

# UNIVERSITY OF CHARLESTON EAGLE AWARDS 2024

*By: Domenica Cruz*

The University of Charleston Eagles Awards will be held on April 18 in Rigglesman Hall Auditorium. Hosted by the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), this annual awards ceremony is one of the most anticipated events of the year for athletes, coaches, and staff.

The awards ceremony starts at 6:00 p.m. and will last until 10:00 p.m. Attendees will have the opportunity to walk the red carpet, take pictures, and then enter the auditorium for the awards presentation.

Athletes are already counting down the days until they can dress up and celebrate their achievements on the red carpet.

"The Eagles Awards last year was truly inspiring," said Timber Huysmans. "Seeing my teammates and coaches recognized for their dedication was unforgettable. I can't wait for this year's celebration."

For these athletes, the Eagles Awards is more than a fancy ceremony. It's an experience where dedication and hard work is recognized.

"Walking on the red carpet and being surrounded by my friends in their finest outfits was incredible," said Victor del Pozo, a member of the men's golf team. "It's a night where our hard work on and off the field is celebrated with style."

The awards are voted on by the athletes. Each athlete receives an email with a survey, allowing them to cast their votes and give recognition to their peers.

Winning an award at the Eagles Awards is an exceptional feeling and a dream come true for many. The excitement is building up as athletes wonder who will walk away with Most Improved Athlete Award? Who will be crowned as Coach of the Year?



"I can't wait to see who will take home the awards this year," said Tessler Aguilar, "It's always exciting to see my teammates and friends being recognized for their hard work. We're all cheering for each other."

However, the Eagle Awards is not just about the athletes. It is also about celebrating the staff and coaches who work tirelessly every day.

"Their hard work often goes unnoticed, and the Eagles Awards is a chance to shine the spotlight on their contributions," said Roberto Agrizzi.

Get ready to celebrate athletic excellence and recognition at the University of Charleston Eagles Awards 2024!

"This year's Eagles Awards is going to be bigger and better. We're excited to celebrate the incredible achievements of all student-athletes and create more lasting memories," Alejandro Salgado said.

2022 Awards:

Community Service Awards – Baseball  
Scholar Team of the Year – Women's Golf  
Female Scholar of the Year – Emma Groe, Softball  
Male Scholar of the Year – Mitch Hoffman, Men's Golf  
Faculty of the Year – Nicky Bell, FAR & Health Promotion Program Director, Assistant Professor  
Performance of the Year – Elise Leveel, Women's Cross Country  
Comeback Player of the Year – Dakota Reeves, Women's Basketball  
Assistant Coach of the Year – Bubby Johnson, Women's Basketball  
Coach of the Year – Tianni Kelly, Women's Basketball  
Female Freshman Athlete of the Year – Elise Leveel, Women's Cross Country  
Male Freshman Athlete of the Year – Thomas Ashworth, Football  
Female Athletes of the Year – Kaylee Hensley, Women's Soccer and Markyia McCormick, Women's Basketball  
Male Athlete of the Year – Lamont McManus, Men's Basketball  
Upset of the Year – Women's Basketball vs. Glenville State in MEC Championship  
Team of the Year – Women's Basketball

# The Herndon Fellowship:

## *West Virginia Excellence*

BY: HARRISON SKAGGS

The Judith A. Herndon Fellowship is one of the most prestigious internships available to college students. The program is named after Judith Herndon, a prolific state legislator and state Senator from 1974-1980. This internship allows many opportunities for students who aspire to have a career in public policy and law.

Each year, up to 10 undergraduate students enrolled in a college or university in the state of West Virginia are selected to participate in the 60-day congressional session as Herndon Fellows. These Fellows are then assigned to assist a sole legislator from either the Senate or the House of Delegates.

However, there are prerequisites for a student to become a Herndon Fellow. A potential Fellow must fill out an application and then submit it to their school's legislative contact. For the University of Charleston, this is Dr. Kara Fisher. Additionally, an applicant must have completed 60 undergraduate hours, and at least one of those courses must be in political science or an extensive public affairs experience. A potential Herndon Fellow must also be a full-time undergraduate student of a public or private institution of higher learning in West Virginia. Lastly, the applicant must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

During the experience, the Fellows are required to perform research and various staff functions centered around the government department they are assigned. Among other job-related responsibilities, the interns are introduced to and develop an understanding of the politics of legislation, legislative research, bill drafting, the role and function of committees and the executive-legislative liaison.

In previous congressional sessions, the University of Charleston has had several students become Herndon Fellows. For the 2022 congressional session, Political Science and Multidisciplinary Studies student, Ryan McFarland, was selected to become a Herndon Fellow and was assigned to the Secretary of State's department. In the 2024 congressional session, two UC students were accepted into the Herndon Fellowship: Tim Wise and Justin Webster. Despite applying together, they were assigned to different departments in the legislature.

"The process of applying for the Judith A. Herndon Fellowship is just like any traditional process when it comes to signing up for a prestigious program. You had to submit a resume that showcased your grades, extracurricular activities, work experience, etc..." said Webster, "Amazing is a severe understatement when describing what each day was like when working at the Capitol."

The Fellow spared no expense when giving his account on the experience. His day-to-day activities included copying papers, taking an occasional phone call, making coffee for those who did the work. However, as time progressed, Justin went on to become speechwriter for the Finance Chairman.

Working as a Herndon Fellow comes with immense benefits. For instance, Webster has become incredibly optimistic about his future in the field of law.

"The networking value of working at the Capitol is unbelievable. I made very close connections and bonds with all 34 Senators of the WV Senate, staff, lobbyists, and even powerful constituents whom I just happened to encounter unexpectedly," said Webster.

"I've become more familiar with Microsoft applications and how to run similar computer programs, I've learned about proper note taking and reporting on meetings, how to collaborate and cooperate with others, coordinating schedules and adapting when things change, and how to network with other people," said Tim Wise, "It was very surreal being able to walk the halls of the Capitol on a daily basis, to see the Senators as regular people just like us, meet various lobbyists and interest groups, and get a better understanding of how the legislative process works and the ripples effects it has on the public."

## *TWO VIEWS TUESDAY*

### *AN INSIGHT INTO K-12 EDUCATION IN WEST VIRGINIA*

*By: Rachel Osborne*



On February 13, 2024, the University of Charleston kicked off its Two Views Tuesdays events as part of the Inspiring Innovation Speaker Series. Taking place at the University of Charleston Downtown Innovation Hub, the Two Views Tuesdays events feature a discussion, conducted by a moderator, between two individuals who specialize in the subject matter, followed by happy hour networking.

This event, moderated by Dr. Beth Wolfe, the Executive Vice President of Enrollment Management at UC, explored the topic of K-12 education in West Virginia through two experienced individuals in the field: Doug Cipoletti, Executive Director of West Virginia Virtual Academy (WVVA), and Amon Gillam, Assistant Superintendent of Middle Schools and Alternative Programs for Kanawha County Schools.

Cipoletti, with over a decade of experience working at the West Virginia Department of Education, is the founding Head of School at the WVVA and currently leads modern educational initiatives. WVVA is one of two state-wide virtual academies. Since the legislature passed legislation to allow charter schools in 2019, there has been an increase in virtual learning.

When discussing virtual education and its popularity, Cipoletti said, “We have 1,270 students. We are in our second year. There is clearly a desire for virtual education. Last year we served K through 10, this year we added 11th grade, and we are adding seniors next year.” Cipoletti explained its mission is for young students: “Our intent is to help kids graduate high school with credentials to be employed or to go onto community college or even college,” he said.

While Cipoletti provides an insight into the virtual world of education, Gillam is on the front line working at the middle school level. In speaking about virtual education from his point of view, Gillam talks about the effects of the global pandemic on the changing education system.

“I think Covid taught us that a lot of students, especially from Kanawha County, didn’t necessarily have the tools they needed to be successful at home and a lot of kids did need that in-person instruction. But in the same breath, I will say that some kids were not thriving in the in-person setting so it did open up an avenue,” said Gillam.

Gillam possesses ten years of experience working as a middle school principal and two years as a principal mentor for new middle school administrators across West Virginia. He is an advocate for developing student success, forming relationships with parents, and growing successful and effective schools.

In-person or virtual, Cipoletti and Gillam have a shared interest in providing the best education for the younger generation in West Virginia.

Gillam said, “Every child is different, all their needs are different so what we really focus on is trying to make sure we give the kids what they need so that they can be successful in life.”

The Two Views Tuesdays series continues on September 10 and November 12, 2024.

As part of the Inspiring Innovation Speaker Series, the University of Charleston is also hosting its Fresh Start Breakfast events, at which an expert gives a presentation on his or her field of work. The next event is on May 14, 2024, 8-9:30 a.m., and will take place at the UC Downtown Innovation Hub.



# River Alley

## BOWLING ALLEY



By: Parker Young

Just a few miles outside of Charleston, in St. Albans, sits the newly renovated River Alley bowling alley. For years, the bowling alley was called Venture Lanes, but the company closed its doors in 2019. It was renovated and reopened as River Alley in 2022. Since then, they have re-introduced bowling to the town of St. Albans with their leagues, glow-in-the-dark bowling, good food, and special themed days.

One of the main draws for the bowling crowd is the weekly leagues that they offer at River Alley. In leagues, you bowl competitively as a team in sets of three games. Each game counts towards your record. The team with the best win-loss record is declared the winners of the league. They give out patches, ribbons, and cash prizes for winning as well as for categories like highest game, highest average, and most improved. They offer a Mixed Trio League, Senior Leagues, and a Doubles Team League. Anybody can join the leagues and have a good time with your friends, family, or you can be placed with someone and make new friends.



Something the people of St. Albans look forward to are the themed days at the bowling alley. Every year they have special days of bowling that are based on major holidays. One of these days is their Fright Bowl and Halloween Boo Bash events they host every Halloween weekend. They have a costume contest, give out prizes to the best costume in each category, and provide games, food and drink specials. They even post the best costumes on their social media pages. Another event that they hold is their New Year's Eve event where they leave the bowling alley open until 1:00 a.m. so that you can watch the ball drop and celebrate the new year.

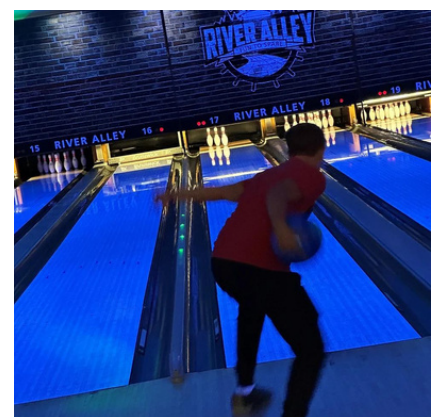
During normal public bowling hours, there are many things to enjoy. They have a mini restaurant and bar where you can watch your favorite team play and enjoy their wide range of hand-made food and drink options. During the evening, they switch to cosmic bowling where they turn on a glowing black light that illuminates the balls and the lanes. It's all accompanied with laser lights and loud music that gives a family friendly rave experience. River Alley charges by how many hours you bowl. One hour is \$30 and two is \$60.

If you have a big company gathering or a birthday coming up, you can schedule parties or rent out the bowling alley for your group to enjoy the special occasion. They have several packages ranging from simple birthdays parties to 250-person full alley company parties.



"My experience at River Alley was pretty great. The place was well kept, the staff was lovely, and the bowling was super fun. Plus, it was a nice bonus seeing all of my coworkers outside the workplace." said Alex Christian about a recent business party.

River Alley has built a reputation as an inclusive family-friendly business. It gives the nostalgic feeling of the old Venture Lanes while also giving something unique for the new generations to enjoy for years to come.



# UC AND AI: ACADEMIC REVOLUTION OR RUIN?



**By: Elijah Newell**

The University of Charleston began implementing policies on artificial intelligence nearly two years ago, and several professors have offered insight into its impact on the classroom.

According to Associate Provost of Academic Affairs, Beth Pauley, UC began developing a strategy to address AI in November 2022, when Chat GPT first came on the scene. DMDS professor, Terry Floyd, said that faculty recognized a need for a direct response to AI whenever student works cited pages increasingly included specific kinds of plagiarism.

"Faculty noticed an increase of work submitted for different assignments that could be considered plagiarized. For example, the work cited page would include articles, books, eBooks, or other sources that did not exist. AI created what is known as "Hallucination," which is when AI generates an output that is not accurate or real," Floyd said.

In response to this problem, UC Provost, Kim Spiezio, created the UC AI Committee. This Committee comprises the Provost and Associate Provost, a faculty member from each of UC's five schools of learning, and one Schoenbaum Library representative. Pauley says that the AI Committee aims to educate the faculty and students on using AI effectively and ethically. The Committee determined that the uncredited use of AI in student assignments would be considered plagiarism. This rule is now explicitly spelled out in UC syllabi, but Pauley noted that this decision is consistent with UC's academic integrity policy. Floyd said that the AI Committee continues to work diligently on AI policy and provides training to faculty and administrators on the ethical use of the technology.

Making effective policy regarding AI is good on the administrative level, but how has AI specifically affected teachers' experiences in the classroom?

Floyd said that he has had issues with some students using AI to write papers, but his experience has been positive for the most part. He talked about several different AI apps that can help students practice presentations, speeches, and job interviews, giving specific feedback to students on how they can improve. Floyd also said that he uses AI to create briefs for students to understand their assignments in his DMDS classes.

"Like any tool, we must understand and learn how to use it. We should not rely on it to do the work for us," Floyd said.

Computer Science Professor Vincent Smith provided similar feedback on how AI has affected his classes.

"I know that some classes have felt a negative impact on AI, but I embrace it in my classes. For me, it is a tool that students have access to and will have access to in their future careers," Smith said.

Smith talked about the various benefits AI has provided his class. He talked about how much time AI helped both him and his students save in computer science classes, with students using AI to find and correct errors in their code and professors having the opportunity to use AI to quickly develop lesson plans or develop ideas for topics to instruct on. Smith compared the new AI tools to technological advancements such as calculators and early AI systems like Grammarly and Microsoft Word suggestions.

Other professors' experience with AI in the classroom has not been so positive. English professor Catherine Wilbur talked about how AI is widely misused throughout the Humanities classes.

"They're using it more for little assignments than bigger assignments, which is weird . . . Very few students are using it for entire essay assignments. Now, they may use it in pieces, but a lot more students are using it for smaller assignments, versus those larger pieces. I'm seeing a lot in that respect," Wilbur said.

Psychology professor Jason Newsome also talked about the adverse effects that AI has had on the psychology classes he teaches.

"Prior to the launch of these systems, you'd usually have either one or two academic integrity violations in a semester, and frankly those were usually related to some kind of online course. But I would have one or two per semester, and that's over four courses. Now, it's not uncommon for me to have at least one in every course, sometimes more than one. I've had a couple in one course already this semester," Newsome said.

Newsome described how he believes the problem of misusing AI is another aspect of what he described as a decline in critical thinking over the past several years in academia. He talked about how, since the advent of the internet, it has become easier to access information online. With AI, it has become increasingly easy to compile that information. Newsome said that he believes AI is only contributing to the trend of lacking critical thinking skills among people since the dawn of the internet.

Despite the problem that AI represents to classroom integrity, Floyd said its use in the classroom is inevitable.

"AI is here to stay. We must learn how to use the tools properly and not rely on it to complete the work. For me, AI will continue to influence how we teach and learn. We must embrace change with an open mind and look for the benefits."

# Coach Bias: A Legacy of Excellence

By: **Domenica Cruz**



Coach Bias has only been associated with success at the University of Charleston. With an impressive collection of the Coach of the Year award in his hands, including an outstanding 30 wins. Coach Bias is a recognized track and field and cross-country coach, and he is not just recognized for the victories but for the impact he leaves on his athlete's lives.

Coach Bias is well-known for being dedicated and helpful, and his athletes agree with that.

"Coach Bias isn't just about the wins. He genuinely cares about each one of us. He pushes us to be our best, not just as athletes, but as people too," said Timber Huysmans.

During a recent interview, Coach Bias talked about his many achievements. He has won six times in a row for being the best coach for the men's cross-country team and four times in a row for the women's team. He has also coached the women's track and field team to six consecutive victories and the men's team to an impressive 10 to 11 winning streaks.

When asked what helped him to succeed, Coach Bias gives credit to his team, including his athletes and coaching staff. He says he's been lucky to work with very talented athletes who have worked hard, and this makes him look good. He also gives credit to his assistant coaches, who deserve a lot of recognition.

"It's not just about me; it's about the whole team effort," said Coach Bias.

Coach Bias has a lot of different ways to find new athletes. He looks for people from all around the world, so his team is made up of people from different countries.

"Our team is very diverse, and that's by design," Coach Bias said, "We recruit internationally because we want athletes who are not just exceptional on the track, but who also bring unique perspectives and experiences to our program."

It's tough to keep performing at a high level every year, but Coach Bias thinks that finding the right athletes is key.

"Success builds on success," he said. "When people see our team doing well, they want to be part of that success. It's a cycle that keeps us motivated to continue performing at our best."

Coach Bias felt proud, grateful, and a bit stressed when he received the Coach of the Year award.

"Coaching is very rewarding," he said, "Seeing athletes grow and develop, not just as competitors but as individuals, is the most fulfilling part of my job." However, he also admits that the pressure to maintain success can be overwhelming.

"It's why I have great hair," he jokes, "But in the end, it's all worth it to see our athletes succeed."

Dealing with stress is all about finding balance, and Coach Bias knows that taking time for himself is crucial.

"As a coach, you have to find something outside of coaching to recharge," he said, "For me, it's distance running. Every morning, I make sure to take time for myself to clear my mind and stay balanced."

Coach Bias also provided some advice for people who want to become coaches:

"Balance is key. Take time for yourself, care for your athletes, and remember why you got into coaching in the first place. It's about helping young people succeed, both on and off the track.

Coach Bias's love for coaching and commitment to his athletes will continue to shape the future of track and field for many years.

"That's what I hope my legacy will be. That I cared for my athletes, helped them rise to the occasion, and prepared them for life beyond the track," he said.

# “A New Generation of Leadership:” Moore Capito Describes His Run for WV Governor

By: Elijah Newell

Many high-profile candidates are running to win the Republican nomination for Governor of West Virginia in the 2024 election cycle. WV Secretary of State Mac Warner, WV Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, and Chris Miller, operator of Dutch Miller Auto Group, are all well-known public figures battling to win a competitive primary. Other candidates, like Kevin Christian, Mitch Roberts, and Moore Capito, are also making a name for themselves in this contest.

Capito, 41, and a former delegate in the West Virginia House of Delegates, is a member of a family with a long history in WV politics. His mother, Shelley Moore Capito, is currently a US Senator for WV, his grandfather, Arch A. Moore Jr, served as governor of the state, and his cousin Riley Moore is the current WV State Treasurer. Capito said his family’s extensive political connections taught him to value public service.

“I always have learned that public service is important, and at the end of the day, it’s all about helping people,” Capito said.

Capito said he ran for the House of Delegates in 2016 to get involved in the political system. While in office, he helped to build the first Republican supermajority in the House, which he says helped him realize his effectiveness at uniting people on different issues in the legislature and delivering on important policy in the state.

Capito talked about a few other accomplishments he achieved while in office. He described how he helped pass the biggest income tax cut in the state’s history and helped pass longer sentences for criminals who interfere with law enforcement operations. He authored the bill that banned sanctuary cities in WV, meaning no city can defy border enforcement law. He also worked on legislation in the field of education, providing more opportunities for school choice and helping to pass several pay raises for educators. Capito says these accomplishments earn him his campaign slogan, “The Get-It-Done Conservative.”

“Being the ‘Get-It-Done Conservative’ is the person in the race that has the experience and the knowledge to be able to bring people together, and deliver concrete results that move the needle,” Capito said.

Capito says that public safety will be his primary policy priority as governor. He sees an opportunity for WV to have the safest cities in the country. He believes that providing adequate training and resources to law enforcement and emergency response services and giving life sentences to people involved in fentanyl smuggling and human trafficking will ensure that more young families will feel safe enough to move to and raise their families in WV.



Capito said his second policy priority as governor would be to fix the education system. He believes the best way to improve educational outcomes in the state is to promote vocational, community, and technical colleges across the state, helping build a skilled labor force. Capito said that as governor, he would ensure every child in the state graduates high school and can either join the military, get a vocational skill, or go to college.

Capito also talked about a few other priorities he would work on as governor, such as creating an office of Chief Innovation Officer to give small businesses a direct link to the governor, working to eliminate the personal state income tax, sunset regulations to ensure small businesses aren’t crushed by red tape, and setting up regional offices of the governor throughout the state so that people with issues for the governor don’t have to go Charleston to have the issue addressed.

Capito said he is running for governor to help tell the story of the state he grew up in.

“I’m running for governor because we need somebody to tell our story, a new generation of leadership that looks like the story we want to tell,” Capito said.

# NEW HEAD COACH FOR WOMEN'S SOCCER

By: Rachel Osborne

On March 4, 2024, Sarah Leiby was named as the new head coach for the University of Charleston's women's soccer team. She inherits a successful team from 2023, a season that marked history for the program.

During the 2023 season, the women won the Mountain East Conference regular season title and the MEC Championship for the first time in program history. Their only loss came against Gannon University in the first round of the NCAA tournament, at which time their season came to an end.

Coach Leiby brings an impressive track record as she steps into her new role. After graduating from the University of Vermont with a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science, Leiby began her career in 2016 as an assistant coach at Black Hills State University, SD. From there, she moved to Montana State University, Billings, MT, where she served as an assistant coach from 2017-2019.



Her next move came one month later in March 2019 to Saint Leo University, FL, where she was the associate head coach. Notably, Leiby helped return the team to nationally ranked status for the first time in two years.

In 2021, Leiby was named as an assistant coach at Dartmouth College, NH, guiding several players to post-season recognition at the Ivy League level. During her most recent coaching term, Leiby was the assistant coach at the College of Charleston during the 2023 season.

Leiby brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, and confidence to UC's team with several U.S. Soccer Federation coaching licenses and a motivation to lead a group of young athletes to greatness. After spending her first few weeks with the team, Coach Leiby shares her thoughts on the experience so far.

"The time with the team has been really positive so far, they've been extremely coachable and hardworking. They are ready to take on this new challenge in the fall so things have been good, putting in a lot of good work and it's starting to show now we have been together for three weeks. I'm excited for what's to come in the fall," she said.





# WEST VIRGINIA POLITICS: A MOUNTAIN STATE'S CHANGING GOVERNMENT

By: Harrison Skaggs

2024 brings potential for political change across the Mountain State of West Virginia, where the governmental body and legislative makeup of the state may change drastically in the coming months. UC political science students watch with anticipation from across the river, studying the election as it unfolds before them.

Governor Jim Justice, who won reelection in 2020, is now barred from running for a third consecutive term as governor as per federal law. However, this may not be the conclusion of Justice's political career. Governor Justice has announced his candidacy for Senator Joe Manchin's U.S. Senate seat.

This has set the stage for fierce competition between the two prominent political figureheads for the state of West Virginia. With his position as a moderate Democrat, Manchin has been able to sway crucial votes and critically change the outcomes of voting processes in Congress. Despite Manchin's influence at D.C., some of his constituents may well have lost faith in him, leaving Jim Justice with a solid chance to win the Senate seat.

However, this is not the only political conflict prevalent in West Virginia. With Jim Justice leaving the governorship now that he's reached the term limit, the gubernatorial election may prove to be just as fiery. Six different Republican candidates have announced their bid for the Governor's seat: current WV Secretary of State Mac Warner, Mitch Roberts, current Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, Chris Miller, former West Virginia House of Delegates member Moore Capito, and Kevin Christian.

Despite their difference in intentions, each of them strives for conservative policies that their constituents would approve of. The only confirmed, announced candidate for the Democrat's gubernatorial bid is Steve Williams, who was once mayor of Huntington, WV.

With these political races becoming more tense as we near closer to November, the future of West Virginia's legislative makeup hangs in the balance.

One political science student at UC, Kelton Boblits, expressed his excitement.

"What a year to be able to vote!"

