Ian Rapoport reported in April Alie-Cox was eligible for the 2016 draft, making him a free agent and immediately eligible to be signed by one of the league’s 32 teams.

Alie-Cox was waived/injured by the Colts Aug. 5 and placed on Injured Reserve after clearing waivers. The VCU hoops star turned tight end was signed to the team’s practice squad in October.

After participating with team Ram Nation, VCU’s alumni team, in their second consecutive year at The Basketball Tournament, or TBT, over the summer, Burgess signed his first professional deal with the top Romanian league, Baschet Club Timisoara. Burgess became the third Ram from last seasons graduating class to sign a professional sports contract.

Former 6-foot-4-inch guard Brooks landed his first professional basketball gig after agreeing to

terms with MBK Handlova of the Slovak Extraliga.

Former Rams point guard Briante Weber latched on with the Los Angeles Lakers last NBA season after being waived by the Charlotte Hornets. The Vertical’s Shams Charina reported in August Weber agreed to a partially guaranteed contract with the Lakers.

Weber joined the Lakers for training camp and earned a roster spot in preseason. Weber was eventually waived by the Lakers after the training camp invite and now has a two-way deal with the Houston Rockets. Weber will report to the Rockets’ G League affiliate, Rio Grande, but could be called to Houston soon as the team looks to temporarily replace injured Chris Paul, who will miss a few weeks.



Former Rams forward Mo Alie-Cox played football in his youth before sticking strictly to basketball for college.



Lane attended Drexel and Longwood Universities before taking his talents to Broad Street for his swansong in collegiate hoops. Lane said VCU is like nothing he’s experienced.

Khris Lane’s winding path back to Richmond

ADAM CHEEK
Contributing Writer

VCU forward Khris Lane is not only a senior ready to represent the Rams this season, but he’s also hoping to serve as a mentor to up-and-coming players as well fill the sizeable shoes of some former ones.

Journeying from Drexel University in Philadelphia to the Farmville courts of Longwood and finally to the cityscape of Richmond, Lane said he finally feels at home as part of the VCU family.

The 6-foot-7-inch senior’s choices were narrowed down to two schools — VCU and the University of Pittsburgh — before he made a final decision.

“The ultimate deciding factor was the chances of being a part of the NCAA tournament,” Lane said. “VCU’s basketball program offered me the best likelihood of being able to do so.”

Previously a football player, Lane said that he always seemed to be bigger, faster and stronger than everyone. Lane’s basketball background began at just 10 years old.

Playing organized basketball at 10 and then traveling just two years later, Lane consistently improved in his second sport until realizing it may be his future.

Lane also played basketball with recent VCU graduate Torey Burston at Trinity Episcopal High School.

“When I got here during the summer, I got [Torey’s] locker,” Lane said. “I took his chair that had his name on it, just because while Torey might not have been the biggest core player, I know what he meant to VCU basketball.”

Lane said having a friend within the VCU community made his decision and transition much easier.

“He was here when Shaka Smart and Will Wade were both here, and he was a vocal part of those teams,” Lane said. “Torey’s actually one of my closest friends.”

Lane expressed his appreciation for the fans at the Siegel Center as well, comparing the difference between the atmospheres of Longwood and VCU as night and day.

“We have great fans here and I’m at home,” Lane said. “I’ve never had an atmosphere close to this,

probably not even combined at my other two schools. I don’t take it for granted, as I’ll only have about 20 opportunities to go out there and play for those fans, and I’m going to cherish it every time.”

Although Lane was injured for most of his time at Drexel, it gave him more time to observe and gather learning experiences. He expressed he didn’t feel he’d be the player he was today if it weren’t for that time, as he picked up a number of good habits, and that became the foundation of his basketball acumen.

Lane’s time at Longwood came to an end after the 2016 season, as he decided to transfer to another school after not experiencing much success with the Lancers, as well as a disillusionment with the culture of the program.

“VCU had the culture that I wanted, one of hard work and one that’s all about basketball,” Lane said.

Although he was unable to play over the offseason due to an injury and minor surgery on his left knee, Lane looks forward to the team building its chemistry as the sea-

“

I’ve never had an atmosphere close to this probably not even combined at my other two schools. I don’t take it for granted, as I’ll only have about 20 opportunities to go out there and play for those fans, and I’m going to cherish it every time.

Khris Lane,
R-Senior Forward

son goes on, with new coaches and players gelling together and communicating better.

Lane said new head coach Mike Rhoades looks to play a fast-paced game, going seven or eight deep to ensure a consistent commitment to playing up-tempo.

“Whoever plays the best, he will play the most,” Lane said. “He has a way he wants to play, and he’s intense.”

While Rhoades is intense, Lane notes how caring of a coach Rhoades is. Lane said that he’s a “players’ coach,” and Rhoades will call players and check on how they’re doing away from the court.

Lane said this was a big factor in his decision to be a part of the team.

As a Richmond native arriving at VCU after the departure of staples JeQuan Lewis and Mo Alie-Cox, Lane knows following in their footsteps will be a large undertaking.

“It’s big shoes to fill,” Lane said. “Mo was a part of VCU for the entire time he was here and JeQuan was an all-league player and nearly is an NBA player now. That’s why I’ve worked so hard since the first

day I got here, to fill those shoes, and I don’t want anyone to say that I didn’t work hard for my city.”

Lane said he will be a mentor to other, younger players, mimicking six seniors who took him under their wing at Drexel, checking on him and being there if he needed anything.

“I want to embody those six guys from Drexel and be the best senior I can,” Lane said. “So, when the freshmen now are seniors, I want them to say that they want to copy how Khris was with me. I’m going to be hard on them, but I’m also going to make sure they know that I’m here for them if they need anything, and to have their back.”

Lane emphasized playing at the highest level he can is his primary aspiration, whether professional or overseas. However, for this season, Lane wants to do all he can to be a part of and contribute to the rowdy atmosphere of VCU, and to become a mentor and role model for younger players on the roster.

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On this day
Orson Welles live broadcast reading of “War of the Worlds,” causes national panic Oct. 30, 1938.



10 years of Inlight: Festival come to Art District

GEORGIA GEEN
Staff Writer

1708 Gallery will host its 10th “InLight Richmond” exhibition on Friday, Nov. 3, displaying dozens of light-based performances and installations inspired by Richmond’s 1901 Electric Carnival.

The day-long setup process will represent the culmination of the year-long process of planning “InLight.”

“We’re already planning for next year,” Emily Smith, 1708 Gallery’s Executive Director, said.

1708 Gallery anticipates between 15,000 and 20,000 people will attend the exhibition, as opposed to the first year of the exhibition which attracted between 3,000 and 4,000 attendees, Smith said. The large crowd and location requires assistance from groups like the police department, other properties in the neighborhood and the department of public utilities, Smith said.

“InLight” will span six blocks, located on Broad St. between Belvidere St. and Foushee St. Smith said the exhibition changes locations each year.

“We just felt like it was a way to keep it interesting, it was a way to just engage with different neighborhoods,” Smith said. “This city has a lot of really different types of spaces and stories in those spaces and ‘InLight’ continues to allow us to explore those.”

When “InLight” was held at Tredegar Iron Works, many of the installations took inspiration from the site’s historic importance. Smith said some of the works reflected the impact of the Civil War on Richmond, in addition to the iron-clad ships constructed from the iron fabricated at Tredegar.

“That was maybe the (exhibition) most clearly-aligned with a space,” Smith said.

In accordance with the exhibition’s 2017 location, Smith said

a few of the works will address themes like gentrification and neighborhood development.

Works in “InLight” fall into two categories, the first being those selected through a jury process. Smith said the call for proposals sent out by the gallery tends to attract artists from a variety of professions. The second category consists of works specifically curated for “InLight” and gives 1708 more control over the end result.

“Curated projects are born out of a desire to have more work and a different kind of work,” Smith said.

One of the 2017 curated projects is by Máximo González, an Argentinian artist based in Mexico City. The piece shows connections between world capitals on a wall, while the floor is covered in inflatable globes, which Smith said represent themes of global culture and mass production in a global economy.

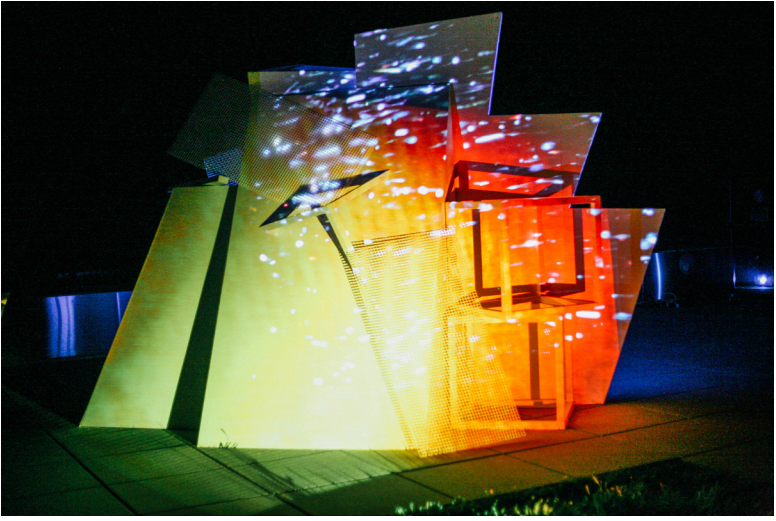
“The world capitals are denoted

by light bulbs connected by conduit and wire. At any moment, they’re all connected and all illuminated. At other moments, the light travels around so it creates this kinetic image,” Smith, who worked with González and his team, said.

Other themes inspired by the global and whimsical elements of the 1901 Electric Carnival to be featured at “InLight Richmond” include Indonesian paper theater, or “wayang,” in addition to early film and animation and mapping projections that have a carnival feel, Smith said.

Smith emphasized that the juried works are important to the exhibition because they make for a more diverse group of artists. The call for proposals brought in individuals from science departments who Smith said the gallery wouldn’t otherwise know how to engage.

“Our audience who we might reach out to is going to be kind of,



PHOTOS BY ERIN EDEYTON

InLight combines structural art designs with kinetic imagery.

for better or for worse, be limited to an audience that identifies as visual artists,” Smith said. “We invite artists to submit proposals for light-based work and that can be anything from projections to a sculpture that engages light elements.”

Travis Austin, an M.F.A. candidate and adjunct instructor for the Department of Kinetic Imaging at VCU, had already developed and workshopped the idea for his piece, “We Were Out of Time to Begin With,” before hearing of the call for proposals. He describes it as a “site-specific installation that addresses the multiplicity of place,” in addition to other themes.

“I want viewers to think be-

yond any kind of preconceived or singular understanding of place, medium, sight or sound they might have,” Austin said.

The 2017 exhibition will include performances from two VCU Dance students, as 1708 Gallery invited the dance department to collaborate. Smith said “InLight” gives the students the opportunity to work outside of a typical production space.

“It’s been pretty great, so I’m excited to see those as well,” Smith said.

“Jig Saw” is more rusty knife than sharpened blade

SAMUEL GOODRICH
Staff Writer

While a former king of Halloween, the “Saw” franchise hasn’t released an installment in the past seven years since the splatterfest was overshadowed by “Paranormal Activity” back in 2009. After “Saw 3D” the following year, the sub-genre of gruesomely violent horror films died out, letting found footage and haunted house scares flood the market.

Now the series has returned with “Jigsaw” a sequel/soft reboot that aims to take the franchise in slightly new directions while getting back to the basics. While I’d like to say this is a return to form, it’s more of a continuation of what hasn’t worked in the past.

This film follows a group of people with questionable morals trapped in a barn full of deadly traps supposedly set up by the Jigsaw killer, who has been dead for

many years. At the same time, local police are trying to figure out who this new copycat killer is and how they can stop this new game from ending in bloody death.

If that synopsis sounded familiar, you’d be right. “Jigsaw” isn’t too concerned with doing something new with the franchise, instead retreading old ground that hasn’t been fertile in about a decade.

The characters inside the game are unlikable and flatter than a saw blade. They exist simply to be killed in elaborate traps. But, the film can’t even get that right, as the traps are too simple and lack any impact, feeling as if the filmmakers were trying to “get back to basics,” but instead failed to come up with anything interesting.

There’s even little gore this time, with many kills cutting away at the last minute, showing the underwhelmingly CGI heavy carnage, or showcasing the eviscerated bodies in great detail. It’s a shame to see a series known for its gore and



ILLUSTRATION BY VAIN DUFFELS

violence fail to push the envelope despite having more leeway.

The worse part about the traps and the game itself is that they’re not the focus of the film. Instead, the audience is mostly left an overly complex and cheap-looking police procedural that feels like something straight out of “Law & Order.”

The acting and writing in these sequences are cheesy in every sense of the word, using clichés and logical leaps to move the plot forward, all while ignoring blatant plot holes

in order to get to the grand twist of “Jigsaw.”

It simply doesn’t work. The twist is meant not only to shock the audience, but to explain some large and distracting plot holes. Instead, it only creates new ones as logic and reasoning are thrown out the window in order to appear as if the film is clever.

The twist comes off as extremely unnecessary since there isn’t a reason as to why the character would do the thing they’re doing

in the way that they’re doing it. This “twist” was only done to fool the audience who couldn’t have possibly seen it coming, since it’s so idiotic.

Despite the hilariously awful leaps in logic, “Jigsaw” still follows the tired franchise formula to a tee, making it a tedious splatterfest if you’re familiar with the other seven movies. The entire movie feels like a waste of time, with its basic plot and numerous untouched series clichés.

Fans of the “Saw” franchise may be able to get something out of this boring wreck, but most audiences will be left disappointed with the lack of satisfying kills and an abundance of insultingly repetitive rehashes of old material.

Goodwill brings denim drive to Altria Theater

MADELINE WHEELER
Contributing Writer

The first floor of the Altria Theater transformed into any vintage-shopper's dreamland when Goodwill brought a truckload of items to the historic Laurel Street venue open only to VCU students to shop Oct. 26.

Items included denim, electronics and fall accessories including boots, scarves and jewelry. The denim was collected through a competitive denim drive at different schools within the Chesterfield County School System.

"We wanted to say thank you in a really cool way," said Martha Murdock, the Director of Retail Operations at Goodwill for the greater Richmond Area. "We asked what could we with all this denim, who could use it? College students."

Murdock, along with a team of several people, organized the event.

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“We wanna get people working and not just working but keeping the job and continuing to build on their skills to better themselves”

Martha Murdock

Director of Goodwill Retail Operations

"The school donated, now the college is buying and we can put all the money we earn toward giving people jobs," Murdock said. "We want to get people working and not just working but keeping the job and continuing to build on their skills to better themselves."

The event was taxless and proceeds from the event go back to funding Goodwill's mission based programs and job training.

The pop-up was the first by Goodwill in conjunction with VCU. The management of Altria Theater already offered up the space for a potential return of the pop-up next year, an idea Murdock is open to.

"We have to go back and post-mortem everything we do because we are so conscious about how we spend money because we want it to go mostly towards our missions," Murdock said. "We've already made a list of everything we could do better."

VCU freshman Piper Lynch attended the event right as they were opening the doors.

"[Not having a car on campus] can make one a little antsy about wanting to get off campus, sometimes it feels like I'm living in a bubble," Lynch said. "I'm so limited in my places to go shopping. The denim sale was definitely convenient, I think it appeals to a large number of college students looking for cheap clothes that they can't drive out to buy."

Trans activist Dean Spade speaks at VCU

BY EMILEY BAGALAWIS
Contributing Writer

Dean Spade, a well-known transgender rights activist and writer spoke at the Siegel Center Thursday night. Around 300 people attended the talk dedicated to understanding how politics and criminal punishment reform affects the transgender community and what mainstreaming, the inclusion of the transgender community into more popular, everyday culture, means for transgender people.

Spade teaches several courses including Administrative Law, Poverty Law and Law and Social Movements at Seattle University School of Law. In the past, he taught a variety of classes focused on sexual orientation, gender identity law and social movements. In 2002, he founded the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, a non-profit law collective that provides legal services to low income and minority transgender, intersex and gender non-conforming people.

"There's a greater visibility of trans people and new greater visibility of critiques of criminal justice systems," Spade said.

Spade talked about how backlash due to increased visibility and mainstreaming can have a negative impact on the trans community. He audience to think about the costs and benefits of increased visibility on the national platform and how it will impact his community.

Spade referenced the recent de-

bate that transgender people should have their own prisons in order to address the abuse they face within existing prison systems. The intent, Spade said, is to ensure there is fairness within the judicial system but it is possible it will be used to systematically attack the already marginalized community.

He showed a picture of a cartoon his friend drew, depicting a group of board members wanting to build a prison just for trans people with trans people across from them as an example of the negativity of mainstreaming.

"Should they build special prisons for trans people?" Spade asked when referencing a cartoon depicting a group of corporate giants using this proposed jail system to profit off filling them with transgender people.

Spade brought up Caitlyn Jenner as a well-known example of transgender mainstreaming in popular culture to address why more exposure doesn't always equate something is better.

"We're supposed to think 'Right that's good. don't we want to be visible?'" Spade said. "I think it's important for us to be cautious and thoughtful about that. If you [are like Caitlyn Jenner] and look like the image of white, femininity and you're super rich and conservative, we [society] might be able to tolerate you."

Spade also pointed out historically before there was legal change to benefit a group, there is usually



Transgender academic and activist, Dean Spade, spoke at VCU on Thursday Oct. 26.

backlash towards a community. There is an amplification of political friction and social distrust that stirs up and actually makes life dangerous for those who are most vulnerable. The extreme focus on mainstreaming is exposing the transgender community to a similar animosity without clear positive results.

"You get reform proposals that don't help you," Spade said. "Everything's still bad, and then it gets worse."

To help solve the problems facing the trans community, like disproportionate assault, poverty, homelessness and homicide, Spade advocates for the concept of mutual aid. Mutual aid is a voluntary reciprocal exchange of resources and services for mutual benefit.

"After the election, people ask me 'what should I do?'" Spade said. "My fantasy would be that we all would engage a mutual aid project."

Aria, an attendee at the audience, is a transgender woman and is part of several mutual aid projects

in Richmond. "He argued something that I've been coming to realize within the last few months anyway," Aria said.

“

You get reform proposals that don't helo you. Everything's still bad, and then it gets worse.

Dean Spade

Transgender Activist

"Hearing it articulated helped me understand that true benefits for

the marginalized can't come within the system."

When talking about mainstreaming transgender politics, Aria said it's something that can be good, but not if it's coming without material benefits for heavily marginalized to uplift and support them.

During the talk, Spade said if an issue has both socially and financially elite support, then it's probably declaring false victories in reformations which is why mutual aid is needed.

Another one of the attendees was Nadia Neman and her classmates who heard about the talk though her queer literature class at the University of Richmond.

"We all just have a really huge interest in making the world safer for queer people," Neman said. "I'm here just to learn more and do good afterward."

TEDxRVA event gives platform to refugee's voices

SIONA PETEROUS
Spectrum Editor

A steady stream of nearly 100 people filited into Impact Maker's high vaulted, iron and brick mortar office space on the evening of Oct. 26 to attend TEDxRVA salon on addressing the process of resettlement for refugees who come to Richmond.

These events are called salons in order to communicate ideas of casual conversation which happen in people's private spaces. The intent is localize broad topics and making them relatable to the Richmond area. Similarly, Thursday's event, "Resettlement in Richmond," wanted to localize a conversation on migration that is global in every sense.

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, as of 2016 there are 65.6 million forcibly displaced peoples, 22.5 million of that number are refugees. Of that number, only 183,900 refugees have been granted asylum and have resettled in other countries.

The UNHCR has declared that the world is in the midst of the largest migrations in world history. The number seems to suggest the swell of displaced peoples will continue to rise and the divisive political tensions along with it which raises an important questions for communities throughout the globe: what does refugee resettlement look like and how is it achieved?

The event was hosted at Impact Makers, a management consult company where 100 percent of all net profits are sent back to the community via donations and other activities the company hosts. This "giving back" business model falls in line with the theme of the night.

"I had been wanting to host this evening since January," said TEDxRVA Community Lead, Patricia Bradby. "I started to watch multiple videos because there are so many videos on this topic that have been done at TED talks but I quickly realized that immigration and refugee issues are not one and the same and needed to be separated in discussion."

As with previous salons, Resettling in RVA featured a video of a presentation done at the national, more well known TEDx event. The video, titled, "Don't feel sorry for refugees - believe in them," was told by Luma Mufleh -- a resettled Jordanian refugee who's moved to America fleeing persecution for her sexual orientation.

Mufleh recalls how even though she lived so close to massive refugee populations in Jordan she never in-

teracted with them until forced to. Though financially privileged, Mufleh was still forced to flee.

She became an active voice in advocating for refugee resettlement after she started to coach soccer for local refugee children in America and realized they fared better when they received support from her and other institutions rather than them just receiving pity. Mufleh said she wants to challenge the myth that refugees are seeking handouts from people and argues that everyone wants to be an active member of society but they have to be given a chance to do so.

"We [America] resettle less than one percent of the world refugees," Mufleh said in the video. "We have seen advances in every aspect of our lives, except our humanity."

For Bradby, who watched hours of TEDx videos to find the right out to the fit the message of the salon, these were the words that hit her the most.

Bradby said that the main goal TEDxRVA wanted to achieve was empowering the voices of refugees by allowing them to speak for themselves. Furthermore, Bradby said they wanted to push back against both negative dehumanizing stereotypes used disparage refugees and other migrants and also wanted to challenge the narrative that people should help these groups of people with pity. Bradby hoped Resettlement in RVA would ultimately urge people to help refugees and migrants by actively listening to them and reaching out with what they said they need.

"If anything, communities should be giving people a hands up, not just a hands down," Bradby said. "We wanted to work within the community to see what that looks like and how it's being done."

Following the video, attendees were randomly assigned into several groups where they discussed how the video impacted their understanding of displacement. The groups were led by a small group facilitator who helped moderate the discussions.

"We send a list of questions for the facilitators to ask because while they may know a lot, they aren't trained to do public speaking so the questions are a guiding point," Bradby said, "But we know people may just want a space to discuss their own perspectives and ask their own questions so the break out sessions allow that."

Seyoum Berhe, the State Refugee Coordinator at Virginia Department of Social Services, was present in one the groups and utilized his own experience as a former refugee and his extensive

academic and governmental experience in refugee work to address various questions.

"Fear is big factor in why people don't take actions," Berhe said. "They just fear the unknown. I've had many homes in my life and no matter where, I always find fear from people, it doesn't always make sense."

“

Every 60 minutes about 20 people are displaced from their homes so about 40 people will be displaced just in the time that we're here

Stepehn Allen

Site manager at the IRC Ricmond

Berhe's comment led into a discussion of what home means to themselves and what they believe home is for other people.

"It's really having a place you are comfortable in, just a space you can be you and not worry about other factors making it harder for you to live" one woman said. "But we live in a society where we are scared to

interact with people, so how can anyone else feel home?

The event transitioned into a Q&A round featuring the testimonies from three resettled refugees residing in Richmond who are originally from Afghanistan, Iraq and Rwanda. They each described the specific reasons as to why they sought asylum, how the process was achieved and the shaky territory of navigating their new communities.

Due to privacy concerns their names will remain anonymous, as will the specific details of their arrival.

"I was shocked at how quiet Richmond is," said one speaker who came to America nine years ago, "I grew up in hustle and crowded cities but here it's just quiet -- it's nice and different."

This speaker spent part of their life traveling and earned their Bachelor's degree in English before forcibly leaving their home country. They hopes to pursue a masters in the near future. Despite their academic and professional background, finding employment in the states was difficult.

"The hardest part was finding employment " another speaker said echoing their experience. "You don't get much to get started off with, your expected to have a job quickly, but no one will hire you because they don't trust the experience you had previously in another country."

Each of the speakers described the difficulty in navigating abuse they may face during their attempts to find employment. For each of them these difficulties were only exacerbated by complicated visa



ILLUSTRATION BY JACQUE CHANDLER



opinions

Quote of the week

“While fortunately Puerto Rico has finally gotten some of the aid it needs, the question remains as to why it didn’t get there sooner.” — Marlon McKay

What Puerto Rico says about the American government



MARLON MCKAY
Contributing Writer

There are an estimated 48 deaths after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, but a recent investigation by Vox states the death toll could actually be over 400, and those numbers are still growing with the lack of resources and clean water.

CNN reported a month after the incident 3.4 million citizens are still without power and clean water. They’ve also reported recently how many citizens are becoming ill by a waterborne bacteria, leptospirosis.

While fortunately Puerto Rico

has finally gotten some of the aid it needs, the question remains as to why it didn’t get there sooner. After Houston was hit by Hurricane Harvey, the Texas Tribune reported the Federal Emergency Management Agency gave more than \$360 million in individual assistance and another \$181 million for public assistance.

CNNC reported the government expedited recovery resources to Texas the Monday after Harvey. Yet, for how fast it took our government to help Houston, Puerto Rico’s authorization for reconstruction was still not finalized by mid-October, according to Vox.

To our government, Puerto Rico was not seen as a priority compared to the others. This is a perfect example of how often our country will look over and cheat a minority population out of aid in favor of the White population.

Puerto Rico isn’t the only example of this. Flint, Michigan, a predominantly Black community, has been plagued with a tainted water supply since 2014, and has taken years for any form of justice to be administered to its people. Even when there is no crisis, minority communities get less federal funding for necessities like education. It’s only when catastrophes happen

we begin to see these oversights.

The criticism President Donald Trump has given the leaders of Puerto Rico isn’t easing the tensions, tweeting, “...Such poor leadership ability by the Mayor of San Juan, and others in Puerto Rico, who are not able to get their workers to help.”

Trump even said Puerto Rico was “totally destroyed.” To condemn their leadership skills in this time of panic is an insult seeing how their hands are tied. There was no such criticism, however, when Houston was in a similar form of distress. They weren’t told they needed to help themselves.

It’s not that Houston didn’t need the aid after Harvey, they did and still do need plenty of help to recover fully. It’s the fact that one area cannot be favored over the other. Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States and their safety and rehabilitation should be one of our top priorities as a nation that is supposed to represent all of its people.

Every day, that concept is challenged by how the United States government has responded to this catastrophe. With Trump now hinting at the removal of FEMA and military aid while Puerto Rico is still in shambles unfortunately

reveals how low their needs matter.

Communities hit by disasters cannot afford to be discriminated against; equal aid and opportunity need to be sent out to everyone who needs it. It’s sad the only times this injustice is seen is on such a large scale, when it happens right under our noses every day.

Let the aid in Puerto Rico be the start of a new era in the United States, where we don’t disregard the needs of the minority when they need it the most. For a country that claims to care about the lives and welfare of its people, we should start to live up to it.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

VCU basketball and the “rebuilding” phase

To the Editor:

The men’s basketball program at VCU had an interesting offseason. Plenty of people are labeling this year to be a “rebuild year,” which gives sports fans tons of grief.

There’s no timetable when it comes to a rebuilding phase. The season may start out rough with miscommunications, teammate miscues and conflicting ideas, however, this rebuild shouldn’t be a major concern to fans at the beginning of the season.

First, there was the surprising departure of head coach Will Wade after his second year as coach for the program to leave for Louisiana State University. Then, there was the departure of eight of the then 13 man roster because five of them graduated and three transferred to different programs.

It was unknown what was going to happen to the program that has seven consecutive appearances in the NCAA Men’s Division I Basketball Tournament. It seemed that the program would be going through a massive rebuild phase for a while, however, that may not be the case.

Shortly after the departure of Will Wade, VCU chose to bring in Mike Rhoades from Rice University as head coach for the Rams. This addition would spark a sign that the program would not go through a massive overhaul after all. Prior to Rhoades’ time as head coach of the basketball program at Rice University in Houston, Texas, he was an associate head coach for the Rams under then head coach Shaka Smart from 2009-2014. While coaching at Rice University, he would help the program earn their first 20 win season in more than a decade.

The coaching staff this year has more of a connection than it may

appear to the eye of the average fan.

Joey Rodriguez, former point guard for VCU (2007-2011), is now the Director of Player Development for his alma mater. Rodriguez during his career helped VCU notch two NCAA tournament appearances (2009, 2011). Not only were Rodriguez and Rhoades together at VCU, but also at Rice. Rodriguez was video coordinator for the Owls under Rhodes during their 2016-2017 season. As a result, the Owls earned their first 20 win season in more than a decade.

Another returning face for the Rams would be associate head coach Jeremy Ballard, who was another product of the Shaka Smart coaching tree. During his first stint with VCU, he helped the program appear in three straight NCAA Tournaments and the Rams were 79-28 during that span. Prior to his current tenure as associate head coach, he was assistant head coach at Illinois State and University of Pittsburgh.

First year Director of Operations Jimmy Martelli, first year assistant coach J.D. Byers and first year assistant coach, Brent Scott were all with Coach Rhodes before, either at Randolph-Macon College or Rice University.

The remaining players that have been with VCU longer than two years are point guard Jonathan Williams and power forward Justin Tillman. The onus of leadership will be put on these two shoulders this year. With the Rams having a plethora of new players, it’s up to Williams and Tillman to instill the “Havoc” mentality that the VCU players are known for on the court.

Redshirt-senior, Khristian Lane can be expected to provide wisdom as a veteran for the younger players on the team. Though this is his first year on the team, he has four years of college playing ex-

“It won’t be a shock if the Rams play the way fans are accustomed to seeing deep into the season.”

Jacob Sexton



perience with three at Longwood and one at Drexel University. Lane is a Richmond native, so he grew up seeing the program rise to the status it is today.

At the moment, it appears the future leaders of this program after these three seniors leave the program will be forward De’Riante Jenkins and guard Malik Crowfield because of their tenure with

the team.

A “rebuilding year” or “rebuilding phase” is a term that sports fans worry about all the time. There’s no real time table for when a rebuild year or a rebuild period is officially over. Most fans consider a rebuild phase to be over when there is constant winning.

The question for the fans is: When will VCU fans consider

the rebuild phase over? Will it be when the team goes on a big winning streak or will it be when the team strives in the Atlantic 10 tournament and advance to the NCAA tournament?

Growing pains are expected for the team and that’s okay, but fans should not be worried about these growing pains. This team’s coaching staff has a strong connection

and experience with each other, including young talented players that are willing to learn. Though the Rams may not start the season the way fans are expecting to see, it won’t be a shock if the Rams play the way fans are accustomed to seeing deep into the season.

—Jacob Sexton



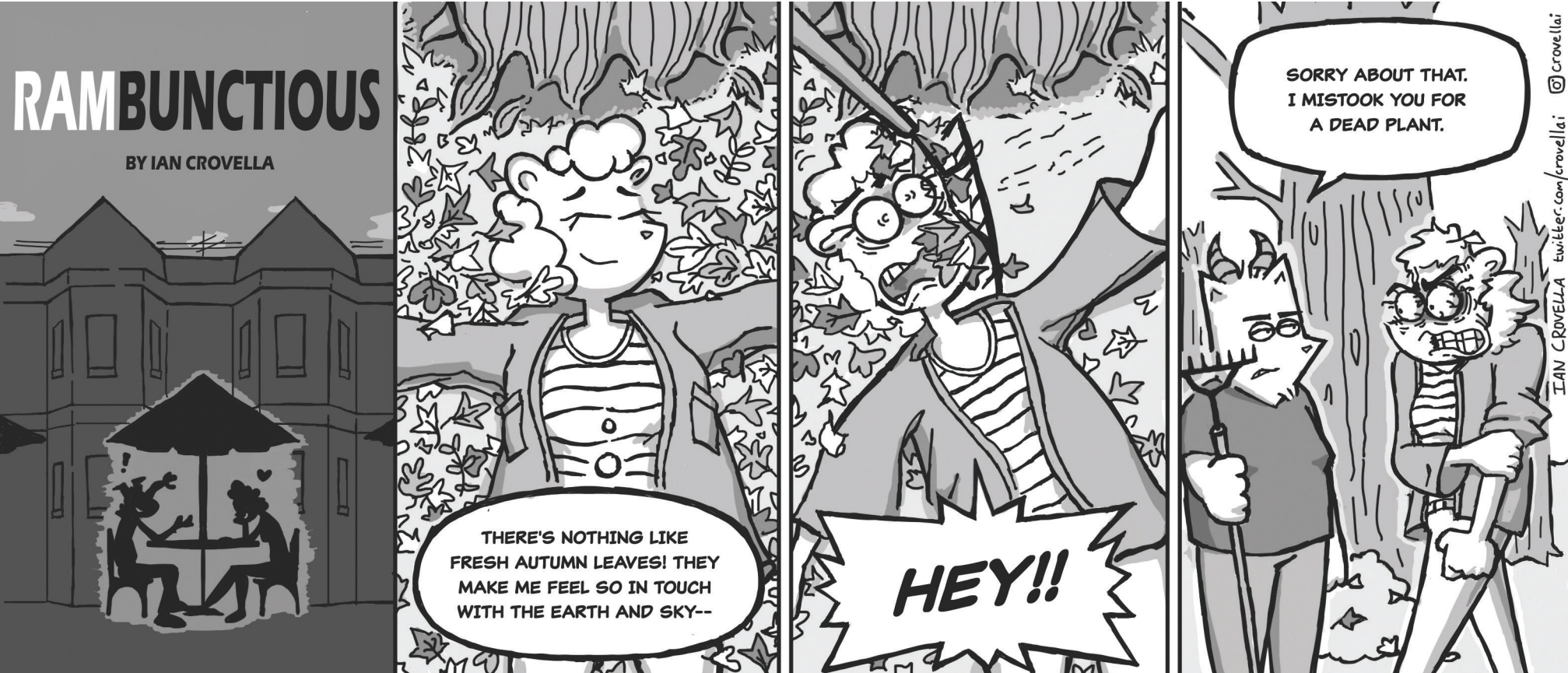
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ABOUT THE CT

The Commonwealth Times is the award-winning independent student newspaper at VCU, since 1969. The CT staff maintains all editorial and operations discretion. There is absolutely no prior review by the public, university or VCU Student Media Center administration or staff. The Executive Editor writes and manages the Operations Budget.

The CT's Operations Budget is a reflection of independent advertising revenue accumulated throughout the previous academic year(s). Operations expenses include salaries, phone and internet, postage, professional memberships, award submissions and banquets, FOIA requests, programming costs and travel. Each spring, the CT staff elects the next year's Executive and Managing Editors, who then hire the remaining staff.

ADD YOUR VOICE

The opinion pages of The CT are a forum open to the public. Contributions are welcome by email to Katie Bashista, by mail or in-person at 817 W. Broad St., Richmond, Va. 23220. Opinions expressed are those of individual columnists and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Commonwealth Times. Unsigned editorials represent the collective opinion of The CT staff.

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