



# The Patriot



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Francis Marion University's award-winning student newspaper

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## An exploration of an unclear history: FMU stands in solidarity, honors victims

Finn Millians  
Co-Editor

Ushering in a new era of diversity and acceptance at FMU, Erica Johnson Edwards, associate professor of history, and a team of FMU professors, administration and staff are in the process of joining the Universities Studying Slavery (USS) initiative. The goal of such an effort is to allow further exploration of the institution's role in race relations throughout its history within the Pee Dee region.

"We are in the process right now of joining the larger network of the USS," Edwards said. "I was the one who brought this to the administration with some other professors. We need their endorsement because it's a university thing, and we must join as a whole."

Once the university is initiated, Edwards will be the faculty coordinator. To officially join, the USS requires a few paragraphs about the history of the university and the plans under the initiative membership. If the proposal is accepted, there will be an official announcement of the university's acceptance.

The Pee Dee region and FMU contain rich, important history regarding race relations. The impact of the USS would be to preserve that history and create more accessible, factual accounts



PHOTO BY CULLEN DORE

A look at a standing slave cabin on FMU's campus, a new site for research under the new USS initiative.

of the past.

There are ongoing projects within the institution that study this valuable history, and the USS will collaborate and assist these professors, students, and organizations.

"There is already work being done before this," Edwards said. "Like, there is a committee on campus that was formed to start looking at the cabins on campus."

An important project that will be assisted by the initiative and integrated into the curriculum will be an

oral history class and project led by Edwards. The course will be offered as a history elective with an honors classification, but it will be open to all interested.

"We've been doing an oral history project," Edwards said. "How that ties to the cabins is that we interviewed people who used to live in those cabins before the school was founded. Students will have access to those oral histories in the library sometime very soon."

Edwards understands and emphasizes the impor-

tance of the personal accounts of people in the Florence community and areas within the Pee Dee region. These citizens lived through the civil rights movement and the slow integration process in the Florence area.

"The Mt. Zion Rosenwald school was a segregated school for African American children in the 1950's, and there are still some people in the area who went to school there for their elementary education," Edwards said. "A lot of these people are advanced in age, and these sto-

ries will be gone when they pass."

Members of the community are a crucial resource to the initial goals of the membership as they are living history. The oral history presentation will be one physical aspect of the larger mission to spread the historical account of race relations and racialized slavery within the region.

"Our theme for starting out is to try to focus on family and youth," Edwards said. "A lot of times, those stories are missing from history,

and in the spring, we had interviewed individuals—who were teenagers in the civil rights movement—who took part in civil rights activity. People focus on adults and students but forget teenagers."

Another ongoing project under USS is research on the university's cemetery led by archaeology professor Christopher Barton. He and a group of students are researching the on-campus cemetery, searching for the identities of the individuals buried there. The research does not involve excavation or intrusion into the physical site.

"The most important part at the cemetery is to honor the people that were held against their will and who had to deal with the brutality of racialized slavery," Barton said.

His involvement in the USS stems from his deep appreciation for history and a desire to help convey the memory of race relations and racialized slavery within the Pee Dee region to the public. Though their membership will initially force them to focus on FMU's specific effect on racial issues within the area, the university will expand its research to encompass the whole Pee Dee region.

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## FMU hosts honors program annual reception

Julia Fulmer  
Co-Editor

A multitude of FMU Honors students donned collars, ties and dresses in a welcoming reception hosted by President Carter at 6 p.m. on Sept. 8. at the Performing Arts Center (PAC).

The annual event serving as a tone-setter for the months to come has been a part of FMU for numerous years and shows no signs of fading its tradition.

The annual event serves as a way to set the tone for the coming months of academics and allows students and professors alike in FMU Honors to connect. In addition to this, it acts as a platform to discuss pertinent business among the organization such as leadership roles and upcoming classes.

During previous years, President Carter hosted receptions for Honors students at the Wallace house, but due to the surge of COVID-19, it was moved to the PAC to allow for social distancing.

The reception started outdoors, with the strum of an electric guitar reverberating in the background along

with savory appetizers offered to students and faculty alike.

Following the initial time for conversation, the group moved into the main auditorium, where President Carter addressed the students and spoke briefly about the history of the PAC. Shortly after, Jon Tuttle, director of the Honors Program and professor of English, listed the 14 Honors courses to be offered in the spring of 2022, as well as introduced the seven new candidates for Honors Student Advisory Council (HSAC) leadership.

Since taking the reins for the program in 2013, Tuttle said he always enjoys interacting with the students in a different setting than usual.

"It's fantastic," Tuttle said. "It's an opportunity, first of all, for everyone just to exhale and get to know one another and maybe put on a nice shirt. The high concentration of intellectual candlepower under one roof probably generated enough electricity to light the downtown area for two years. Where there are Honors students, there are always great conversations."

Tuttle said he was glad so many students could come to the event and felt it was a productive night overall.

"I hope [the students] were most excited about meeting one another in an atmosphere that was casual and stress-free," Tuttle said. "Also, we got some good business done—the statements from the HSAC candidates, and of course the greetings from Dr. Carter. Students need to get to know him and appreciate what a well-run university this is."

FMU Honors is one of the largest organizations on campus. According to Tuttle, the group has garnered roughly 220 members since its inception in the late 1970s and continues to add new students each semester.

In addition to the two HSAC vice president elects, Kelsey Ioffreda and Camryn Cassetori, was Jacob Ballington, a junior math and finance double major, who was recently voted HSAC president for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Ballington said he was inspired to run for president because of the leadership he saw in other presidents that

came before him.

"When I heard the announcement, I was a bit surprised," Ballington said. "I was up against some really strong candidates. I'm really glad people have faith in me to help run the organization; now, I plan on living up to those expectations. I've got some good events in mind, and hopefully, this is the best year of FMU Honors yet."

Throughout his years at FMU, Ballington said the

Honors program has helped him form a strong support system with his peers, and he looks forward to seeing everyone at the Honors reception each year.

"So many people have interesting projects they are working on, and it's great to hear about them," Ballington said. "To anyone on the fence about joining honors, I'd say, a hundred percent, come join us. Honors people are the best if you need any-

thing from a study buddy to a shoulder to cry on."

The Honors program at FMU includes a variety of courses offered exclusively to participating students as well as student-organized events and outings. Those interested in joining the Honors program can apply at <https://www.fmarion.edu/honors/apply/>.



PHOTO BY ELODI BERG

Honors program poses for picture at the end of annual welcoming event at the PAC.

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*The Patriot* is interested in what you are doing on campus. To increase the likelihood that your events are covered, please submit news releases and schedules to us. We look forward to hearing from you.

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# FMU takes a shot against COVID-19

Lesley Willard

Copy Editor

FMU remains committed to ensuring the health and safety of its students throughout the continued struggle with COVID-19 by implementing vaccination clinics and vaccination participation drawings for the fall 2021 semester.

"It became very apparent that we needed to do what we could to ensure a safe environment for all of our students, our faculty and our staff," John Sweeney, Vice President of Communications, said. "Given some of the restrictions on institutions of higher education through state provisos, we wanted to take a look at ways we

could encourage students because we can't require vaccinations, and so, this was an idea that we came up with to encourage students, all in the hopes of creating as safe of an environment to return to classes as possible."

Deciding to provide clinics throughout the semester and create a vaccination participation drawing was not easy. It involved plenty of research and several meetings between administrators, but in the end, the goal for everyone was the same: to keep students, faculty and staff on campus safe.

"From the university's standpoint, vaccinations are one of the best tools that we have to ensure a safe campus

when it comes to COVID-19, especially the delta variant," Sweeney said. We are just encouraging students to get vaccinated and making it as easy as possible for those who want to get vaccinated."

One of the ways FMU decided to encourage students to get vaccinated is by awarding three students \$1,000 each week until Nov. 16. To enter the raffle, students must turn in proof that they are fully vaccinated. Once entered, they are eligible to win in every drawing from now until the final one.

Each vaccination clinic will offer the Moderna vaccine, except for the clinic scheduled for Sep. 15, which will administer the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. Students

will be able to plan their second dose after receiving their first. Although the CDC recommends waiting 28 days before another dose of the Moderna vaccine, FMU will offer it at each clinic.

"We recognize that not all of the students who get their first shot here will get their second shot at the next clinic," Sweeney said. "If they go to Student Life and the COVID-19 Response Center, they can get help coordinating their second dose, or even their first dose, whether it is here on campus at one of our clinics or at a clinic elsewhere."

The goal is to make the vaccination process as easy and painless as possible. Appointments are

not mandatory for the FMU vaccination clinics; however, if students choose to receive the vaccine elsewhere, they may be required to make an appointment.

So far, the vaccination clinics have reached 60 people, but the hope is that they continue to grow.

"What we want to do is create as safe a campus environment as possible," Sweeney said. "And that means making resources available to the faculty, the staff and the students as much as we can. We feel like these are the best ways that we can do that."

## Student social to start off new year

Julia Fulmer

Co-Editor

After the first day of fall classes, students retired to the Smith University Center (UC) Commons for the "Mega Mingle" event, a night full of games, cotton candy and bustling conversation.

After starting at 6 p.m. on Aug. 24, the event served to kick off the new semester and help welcome those who recently joined the university, stimulating new connections within the campus community.

Jayla Frieson, Vice-Chair of the Campus Activities Board (CAB) and junior theater design technology major, said the event

originated as a cooperative effort between Student Life and CAB. Eventually, Student life handed it off to the student-run organization to morph into their vision.

"We really didn't know that this was going to become our event," Frieson said. "But when we knew it was ours, we just took it in our hands and said, 'Okay, let's do games, karaoke—stuff that people like'—and that's what we did. The turnout is amazing."

Amongst the ping pong matches, putt-putt greens and corn holes, one of the more notable aspects of the event was the open mic karaoke. Between the other participants in karaoke, Frieson performed 'Party in

the USA' by Miley Cyrus, with help from friends.

"I didn't even care how I sounded," Frieson said. "I just was like, 'Look, I'm trying to make you guys have fun, so let's have fun.' Just seeing everybody having a good time was the best part. I love people, and I love seeing them enjoy themselves."

Andrew Brain, a freshman mass communications major, said he came to the event to meet new people, but he soon found himself enthralled in an intense and lengthy game of UNO.

"Even in just that one game of UNO, there were a lot of laughs in it," Brain said. "It's good to just have a small group of people and get

to joke around and play with."

Brain said he enjoys the relaxed environment events provide because they allow for easy connections with peers.

"It helps build a community and the spirit around campus," Brain said. "You just see a table with someone sitting there, and you sit down and just go like, 'Hey, what's up?' It makes it a lot easier to meet people and just have fun."

FMU alumna Elizabeth Floyd said she heard about the event from a current student and was excited about returning to campus.

"I really like these events because I get a good excuse to come see some

of my close friends, who are underclassmen, without feeling like I'm interrupting their busy schedule," Floyd said. "It's just the perfect time to come together and have some laughs. FMU will always be like my home away from home, and it's always fun to visit."

CAB encourages students to be on the lookout for their upcoming events through the FMU calendar. In addition to this, the organization also has an Instagram page, @fmu\_cab, and a

Snapchat account @fmucab17.

## Battle against boredom: activities fair

Andrew Brain

Staff Writer

With the start of a brand new school year, a new wave of students has entered the campus with nothing to do. Having nothing to do brings boredom, and boredom brings anarchy, so how does the staff at FMU solve this dilemma? Simple: host an activities fair.

This is exactly what Student Life decided to do from 1-4 p.m. on Sept. 9, 2021, in the Smith University Center (UC).

"This event is a student activities fair," said Brittany Durrah, a Student Life specialist overseeing the event. "It's basically just all of our organizations on campus coming so that the students, in general, can get a better understanding of the organizations we have on

campus so they can be a part of more than just themselves--more than just a student on campus. They can get active and get involved."

Having an assortment of joinable organizations on campus is a great thing, but it can be difficult for incoming students, who may be unfamiliar with such clubs, to get involved. For all the many events hosted by the staff and faculty of this university, an opportunity for students, both new and old, is crucial not only for the student body to discover ways to get involved but for the organizations themselves to find new members to join their groups. "It's going really well," said Santana Christmas, editor-in-chief of the Snow Island Review, on the success of the event's mission. "A lot of people have

come out, and a lot of people are actively participating, and a lot of people are very interested, writing down emails, wanting to get involved, not just walking around taking some candy. I think it's doing really well getting younger freshmen out here and getting them involved in all this."

Dubbing the Snow Island Review as a smaller organization, Christmas said she was excited about the attendance, expressing her joy at the turn-out. Passersby were continually stopping by her stand to learn more.

"Just from the one hour I've been here, I'd say we've benefited a lot," said Christmas. "We have a lot of people, especially from different majors, which is kind of what we're focusing on right now -- is getting

literature and writing and expression to everybody on campus. With how it's going, I'm pretty excited."

So with the event organizers and organization leaders believing the activities fair to be a success, what say the students? After all, they are the target audience here, so their judgment truly determines the success of this event. "It's a good way to get people who otherwise wouldn't get out and socialize to find new people and find new groups," said freshman computer science major Alan Wallace. When asked about the variety of organizations represented, Wallace said, "I didn't know there were clubs for every major. I didn't know there was like a math one or a computer science one, and those are interesting to me -

the niche groups, the people who understand the classes I'm taking."

It would seem all parties involved viewed this event as a major success in inviting students to see and join a wide variety of clubs and organizations seemingly tailor-made for whatever interests they may have. With this new school year comes a new opportunity to get involved, and there is no better time than the present. So what are you waiting for? Join a club! And, if you don't know of any specifically you might want to join, you can always ask around. There are so many on this campus, so somebody is bound to have the group just for you.

## USS continued

*Continued from Page 1*

"This isn't just about the effects of slavery on campus but about studying racialized slavery and racism in the Pee Dee region itself," Barton said.

Barton also emphasized the importance of the involvement of different voices and backgrounds in this initiative.

"As an archaeologist, the idea is that my specialty is bringing people together," Barton said. "I always want to make sure that I am bringing in diverse voices and diverse backgrounds. It is so important because the last

thing you want is a monolithic or singular voice to try to talk about these things."

Both Barton and Edwards understand the impact of having administrative and community support with the initiative, but they also consider students invaluable resources.

"We want to know what will get students interested and excited about this, not so we can say we have students doing it, but so that students can take part in something they can be proud of and invested in," Edwards said.

There are events scheduled for late September and early October. The first event will include the live, person-

al oral history of Dr. Joseph Heyward, which will hopefully entice more citizens of the Florence community to share their own stories. The second event will bring in a renowned poet, Glenis Redmond.

"Universities Studying Slavery—I know it says slavery in the title—but it actually covers racial issues since slavery through today," Edwards said. "She is going to try to get the audience to creatively express their ideas about these things. On Oct. 6., we are going to have a poetry slam where students can perform their own poetry."

These events were created to entice students, faculty

and community members to involve themselves in USS sanctioned research and activities. If enough students involve themselves with the initiative, there are professional conferences that could become available to them.

"There are two conferences a year for USS to bring all the schools together," Edwards said. "The next one is in the spring, and it's going to be hosted by UNC Greensboro and Wake Forest; we are hoping to get a real grant to take some students with us."

With FMU's admission into the USS, there will be the potential to create a community that can understand

and grow from its past and teaches other people the lessons that history grants us.

"We want this to be not just the professors telling everyone what to know and what to do. We want this to be community members, staff members, and students learning and teaching each other," Edwards said. "I think that has maybe been the problem in the past with race relations in the Florence area; there has not been more of that communication. We do have really high hopes for the initiative. It's a big goal, but we still want to work toward it."



# Students get the scoop on FMU police

Chanelle Hanberry  
Staff Writer

Campus police spoke with students about their mission and plans for this semester at 3 p.m. on August 30th in the University Center Commons (UC). Chief of police Donald Tarbell said, “We enjoy what we do, and that is keeping you all safe.” The campus police mission statement is to “keep our campus safe.” The campus police station is always open and willing to help, whether student or

staff. They provide services, such as safety escorts, automobile lock-out and jump-starts, temporary vehicle registration and much more. Sergeant Tracey Tolson and Officer Daniel Carmichael also offer CPR lessons to students on campus. Recently, Tolson and Carmichael taught a group of Resident Assistants on campus CPR lessons. Campus police also help with graduation, campus move-in, Resident Assistant Fire Safety, and the “Think Before You Drink Alcohol Awareness” program. The

campus police are always available and will try to help you with anything that they can. Freshman biology major Jaiden Dunigan said, “I learned that they are actually here for you, and they are not just here for work. They actually want to help you.” One of campus police goals is to bring people together in a safe community. “We are an important part of the community because we keep it safe, and we make sure that you guys have a good safe environment,” said Lieutenant Christopher

Moore. Campus police hope to build a community by developing relationships with students and student organizations. They encourage students to wave and speak to them because they want to establish those relationships with everyone. They attend events on campus to socialize and let others know they are there, watching and ensuring the safety of the on-campus community. Developing relationships with the officers helps them to get to know you personally as well as create friendships that could last a lifetime.

Freshman nursing major Chastity Lubang said, “I learned that the officers here are pretty friendly, and they want to build relationships with you.” The purpose of the “Get The Scoop” event was for students to get to know their campus police. New students coming to campus from afar may not be aware of their campus police officers, which is why the officers thought inviting students to an event with ice cream would help them become more comfortable. They hoped this would ring true

not only with their campus, but also with their community, including the campus police. As everyone ate ice cream at the end of the presentation, they spoke with some of the officers, getting to know them more as students also learned more about one another. The Campus Police Station lies between LSF (Leatherman Science Facility) and the James A. Rogers Library parking lot. If you ever need Campus Police, call: (843)-661-1109.

# Launching into a new semester, bottle style

Julia Fulmer  
Co-Editor

To signify the start of a new school year, the physics and engineering department held a water bottle rocket competition on Aug. 26, beginning at the McNair Science Building. Students considering majoring or those who already declared majors in the department were welcome to attend the third annual “Kickoff Event” to connect with their faculty and peers before the coming semester. Faculty and staff greeted

students as they arrived, distributing t-shirts to each attendee upon signing in. The group soon convened in Chapman Auditorium, where Derek Jokisch, Department Chair of physics and engineering, welcomed the crowd and introduced each faculty member from the department. Afterward, students separated into 10 teams, each named after an influential historical scientist, and the competition began. The groups had 30 minutes to construct a water bottle rocket from materials provided by the department, including two-

liter soda bottles, cardboard, and decorative items to add flair to their projects. While functionality was the main goal for the designs, teams had the opportunity to obtain one of four different awards: best looking rocket, farthest horizontal travel distance, most impressive flight and least impressive flight. Once the timer struck zero, all ten teams gathered on the Smith University Center (UC) lawn to test their concepts. With the help of a water pressure launch assembly, rockets soared through the air as department faculty evaluated their

performance. Jokisch said the main goal of the Kickoff Event was to grow, strengthen and initiate friendships within the department. “The idea for the event came out of a desire to welcome students back to campus and create opportunities for them to meet each other and the faculty,” Jokisch said. “I was once again impressed by the designs student teams came up with for their rockets given they only had 30 minutes to plan and construct them.” Caleb Mahoney, junior computational physics and

math double major, was part of team Marie Curie, winners of the most impressive flight award. Mahoney said he heard about the event from one of his professors and was intrigued by the mention of a surprise activity along with new department t-shirts. “How impressive some of the bottle rockets were and how far and high some flew was memorable,” Mahoney said. “that, and winning one of the sections of the competition. I’m very glad that I went, and hope to go next year! It’s a great way to meet new people in similar majors.”

The Kickoff Event has become an annual tradition, and provides a positive start for students majoring in physics and engineering. The department offers three majors in mechanical engineering, industrial engineering and physics, with specific tracks for health and computational physics. Students interested in joining the program are encouraged to contact professor Derek Jokisch for further information.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Team Marie Curie shoots for the stars in hopes to land ahead of the competition.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Physics and engineering students have a blast as they launch homemade water rockets.



“Netflix Original Series: Fear Street”



By now, we all know Netflix and Hulu’s original movies are wild cards. When I first heard Netflix was creating a trilogy based on the hit book series by R.L. Stine, Fear Street, I was skeptical. The Goosebumps and Fear Street stories were some of my favorite books growing up, and I was worried the streaming service would not do them the justice they deserved. Fortunately, I was pleasantly surprised in all aspects. The Fear Street trilogy was excellently written, and the storyline was creatively arranged in a way where anyone could enjoy the film, regardless of whether or not you had previous knowledge of the books. The first two films are full of nostalgia of the 70s and 90s, paying homage to not only the slasher genre but also delivering a fun and edgy cross between The Goonies and Stranger Things. Janiak and her writers have captured the tone of Stine’s Fear Street books created for the young adult audience, rather than the spooky Goosebumps childhood stories for which he was most known. The third feature throws us into the far past and reveals how the horror began. Not only does the third part become more involved in its mystery, but the characters prove to be more diverse, and the threat level much higher. The trilogy of the movies is cleverly orchestrated, delivering thrills and chills and pulling heartstrings. Fear Street 1994: Part One introduces us to Deena, a girl from the murder capital of the world, Shadyside, who recently broke up with her girlfriend, Sam, who moved into the neighboring town of Sunnyvale. We learn very quickly that there is a massacre every couple of years in Shadyside, and while the

members of this town mourn their losses, Sunnyvale continues to improve. Most of the community believes their misfortune comes from the curse of Sarah Fier, a witch hanged in 1666. Until her hand reunites with the rest of her body, the curse will continue to take more and more lives. When Sam becomes all too quickly involved with the so-called “curse,” Deena, her younger brother and her friends swiftly take action to find Sarah Fier’s hand, hoping to stop the next massacre. To avoid providing too many spoilers, let’s skip to Fear Street 1978: Part Two. This film gives us a quick recap of where our characters left off in the present, speaking to the only survivor of the witch’s curse, C. Berman, who begins by telling her story of survival during the camp massacre of 1978. As an audience, we are thrown straight into 1978, where we meet C. Berman, her late sister and the Sheriff of Sunnyvale as children. The events of the massacre provide big spoilers for the rest of the series, so I’ll merely say that Deena and her crew were not the first to try to break the curse of Sarah Fier. After learning a little bit more about what happened then versus what happened in 1994, we begin to figure out that the only one who knows what happened when Sarah Fier was hanged was the witch herself. This brings us to the finale of this series, Fear Street 1666: Part Three. To find out how to stop this curse, Deena decides to visit the witch’s corpse, hoping to learn more about the incident in 1666. Deena touches the body of Sarah Fier, and she is taken into 1666, where she will finally discover the harsh truth of what happened all those years ago. There’s not much else to say without spoiling the big plot, but I will say this: this last film will leave you shaken to the core with twists and turns. Honestly, I have rewatched this series at least three times, and it is still as interesting as it was the first time. The plot was creatively organized in a way that the audience cannot guess how the story concludes until it does. If you are a fan of horror, slasher, or nostalgic movies, this series is a must-see!

Cassidy McKnight  
is a freshman  
early childhood major.



# PROFESSOR SPOTLIGHT | Gregory Pryor

Lesley Willard  
Copy Editor

Acknowledging his love for all things outdoors at an early age, Gregory Pryor, professor of biology at FMU, knew he wanted to live a lifestyle that allowed him to have a flexible schedule to pursue his extensive list of hobbies.

“Regardless of discipline, I think being a professor is like the greatest job, really, at least for me,” Pryor said. “I have paperwork to do, but a lot of that I can take home. When you see a professor at three in the afternoon mowing their lawn, they might have three hours of work to do when the sun sets, but at least you get that flexibility in your schedule that a lot of people do not have.”

Born and raised in a rural town in upstate New York, Pryor initially wanted to be a birdwatcher. For a short period, he was a naturalist for the Nature Conservancy in New York, where he led birdwatching trips throughout the summer. Although Pryor loved the job, it did not pay well; so, when the company offered to promote him after receiving his master’s degree, he jumped on the opportunity. Little did he know, going back to school would lead him on a completely different career path than what he originally planned.

“I got my master’s degree, and then I continued to my Ph.D. because you



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gregory Pryor, professor of biology, outlines his multi-faceted life in dazzling detail.

need a Ph.D. to be a biology professor,” Pryor said. “I knew towards the last year or two of my schooling that I wanted to be a professor, and so I started doing teaching assistantships.”

Following graduate school, Pryor worked for a year as an adjunct professor at the University of Florida, where his passion for teaching was solidified.

During his short time at UF, he was awarded the 2003-2004 Faculty of the Year Award for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

“That was such a surprise and such a huge honor,” Pryor said. “I think the reason for that was because I was really bringing technology into the classroom and a lot of the professors were still using overhead projectors

and chalkboards. And I was young, so I related to the students really easily.”

When the time came for him to begin searching for a permanent teaching position, he knew he wanted to stay in the south, have a large piece of land and work for a smaller university that emphasized teaching.

“I ended up getting 130 acres of land here,” Pryor

said. “I love it. I have goats, chickens, dogs, cats, lots of gardens, a small vineyard where I do wine-making and a big pond where I can go fishing.”

One of the most exciting accomplishments of Pryor’s career thus far is a 24-episode video series for a college-level online platform called The Great Courses, for which he wrote,

filmed, hosted and composed the soundtrack. The series focuses on life on the farm, but it goes into depth about the biology of daily farm processes. The project took two years to create, but it is one that Pryor is extremely proud of.

Along with the responsibilities that come with being a university professor, Pryor has also added several other accomplishments to his resume. He currently writes a monthly column for The Morning News, has numerous peer-reviewed publications, runs a successful YouTube channel and had the experience of being featured in an art gallery on campus.

“I do not have kids; I do not know if that’s relevant to anything,” Pryor said. “I am married. But you would be surprised how much more free time you have when you do not have kids and you are done with school.”

Pryor said his accomplishments are a series of luck and hard work, but his passion for teaching others and love for the subject of biology has made everything worth it.

“It is simply that I want to challenge myself, learn from it and then teach others,” Pryor said. “And that really seems to come through at school, on my YouTube channel and in my newspaper articles.”

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT | Harper Jackson

Lesley Willard  
Copy Editor

After taking advice from the most influential people in his life, 21-year-old environmental science major Robert “Harper” Jackson is working toward earning a degree that will allow him to make his favorite hobby a career.

“When I first came to FMU, I was undecided on a major,” Jackson said. “On the day of freshman orientation, I was trying to think of things I enjoy, and fishing was the only thing that came to mind. I decided that if I was going to work my entire life, I might as well make it fun and turn my passion into something I could make money off of, so I decided to major in biology.”

As a child, Harper’s favorite thing to do was go fishing with his family. Even when they didn’t catch anything, he loved spending quality time with those he could learn from and never took the outdoors for granted.

“It’s just fun to be out there on the water,” Harper said. “I never get discouraged when I don’t catch anything because the best part of the sport is sitting outside enjoying nature.”

While he didn’t particularly like the entry-level biology classes, now that he is in courses geared toward his interest, Harper loves his major—specifically



PHOTO BY JULIA FULMER

Robert “Harper” Jackson, junior environmental science major, journeys towards the career of his dreams.

the professors and students he works with daily. One of his favorite things about FMU is the exposure he has to those with similar interests.

Over the summer, Harper had the opportunity to intern with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) through FMU’s Fishery Biologist Internship Program. He was able to

work alongside fishery biologists who taught him things such as how to electro fish and how to test for water quality in state lakes and rivers, along with a plethora of other things.

“I got to see how DNR fish management works and what they do on a day-to-day basis,” Harper said. “I learned everything from

fish habitat restoration to how to operate a boat and back it onto a trailer. I got to work in the lab where we processed and aged catfish otoliths and weighed and measured fish and tracked it excel. Then I got to see how the data we collected in the field was used, and I was able to travel all around our state doing these things.”

As a student, Jackson wanted to be sure he experienced everything FMU has to offer. Along with making friends within his major, he decided to venture out and join a fraternity, ultimately choosing the Kappa Alpha Order.

“I have a lot of friends who reached out to me and asked me to join,” Jackson

said. “I decided to give it a try, and I have absolutely no regrets. I knew several of the brothers already, but it has given me the opportunity to make new friends and get more involved with FMU on campus, which is exactly what I wanted.”

As he inches closer to the end of his FMU career, Harper said he only has two things he wishes were different about the school: a football team and more fishery biology classes.

Jackson said, above everything else, he is excited to graduate and find his dream job.

“There are so many opportunities out there; I’m excited to figure out exactly where I want to work,” Harper said. “I do wish there were more opportunities to get involved with fishery biology here at FMU, but I’m thankful for the professors and opportunities I have found through this school.”

Looking ahead, Harper is ready to strap up and finish out his college career strong. He said he is already in love with his major, and his internship with SCDNR only made him more confident that he made the right choice. He can’t wait to see how much better it will get through the years.

“I get up and go to school every day because I love what I do,” Harper said. “I love doing the research and thoroughly enjoy learning everything I can about the subject.”

Do YOU know of an event happening soon?

Send us information at  
fmupatriotnews@gmail.com



# ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT | Pearson Mixon

**Finn Millians**  
Co-Editor

Though he had a later start to his sport than most, cross country and track-and-field sophomore, Pearson Mixon, runs with a passion and drive that awarded him the MVP title for the track team in early 2021 and propels him towards even more success in the 2021-2022 season.

“I’m glad that I picked it up whenever I did and not so early on because I’d hate to be one of those people who gets burnt out of their sport,” Mixon said. “I don’t want to do it for so long that I’m like, ‘I don’t want to keep doing this;’ I’m at the point now that I really enjoy it.”

Mixon was never heavily involved in sports until his high school years. He started playing soccer as a freshman, but his junior year is when he adopted cross country and track. There was some difficulty at first, but he soon hit his stride.

“Cross country and track especially are all mental,” Mixon said. “When I am in a race, the only things I focus on are the people in front of me and the people behind me. I don’t really focus on myself too much. You are always chasing somebody, so you have to work to get to where they are at.”

That internal competitive instinct caused him to push through the initial pain of starting cross country.



PHOTO BY CULLEN DORE

Pearson Mixon , sophomore cross country athlete and track MVP, makes strides towards creating his own legacy at FMU.

Though there is a significant amount of cardio in soccer, the switch to serious running involved a learning curve.

“After a while, your body gets used to it,” Mixon said. “The more and more you do, the more your body can withstand.”

He did, indeed, withstand it; he withstood it so well he now performs at the Division II collegiate level. This may not have been an initial childhood dream, but Mixon would not trade

his experience with running for anything.

“During weekdays, we have practice at 6 a.m., and we usually get in anywhere from 8-10 miles per day,” Mixon said. “It was a big adjustment at first, but once you get used to it, you’re really grateful for it.”

His career at FMU is also enhanced because he is a Florence native with many family ties to the school.

“I just felt—considering this was my home, I grew up

in Florence—I didn’t want to start over,” Mixon said.

He felt most comfortable here, so he jumped at the opportunity to continue his passion while staying in a place he loved.

“It just felt natural to come here,” Mixon said. “From an academic standpoint, from a social standpoint, everything just fell into place. I’ve loved it here so far; I wouldn’t want anything else.”

As a sophomore, he

stands by his decision. One of his teammates, sophomore mass communications major Cullen Dore, and Mixon were Florence school rivals turned close friends. According to Mixon, Dore had a relatively big impact on his recruiting process and helped convince him to attend FMU. Along with his friendship with Dore, Mixon also attributed his love for the sport to his love for his teammates.

“They’re a great group of guys,” Mixon said. “We’re

with each other every single day. I’m with them every morning at 6 a.m., so you get kind of used to having them around.”

In addition to his athletics, Mixon is pursuing a degree in marketing with plans to add another major down the road. He does not know what he would like to do with it yet, but he has a good cushion of time to figure it out. Though he is a sophomore, Mixon has an extra year of eligibility the plans on using to pursue a Master’s in Business Administration in his fifth year.

“Because of COVID-19 last year, the NCAA granted athletes another year of eligibility,” Mixon said. “I’ll be able to run and pursue my master’s at the same time. It works out very well.”

He is also a member of the Pi Kappa Alpha (PIKE) fraternity on campus, a fraternity his father was a part of, too. As a legacy to the school and the fraternity, Mixon takes pride in his present position.

“My dad was a PIKE here,” Mixon said. “With the chapter just coming back, it just feels nice following my dad’s footsteps.”

A long-term product of Florence with plans to strengthen his roots, Mixon is here to stay. You can find him running along Florence roads almost every morning and participating in meets to represent FMU periodically through the fall and spring.

# Patriots’ tough loss to Bearcats in overtime

**Finn Millians**  
Co-Editor

The Patriots’ men’s soccer team faced a tough defeat after two overtime periods to the Lander Bearcats in their first game of the season at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 2.

Within minutes of the match starting, the Patriots secured their first goal by freshman forward, Nick Huenig. Though the Bearcats fought hard through the first half—with several close calls—the Patriots remained in the lead until the beginning of the second half.

The Patriots began to break down with a red card given to sophomore defender Rodrigo Alvarez, causing the team to play the remainder of the match with one less player. Shortly after the red card, the Bearcats tied it up with their first goal.

Junior forward Alvaro Zamora managed to take the lead back with an impressive 11-yard shot halfway through the second half.

“At the time of scoring that goal, when the team had been working very hard throughout the second half with one less player; it was an incredible feeling,” Zamora said.

The Patriots were able to hold the lead until the end of the second half. The two teams went into two overtime periods to settle the score. Early in the second overtime period, the Bearcats were able to slip one in and ended up emerging victoriously.

Though it was a heartbreaking loss, the Patriots look toward the rest of their season optimistically.

“Lander will always be a game that we want to play,”

Zamora said. “They were ranked top ten in the nation, so beating them would have been great for the team.”

Graduate defender Oier Bernaola is disappointed in the loss to the Bearcats, but he has confidence in the team’s ability to have a successful season after working out the kinks.

“A game is not going to change the mentality and the goals of the team; we still want the same things from the season,” Bernaola said. “It is true that this loss could be like a warning to us because we still have a lot to improve to achieve our goals.”

One motivator for a good season comes from having a semi-normal one again after their latest experience with strict COVID-19 regulations.

“It was a very good feeling to arrive on the field and

to see so many people, even before the game started, ready to support us in our season opener against a very tough opponent,” Bernaola said. “It was great to have them back.”

After last season, with a late start date and limited allowed fan attendance, the Patriots are excited to be back playing for their multitude of fans this season.

“Being back on the field after the year of the COVID-19 is a great experience since it feels different,” Zamora said. “This year, the national championship returns, and we all want to be there.”

The Patriots will continue their journey toward the NCAA Division II championship with their conference season coming up shortly. You can catch the Patriots next on the field Wednesday,

Sept. 15., at 7 p.m. playing the Coker University Cobras.

While students can attend for free, fans must purchase tickets ahead of time or at the ticket booth to see the games. As it is outside

at the Griffin Athletic Complex, masks are optional, but social distancing is enforced.



PHOTO BY CULLEN DORE

Jafet Santiago volleys the ball towards opponents’ box.



John Castro holds ball as he waits for referee’s instructions.



Young Harris forwards head the ball toward the net.



Junior Sebastian Garcia looks for an opening.  
PHOTOS BY CULLEN DORE