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THE CROW'S NEST

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER AT THE USF ST. PETERSBURG CAMPUS

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The Crow's Nest at USFSP

THEATER CLUB TAKES CENTER STAGE



The Musical Theater Club debuted its production of "The Theory of Relativity" on April 19. PHOTO BY MAKENNA WOZNAK

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USFSP DEAN OF STUDENTS ANNOUNCES RESIGNATION

By **SECILIA RUIZ**
CONTRIBUTOR

After 12 years as the Dean of Students at the University of Florida St. Petersburg, Jacob Diaz is resigning.

Diaz's last day is on May 15; he will then serve as the inaugural assistant vice president and dean of Students at the University of Maryland.

Diaz described his time as dean of students as a "dream come true."

"I was given so much by my dean of students as an undergraduate student, and I thought that if it would be possible someday for me to do the same and help a student and a student body achieve their aspirations and dreams, what a gift of a career that could be," he said.

While living this dream, Diaz stated that he has been stretched and pulled in ways he never thought possible and has learned a lot in the process.

"[Students] taught me

that I need to work at being brutally honest with myself every day," Dr. Diaz said. "Because I think students expect, rightfully so, that I'm showing up on their behalf every day, in a way that speaks to their experience, not mine."

Dr. Diaz emphasized that as he moves on to this new endeavor, he will still hold tight to the fond memories he has with USF St. Petersburg students.

"Students make my heart feel lighter. And they make my mind

sharp... I will miss that. I will miss people. I think people make a place. And it's special here. It feels special to me. And I'm also simultaneously excited about the professional opportunity I'll get to have," Diaz told *The Crow's Nest*.

Diaz's impact is felt by his colleagues in the Student Life and Engagement department.

Kyonna Henry, the director of student life and engagement, highlighted Diaz's people-centered

approach to his leadership as dean of students.

"He had a way of navigating challenges with thoughtfulness and transparency, and he always kept student impact at the center of everything," Henry said. "His leadership style is something I'll carry with me moving forward."

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DEAN

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Similarly, Abigail Bradley-Tyler, the assistant director for student life and engagement at USF Petersburg, told *The Crow's Nest* that she will miss Diaz's transparency and openness as an administrator.

"He's one of those admins that you could feel comfortable going to his office and sitting down, having a cup of coffee with him, and [asking], 'What is going on?' ... And he'll be honest with you. Which I really appreciate, because I value transparency a lot," Bradley-Tyler said.

Along with his professional legacy, Diaz also made a personal mark on both Henry and Bradley-Tyler.

According to Bradley-Tyler, Diaz was a mentor throughout her journey pursuing a Ph.D.

"He was one of the first professionals to really challenge me and encourage me to do the last five years of schooling," she said. "Personally, having him as a supporter in this journey has been wonderful for me. He's just so kind [and] supportive."

Henry stated that working under a supervisor as authentic and open as Diaz allowed her to grow and feel confident in her position as Director of Student Life and Engagement.

"On a personal level, I appreciated how approachable and authentic he was," Henry told *The Crow's Nest*. "He created space for honest conversations, encouraged new ideas, and trusted his team to lead. That kind of trust-built confidence and made me feel empowered in my role."

Other students also



"You didn't come here to be the same as when you started. I really believe... we're failing you as a student if you're not different for the good when you graduate," Diaz said.

COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

expressed that they'll miss Diaz's leadership and character.

Elena Mere, a senior business analytics and information systems major is a student-worker at the Office of Veteran Success and the treasurer of the

Latin American Student Association – where Diaz serves as the advisor – and has worked closely with Diaz throughout her time at USF St. Petersburg.

"I feel like he is somebody who really cares about students," Mere

said. "I would say I can tell with him, more than any other faculty, that he is very honest and empathetic and really cares about our experience, so I was sad when I found out he was leaving...but also, I'm happy for him."

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MISSING USF STUDENTS CONFIRMED DEAD, SUSPECT IN CUSTODY

By **JULIA FERRARA & ALISHA DUROSIER**
CROW'S NEST STAFF

Hearts are heavy across the University of South Florida this month after two missing 27-year-old doctoral students from Bangladesh were confirmed dead.

Zamil Limon, a geography, environmental science and policy student and Nahida Bristy, a chemical engineering student, were reported missing on April 17 after a family friend was unable to reach them.

Both students were last seen on April 16, Bristy in the Natural & Environmental Science building of the USF Tampa campus and Limon at his Tampa apartment complex — a week later, on April 24, his remains were found on Howard Frankland Bridge.

Limon's roommate, Hisham Saleh Abugharbieh, 26, was taken into custody on the preliminary charges of moving a dead body, failure to report a death, tampering with evidence, false imprisonment and battery.

On April 25, Abugharbieh's charges were upgraded to two counts of first-degree murder for both Limon and Bristy's deaths, according to the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office.

Abugharbieh has a prior record, including domestic violence petitions, battery and burglary of an unoccupied dwelling, but they were either dropped or classified as misdemeanors.

Though confirmed dead, Bristy's remains have not been found.

The Sheriff's Office Deputy Joseph Maurer shared that they've been able to link Abugharbieh to the case and are waiting on the autopsy results for manner and cause of death.

"At this time, we have no indications that think he was not working alone, but again, active investigation," Maurer told WFLA.

USF students shared their thoughts on the situation.

"It is really concerning because, like I said, it is really close to home," a student said to a WFLA reporter.

"It's really shocking, just because I've been here for



Zamil Limon, left, and Nahida Bristy were reported missing last week. Authorities say Limon's remains were found on April 24.

COURTESY OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

three years and I haven't really seen anything like this," another student shared.

USF President Moez Limayem sent a university-wide email sharing updates about the case, and services staff and students have access to if needed.

"In recent days, members of the USF

leadership team have spoken directly with the families and friends of the students to offer our support and assure them that we have been doing everything possible to assist in this case," Limayem said. "We will continue to stay in close contact with them to provide any help that we can."

Students can access Timely Care 24/7 or in-person counseling services on campus. Resources for faculty and staff are available through the Employee Assistance Program.

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COLUMN: PARTING REMARKS IN LIEU OF SILENCE

OPINION

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By ELISE PROPHETE
GUEST COLUMNIST

It is never easy to do the right thing. Doing the right thing becomes even harder, as others tell you their position is on the line when you speak.

Their words mean more than yours when you're told you're being selfish, difficult and "mean" for speaking. When you are told that this event was not meant for you. That alone becomes a sort of censorship, even when you are told that it is not.

Even when you tame your original words and distill your message into

something that makes others more comfortable — that is still not enough, it never will be. Again, the right thing will never be easy,

This university exists to educate us, to allow free thought and the free exchange of ideas. The press exists to hold us all accountable — to spread the word, to negate the occurrences of censorship, perhaps.

I am choosing to do what is right for me and provoke the thoughts that I hope are right for this campus. To shift the self-censoring, student-second attitudes back into

a space where our stories are told and appreciated.

My name is Elise Prophete, I am your campus Governor, and despite the context of the Leadership and Student Organizations office holding the event, I was not allowed to give a speech at our Leadership awards ceremony, known as the Rocky Awards. I am reclaiming my voice through my words, and I thank *The Crow's Nest* for empowering me to do so.



Elise Prophete is USF St. Petersburg Student Government's first Black female governor.

COURTESY OF
ELISE PROPHETE

YOUR CAMPUS GOVERNOR'S UNSAID SPEECH AT THE ROCKY'S

Good evening, What a year it's been!

It feels like I was just on this stage, spreading gratitude to each department, which I would like to extend again.

So, to start off can we please get a round of applause for all of the amazing organizations and departments that power this campus?

With this immense gratitude that I've felt all year, I have also felt a pit... an absence of what once was. I feel it right here.

It seems like over my years here, it has only been growing and growing.

And it seems like this pit is something bigger than just me. It might have a name. For now I'll call it what I've heard in university statements, and in the news, ... "uncertainty."

This time of "uncertainty" is the biggest obstacle I've had to face this year. This pit seems to be absorbing the source of my joy.

Calculated attacks to hope and community are what I know I am experiencing. I can't help but assume that you all are feeling it too.

I am the daughter of a

Haitian immigrant, with a mother from the Bronx who has always learned to work with what she had. Creativity and resilience are in my blood, and I honestly expect nothing less than needing to adapt.

I know this country was not made for me. This state makes it abundantly clear that I do not belong, but the university seems unsure. USF allows me to represent communities that are rejected by our legislature. Our community has enabled my sense of belonging, physical representations like our flags have told me that I'm welcomed. I've realized over the years, that there are spaces for me. These spaces cannot fall into that pit.

So I'll ask: How many times can we rename a program or office until it does not function anymore? How much can we minimize, work around, and work with what we have until we become invisible?

These are questions I've been grappling with.

The hope that I've mentioned must transform into action. We need physical representation of who we are. Our resilience. Our character. Our diversity

How many times can we rename a program or office until it does not function anymore? How much can we minimize, work around, and work with what we have until we become invisible?

and differences. The sense of belonging we create through whole, equitable inclusion for ourselves.

Student Government, with its pages of rules, is ironically somewhere where I've found my sense of agency. It is somewhere where I've lost passion and gained it back tenfold. Where I have been enabled to act by the very people who fear action. Where I've reclaimed my power, and where I've felt more suppressed than ever. So, forgive me, this is not a traditional speech, but I did not have a traditional term here.

In my years on this campus, I've noticed a pattern, and we are impacted annually.

In 2023, anti-DEI enforcements. In 2024, our flags were removed. In 2025, our mural disappeared.

What comes next? When

do we stand? Or do we become invisible? Reduced to a pit; A shell of what once was?

You all believed in me as a leader. As my time comes to an end (at least in this role), I want to pose a question to the room.

A question that was posed to me last month, by one of my mentors, inspirations, and one of the first people to believe in my leadership.

This is a question every single one of us can answer, but I really want the future governor (if they're in this room), and our chancellor, budding student leaders, and fellow administrators to think about.

Are we ready?

She asked me: What story do we want this institution to tell? How does our story emerge through the relationships we create, and the work that we do?

This is not a question of

metrics, of rigidly defined parameters to measure success. This is a question of action, of real change, real goals, and the bridges we build to keep students returning to this campus.

I know the USF St. Pete I came here for. The USF St. Pete I want to see.

So, in one of my final addresses as Governor: What campus do you want to see by this time next year? How will you make it happen, for yourself, for your community, and, most importantly — for future leaders on this campus?

Please take some time to think about that tonight. We have all gathered to celebrate our community. It is up to us to make sure our communities can visibly thrive, persist and belong.

My chest feels a little bit better now.

Thank you for hearing me, and for electing me as your governor.

Have a wonderful rest of your night.

Elise Prophete is a junior political science and sustainability major and governor of the USF St. Petersburg student government.

4 ARTS & LIFE

MUSICAL THEATER CLUB MAKE ITS DEBUT

By ZARIYA BANKSTON & REAGAN HASKELL
CONTRIBUTORS

Theater lovers at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg campus engaged with the art form on campus with the introduction of the Musical Theater Club this past spring.

Anya Gorgas, a senior finance major at USF St. Petersburg, is the founder and president of the Musical Theater Club.

Gorgas told *The Crow's Nest* that she has always been a musical theater fan and wanted to bring a different form of expression to the St. Petersburg campus.

"I have played sports my entire life and on multiple teams here, but I was ready for a change, and I'm so glad I was," Gorgas said.

When brainstorming the possibility of a musical theater club, Gorgas asked students about their interest in the idea. When she gained encouraging feedback, she knew that the club would be successful. Despite having zero experience in musical theater, Gorgas took a leap and began work on the club right away.

Fortunately, her idea inspired many to join, even earning the 'Best New Club' at the Rocky Awards, the annual event highlighting student achievement on the St. Petersburg campus.

The Musical Theater Club also put on their first

production, a musical titled "The Theory of Relativity," with music and lyrics by Neil Bartman and written by Brian Nill.

Directing the production was Aubrey Soldo, a freshman theatre major with a minor in education.

Soldo has been interested in theatre since she was young. Hobbies involving acting fueled her passion to be on stage. It was her first time directing a show, which was an exciting and proud experience for her.

"It's a step in the right direction for my future goals as I aspire to be a theatre teacher/director," she said.

The musical is about how ordinary people's lives are interconnected, while exploring the ways in which shared experiences can bring communities of people together.

"It has many different storylines that all eventually connect. It follows normal people with normal problems that everyone goes through. It's relatable and very sweet with a good message," Gorgas said.

The idea to perform the musical was brought to Gorgas by Uche Emeuche. It was her first time hearing of the musical, and when listening to the soundtrack, she knew she had to perform it.

Gorgas is the executive director of the musical and acted in two roles.

First, she plays Sara, a girl with an awkward personality with a best



I knew a lot of people on campus loved musical theatre as much as I did, so I asked around if anyone would be interested and I got the most encouraging results," Gorgas said.

PHOTO BY
MAKENNA WOZNIAK

friend named Jenny who secretly despises her. After ending her friendship with Jenny, she becomes endeared to her new friendships.

"She's kind of in her revenge era now," Gorgas said. "I think people can relate to realizing they're not friends with the right people and finding their own somewhere else."

Gorgas' second role, Julie, is a character who deeply adores her cats and her fiancé, Paul, who is played by her boyfriend Tripp Tucker, a senior science in finance major.

Gorgas told *The Crow's Nest* that this role is

relatable to aspects of her own life.

"While I can't knit or crochet, I do love my pets more than anything else. And Paul is played by my long-term boyfriend so I definitely relate to feeling in love and excited to be in a relationship with someone who is just right for me," she said.

Gorgas's favorite of the two characters is Julie due to her sweet nature, but she also adores Sara's feistiness.

Rehearsals for the show proved to be demanding work for Gorgas. She stated how she has been heavily involved in behind-the-scenes activities regarding the musical.

She was in charge of handling bookings, purchasing the rights for the musical, hosting events to help gain traction, food catering, leading vocal rehearsals, overseeing director and producer and collaborating with USC staff to help the musical run smoothly.

As executive director of the musical, many responsibilities had to be managed while also preparing for her own two roles.

"For my role particularly, I practiced my

song and honing my skills until I was blue in the face. I really wanted to make myself proud when I went out there on stage," Gorgas said.

The club as a whole prevailed through hardships faced during rehearsal and continued to work to deliver an exceptional performance.

"There's been a lot of ups and downs, but I think that goes for every single production. Overall, I'm so incredibly honored to be a part of something so big for USF St. Pete," Soldo said.

The musical was performed three times over the course of a week in the USC Ballrooms, free of charge and open to anyone with a yearn for a play with an emotional message.

Gorgas hopes that the musical reinforces people with the value of community.

"The one thing I think this musical should show people is that we all need one another and good people in your life is really important," she said.



The Musical Theater Club performed their last show of "Theory of Relativity" on April 26.

PHOTO BY
MAKENNA WOZNIAK

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BULLS AND BREWS BY THE BAY CELEBRATES 'ONE USF'

ARTS & LIFE

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"I always think food and beverage is kind of like the spice of life," Matthew Dahm, owner and founder of Mastry's Brewing Co, said. "...Why not make it educational?"

PHOTO BY
GABRIEL BALLESTER-RIVERA

By **COLE MAINES**
CONTRIBUTOR

Brews and eats set a jovial tone on the USF St. Petersburg campus as President Moez Limayem addressed students and alumni at the Bulls and Brews by the Bay event on April 17.

This marked Limayem's fifth trip across the bay, a concerted effort from the university's new leader to try and understand the tasks that lay ahead.

"I promised to hit the ground listening, so listening on three campuses and just hearing the good things that we do and some of the concerns and challenges, and we're addressing them," Limayem said.

Bulls and Brews by the Bay emphasized "One USF," bringing together and celebrating scholarship recipients, current students and alumni.

"This is not just a fundraiser. This is a celebration," President Limayem said. "This is something that brings all of us, all of us are here to celebrate, to be together and to send a message to our community, to our state, to the world, that USF is stronger with the three campuses."

The significant alumni presence included association leaders, co-

leaders of the LGBTQ Alumni Society, Ronald Kennedy and Robert Wallace. They seek to attend events like these to organize and establish a community of current and former USF students that can share their experiences.

"We want to try and organize and get alumni more involved in understanding that there's a sense of community that they should appreciate and try to become involved with. Because we come from different backgrounds, engineering and medicine, we also offer some perspectives on what those schools looked like back then and what they've evolved into, and what the school has evolved into," Kennedy said. "We try to tell everyone, tell the alumni who are interested in belonging, of course, there is value in feeling like you're part of a USF family."

Current student and scholarship recipient Victoria Phan appreciated the alumni involvement at the USF St. Petersburg Waterfront and the connections and opportunities it offers students.

"It's really nice to put name to face, just to see how the local community has come to support specifically the St. Petersburg students,"

Phan said. "I'm really appreciative. It's great seeing how people invest into the future of students and academia. I really love the beautiful community."

One of the vendors at the event was the brewing bulls of Mastry's Brewing Co. and the USF Brewing Arts program. At their booth, they poured the new USF Pilsner and "Green and Gold Lager" in support of alumni and to contribute to the St. Petersburg craft beer community, as well as highlight the opportunities they offer.

"It's community involvement," Matthew Dahm, brewing arts instructor and founder of Mastry's Brewing, said. "It's a way to support and give back to the program

and the university." Professor and Director of the Brewing Arts program, Joe Askren, described how the university came together with the craft brewing industry to create the program and why they wanted to be at Bulls and Brews by the Bay.

"The program was jumpstarted by USF connecting with local breweries here in St. Pete. They wanted to have people coming out of a program that were educated on the brewing industry," Askren said. "You have your craft brewing companies that are here today that really help to spark other industry. Brewing helps create culture in cities in towns all across the world."

Program alumnus and current Mastry's brewer Brian Brown sought this opportunity to share his interests with others at the event.

"Beer is a social gathering. Even people that drink lightly, everyone has a few beers and starts talking and hanging out," Brown said. "Craft beer brings people together to either try new things or to try things you love."

Other vendors included local breweries like 3 Daughters, Green Bench, Grand Central, Bayboro Brewing, Great Bay Distributors and Mother Kombucha.

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Limayem highlighted USF's three campuses two months after a state bill proposed transferring the Sarasota-Manatee campus to New College.

PHOTO BY
GABRIEL
BALLESTER-RIVERA

SPRING FEVER: USFSP REACTS TO ALLERGY SEASON

BY **ASHLEY PENNA**
CONTRIBUTOR

The bright, green oak trees and sparkling Bayboro Harbor make walking along the University of South Florida St. Petersburg campus in the middle of spring seem like a dream come true for students. But the dream ends when huge piles of pollen come raining down.

This spring, allergy season kicked off early in March with pollen counts reaching their peak across Florida. A month later, USF St. Petersburg seems to be drowning in pollen.

Courtney Jean, a public health junior, didn't feel the effects of seasonal allergies until her first semester on campus.

"When I started my freshman spring semester, my allergies seemed to flare up and became quite severe," Jean told *The Crow's Nest*. "I was sneezing constantly, my throat felt like sandpaper and my eyes would swell up from irritation."

Now, Jean finds that her allergies have only worsened with the high pollen counts.

"The pollen definitely seems to be more potent during this allergy season, so my symptoms have been a bit more severe," Jean said.

In addition to high pollen counts, last month was the warmest March in U.S. history. Rising temperatures lead to a longer growth season for pollinating trees, resulting in an aggressive allergy season that's only beginning.

While there is a limited number of ways to combat seasonal allergies — staying indoors or taking allergy medicine — students like Morgan Niem, a junior graphic design major, see an opportunity to alleviate the allergy season



"There were many times I'd even get home from class, and there would be a bug in my hair... Now that rarely happens, and I don't even see bugs landing on my clothes," said senior psychology major Skye Smith.

PHOTO BY
MAKENNA WOZNIAK

through landscaping.

"Plant female trees," Niem told *The Crow's Nest*.

USF St. Petersburg is lined with male oak trees, which spew out pollen as opposed to female trees which release seeds. As the rising temperatures make it difficult to avoid longer growth seasons, a literal change in the scenery may be one of the only direct solutions there are.

Taylor Rand, a senior biology major with a concentration in evolution and ecology, finds that this spring's hot weather is not only impacting pollen counts but insects as well.

"Rising temperatures as a result of global climate change has likely contributed to the reduction in insect populations and insect diversity we're seeing around the world."

Skye Smith, a psychology major senior, agrees that there is a noticeable difference in the number of bugs flying around.

"I used to hate going outside the last two

years during the spring because of all the bugs," Smith told *The Crow's Nest*. "Now I'm worried because it's no longer an issue and I rarely see the bugs I used to have so many issues with."

Spring commonly brings out bugs seeking out warmth. Unfortunately, rising temperatures have made that nearly unviable for them.

"Global warming can have serious impacts on insect populations by altering resource availability and reproductive timing," Rand said, "Many insect species are specialists, relying on one or two single plant species for food and timing of their reproductive cycle; when things like rising temperatures begin to affect local host plant populations, insect diversity will undoubtedly begin to decline."

Rand emphasized that as insects experience habitat loss due to global warming, biodiversity is threatened as well.

"All of the ecosystem services that insects provide—pollination, acting as a food resource for birds and reptiles, controlling other pest insect populations, cleaning up organic debris—are essential to any healthy, stable ecosystem."

It can be easy to dismiss insects as a nuisance or even gross, but insect diversity plays a key role for the ecosystem.

"Insects are deeply interconnected with our local ecosystems in ways that we often cannot even understand, until they are gone," Rand said.

As temperatures continue to rise, this spring season may prove to be a rough one for bugs as well as those suffering with allergies.

THE CROW'S NEST

Mission Statement

The Crow's Nest is committed to providing its readers with news relevant to the University of South Florida St. Petersburg campus and its surrounding community. *The Crow's Nest* abides by the highest ethical standards and focuses on stories that help readers make informed decisions on current issues. We take seriously the public's trust in our news reporting and strive to uphold the highest standards of reporting as defined by the Society of Professional Journalists. Opinions in this newspaper do not necessarily represent those of the administration, faculty or student body.

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WHAT'S NEXT? GRADUATING SENIORS REFLECT

BY JULIA BIRDSALL
CROW'S NEST STAFF

The thought of an early graduation is a harrowing thought for third year digital communications and multimedia journalism major Sophia Lowrie, who said that she wishes they had more time to assimilate to life on a college campus before being thrust into adult life.

She is not the only one.

Whether the next steps involve graduate school or entering the workforce, many of the seniors at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg are feeling similarly anxious and uncertain in the weeks leading up to their graduation dates.

“Undergrad feels like a safety net,” political science senior Izabella Annunziata told *The Crow's Nest*. “Why a lot of people extend their time here is because it feels safe. Going out into the real world is nerve-racking.”

Senior biology major

Maya Shaffer echoed this sentiment.

“College is just a stepping stone. You're like a baby adult,” she said.

She worries about taking on the full responsibilities of adulthood and whether or not she will “rise to the occasion.”

However, Shaffer — who is moving to California shortly after graduating and will soon be applying for jobs in the state — and Annunziata — who is moving to Scotland to complete a master's degree — have decided to embrace the uncertainty.

What they have learned during their time at USF St. Petersburg will help them adapt to the new circumstances, both felt.

Over the past four years, Annunziata has learned to always be open to new experiences.

“Try everything. Do everything,” she said. “If something comes your way and you're even slightly interested in it,

do it. See if you like it, love it, hate it. Because it'll really help shape your future.”

This is how Shaffer determined what she wanted her future career path to be.

“I want to be a lab technician for wildlife research,” she told *The Crow's Nest*. “Being a lab tech isn't really that different from just doing the regular labs that you do while earning your degree and I really, really enjoyed that whole process.”

Lowrie felt the same.

They are applying for a range of positions in her hometown and, though uncertain, she said that their time at USF St. Petersburg taught her how to be “more outgoing and extroverted,” which can help her make future connections and secure jobs.

Lowrie also said that one of the best ways to prepare themselves for graduation is to try and leave the St. Petersburg campus with no regrets.

Shaffer is trying to

achieve this as well, and has a list of things she wishes to do before her commencement ceremony such as having a grad photo shoot, attending a concert of her choosing and going on a vacation with her friends.

She also wants to make the most of her time by being involved on campus.

“Throw yourself into the community here,” she advised fellow seniors. “Because it's probably going to be the closest-knit community that you'll have for the next couple of years before you fully settle into your life after this.”

Annunziata found that the campus community was immensely helpful throughout her undergraduate experience and hopes she can build a similar support system in Scotland.

She has contributed to the USF St.

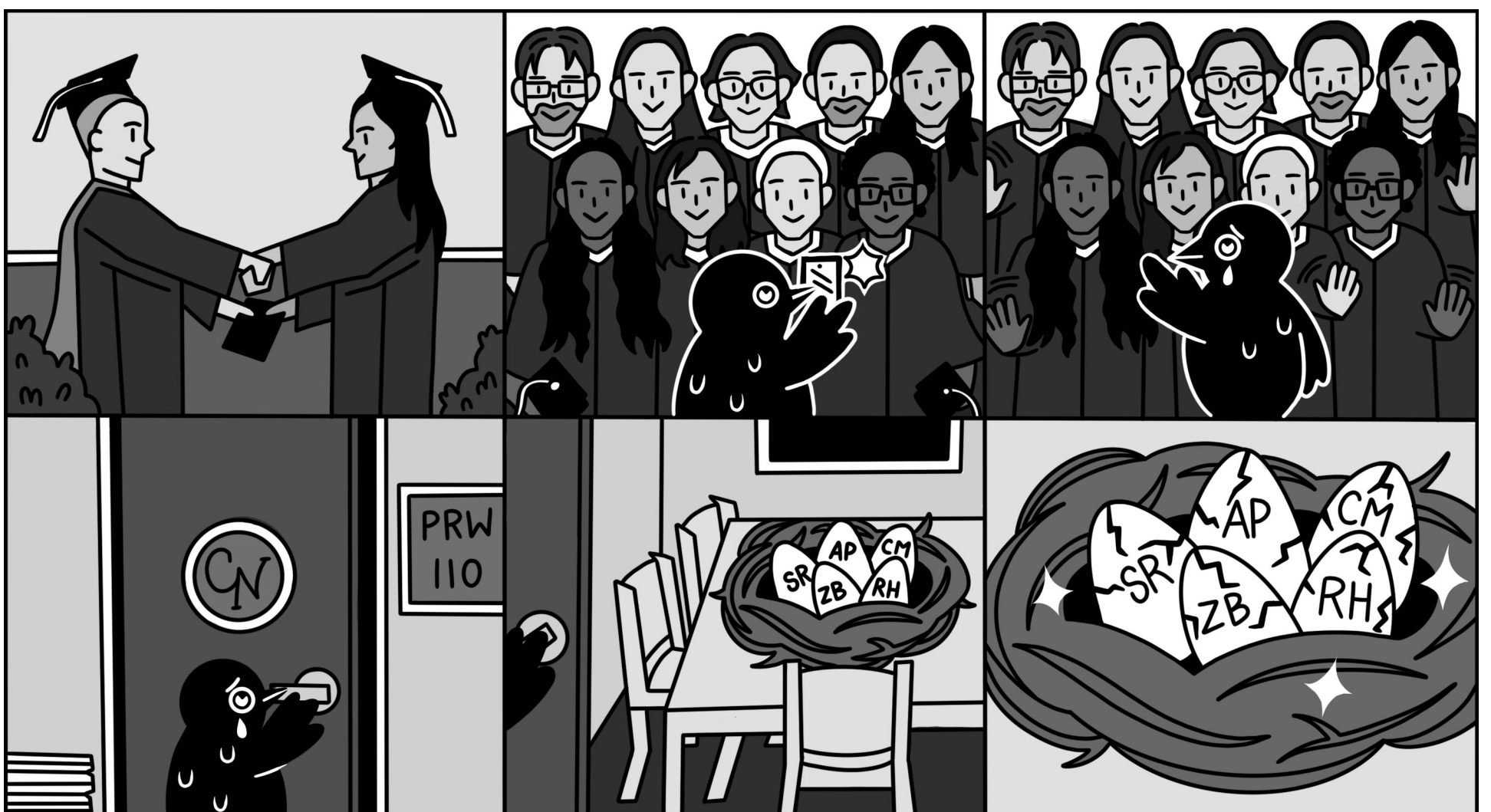
Petersburg community by becoming active in multiple organizations and planning several important events on campus.

She feels content, she told *The Crow's Nest*, because she helped to create traditions, such as the Left vs. Right debate that has now occurred two semesters in a row, that she hopes will extend beyond her time at the university.

“I've loved all my four years here, but you know, it's just like a certain time where it's like, ‘Okay, you've got to move on,’” Annunziata said. “You've got to close this book and then move on to the next.”

And to all of the graduating seniors who are feeling nervous, “embrace that fear,” Annunziata said. “Turn it into excitement. Don't let it control you, let it move you.”

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Comic by Kaila McEwan, a graphic arts senior with a concentration in illustration.

TRANSFERS SHOW PROMISE DURING SPRING GAME

By **DOMINIC FEO**
Crow's Nest Staff

Students and fans of the University of South Florida football team gathered at Corbett Stadium on April 19 to watch the team's first spring Game under new head coach Brian Hartline.

The audience of 3,878 is now the largest Bulls crowd to watch the team's newest transfers find their footing.

Transfer quarterbacks Luke Kromenoek [Florida State] and Michael Van Buren Jr. [Louisiana State University] continued their

battle for the starting spot next September. Both passers were able to find open receivers, but Van Buren Jr. separated himself by using his legs to gain yards when plays broke down.

"There will be a quarterback battle for a while," Hartline said about competition at the position. "That being said, they're both doing a great job. I think the most encouraging part is that they're encouraging each other. So, as far as today went, I think the ball wasn't put in jeopardy too often."

No position group made

more plays however, than the revamped running back room. Aside from Alvon Isaac and Chase Garnett, freshman Connor Matthews and transfers Jason Collins Jr. and D.J. Crowther broke off big runs throughout the day.

The first score of the game was a long run from Collins Jr., who squeezed through defenders before sprinting up the left sideline. This will be Collins Jr.'s first year in the FBS, following three years at Morgan State.

Several Bulls defenders stood out, including corner

Jair Murphy, who caught a diving interception in the endzone. Murphy was more of a playmaker on special teams last season, blocking two punts.

The aggressive play from Murphy is exactly what new defensive coordinator Josh Aldridge wants from his squad. Coaching Eastern Carolina University's defense last season, the Pirates let up the second least yards in the American Conference.

"I like what I see so far," defensive end Michael Williams II said. "Since [Aldridge] got here, he has

been on me, and he has been on all of us. Honestly, since he got here, I can say that our defense has improved tremendously."

Corner back Masiyah Limehouse also looked disruptive, breaking up passes throughout the day. Limehouse joins the Bulls this offseason after committing last May.

Until opening day kickoff against Florida International University on Sept. 5, USF will focus on recruiting the first high school class of Hartline's USF tenure.

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Jason Collins Jr. running to the endzone.

PHOTO BY
IRENA MESA



QB Michael Van Buren Jr. threw for 267 yards and 3 TDs for LSU in the Texas Bowl on December 27.

PHOTO BY
ALEX FELSKI



Head coach Brian Hartline won a national championship as an assistant coach at Ohio State University last season.

PHOTO BY
IRENA MESA



Transfer quarterback Michael Van Buren Jr. during the USF Football 2026 Spring Game.

PHOTO BY
ALEX FELSKI