

# Students, faculty, and community members attend MLK Day Celebration at Bethel A. Baptist

**Madeleine Pollock**  
Copy Editor

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Monday, Jan. 19, many community members, students, and faculty flocked to the courthouse in downtown Brevard to march to Bethel A. Baptist Church for a celebration honoring the life and legacy of activist and visionary, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The event was sponsored by the Brevard chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Bethel A. Baptist Church, the City of Brevard, and Derrick Gardner. It brought together people from all walks of life and emphasized the importance of remembering MLK Jr. as well as an appreciation for the arts in the community.

Over a 100 participants showed up at the courthouse, with many carrying home-made signs in support of racial equality, queer rights, immigration, and other social issues inspired by the inclusive message of MLK Jr. Many more community members joined later into the evening.

After the crowd marched to Bethel A. Baptist, they were met with refreshments, baked goods, and a chance to catch up with others.

At 6:30 p.m., the congregation moved to the chapel, where Reverend Dr. Pamela C. Holder kicked off multiple speeches, presentations, and songs that offered reflection about the life of MLK Jr. “It is good to come together as a community in days and times like these,” she said.

Holder was followed by greetings from Mayor Maureen Copelof and the new Chief of Police, Christy Wentzell, who is the first woman to hold the position.

“My heart finds strength in Dr. King’s message, a message which will never be forgotten and can never be corrupted because it resonates with the truth and the power of love,” said Mayor Copelof. “And that power and that truth are stronger than any political faction or governmental decision, and it will ultimately prevail.”

Wentzell’s speech was about how, as the new Chief of Police, she would “lead with humility” and “listen with intention.” She also touched on how the Police must be held accountable for their actions. Finally, Wentzell shared her favorite MLK Jr. quote, saying, “The time is always right to do what is right.”

Later, community member Alex Boyd shared excerpts from MLK Jr.’s famous speech, “I Have a Dream,” and Councilman Dean Lytle read excerpts from “I’ve Been to The Mountain Top,” which was the last speech MLK Jr. gave before he was assassinated in 1968.

The speeches were broken up by songs from the community choir, dances and skits from the youth program at Bethel A. Baptist, known as Rise and Shine, and a liturgical dance by community member Nita Long.

The final speaker was Reverend Dr. Claude Forehand II of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Lincolnton, N.C., who gave a sermon on the power of love. Rev. Forehand was an animated, lively, and passionate public speaker who captivated the audience with teachings from the bible, personal anecdotes, and real-world applications in a way more reflective of spoken-word poetry than a traditional church sermon.

“Hate is the absence of love,” he said, while reflecting on how current social and political events are creating hate and fracturing communities. “We need to continue to lift MLK’s dream by being intentional in practicing love.”



BC Prof Dr. Betsy Burrows holding a sign that says “Love Wins.” Photo by Madeliene Pollock.

# Origin Story: white squirrels in Brevard

## *National Squirrel Day allows us to revisit our history*

**Autumn Jones**

Editor in Chief

The town of Brevard and the college campus are well-known for a few things, like being the land of waterfalls, but one of the most notable has become a mascot of sorts: the white squirrel. Wednesday, Jan. 21st, was National Squirrel Appreciation Day, so it seems fitting to address the bizarre history of the mascot of Brevard.

The national day was created in 2001 by Christy Hargrove, who, according to Fremont News-Messenger, was a freshman at UNC-Asheville at the time, and a wildlife rehabilitator affiliated with the Western North Carolina Nature Center.

The history of the white squirrels in Brevard is actually well-documented, says an article by Laura Sperry from the Transylvania County Library. According to Mull family stories, the squirrels originated from Hawaii. On the way to Madison, FL, a carnival man's caravan tipped over, and two of the squirrels escaped. They took up residence in a nearby pecan grove and were reproducing so much that the owner of the grove began to catch and sell pairs of them. H.H Mull was given a pair and gifted them to his niece, Barbara, in 1949.

Barbara's father

was transferred for work in 1951, and their new living situation did not allow pets, so she gave her squirrels to her grandfather. One of the squirrels escaped, and the other was so lifeless without the other that he was released as well.

The squirrels populated the county, and in 1986, a city ordinance was passed that "designated the Brevard city limits as a squirrel sanctuary. All squirrels, but especially the Brevard white squirrels, are protected."

In a letter to the White Squirrel Institute, Barbara Mull Lang wrote, "I never dreamed that they [the squirrels] would survive, but over the months and years, I would have people tell me they saw one of my white squirrels on Maple Street and then other places. I enjoy seeing my white squirrels, 'great grand squirrels,' when I come home."

Although Brevard is not the only home to white squirrels, it has one of the largest populations of these animals. There are also notable populations of these squirrels in Marionville, Missouri, Kenton, Tennessee, and other states like South Carolina, Florida, and Virginia.

Thanks to the survival instinct of Mull's original pair, these unique squirrels continue to flourish. Let's ensure we continue to protect and admire the neighbors that make our town so distinct.

For another opportunity to appreciate our furry friends, mark your calendars for Feb. 2nd to celebrate White Squirrel Day at the White Squirrel Shoppe from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### THE CLARION

#### SENIOR STAFF

Editor in Chief . . . . . Autumn Jones

Managing Editor . . . . . Zoe Hughes

Copy Editor . . . . . Madeleine Pollock

Layout & Design . . . . . Emma Murray

Faculty Advisor . . . . . John Padgett

#### STAFF WRITERS

Abigail Callahan Ivelysse Leighton

Danniel Huestis Jordan Ramey

Rue Perez

The Clarion is a student-run college newspaper produced by student journalists enrolled at Brevard College. Unsigned editorials represent the collective opinion of the staff of The Clarion. Other opinions expressed in this newspaper are those of respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the faculty, staff or administration of Brevard College.

All correspondence should be mailed to:

*The Clarion*, Brevard College, One Brevard College Drive, Brevard, NC 28712, or send

E-mail to [clarion@brevard.edu](mailto:clarion@brevard.edu)

[clarion.brevard.edu](http://clarion.brevard.edu)

**Letters Policy:** The Clarion welcomes letters to the editor. We reserve the right to edit letters for length or content. We do not publish letters whose authorship cannot be verified.



Nado the white squirrel joins festivities at BC Day. Photo by Alecia Janerio via Flickr. During the COVID pandemic, Brevard College decided to create Nado (short for TOR-nado) for our mascot. An Instagram post caption detailing why says, "Given the unique nature of the white squirrel and the general love for the alabaster critter here in Brevard, Nado was the perfect fit to represent Brevard College."



Associate professor of mathematics Charles Wallis poses in front of Moore Science with the W. W. Rankin Memorial Award, the highest honor awarded by the North Carolina Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

# Brevard College math professor wins prestigious statewide award

Dr. Charles Wallis, associate professor of mathematics at Brevard College, has been honored by the North Carolina Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCCTM) as the 2025 recipient of the W.W. Rankin Memorial Award, the highest honor that the statewide organization can bestow upon a member.

The Rankin Award is designed to recognize and honor individuals for their outstanding contributions to NCCTM and to mathematics education. The award is named in memory of W.W. Rankin, Professor of Mathematics at Duke University. Wallis accepted the award at the NCCTM's 55th annual State Mathematics Conference held recently in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

"I was overwhelmed and surprised to receive this award," said Wallis. "It was very special and moving for me to be honored. With our focus on teaching and education, it's meaningful for Brevard College to be recognized as well."

The NCCTM awards committee cited Wallis's work from 2014-17 as a co-lead for Project LEAD, a statewide project that supported approximately 250 high school mathematics teachers from across North Carolina in deepening their understanding of mathematics and strengthening their teaching pedagogies through two-week summer institutes. In total, Wallis has been an active member of NCCTM for more than 25 years, providing sustained service to the organization.

A native of Morganton, North Carolina, Wallis is currently in his 20th year teaching at Brevard College, where he has taught mathematics since 2006. Before he arrived at BC, he served as an assistant professor and later an associate professor at Western Carolina University for 11 years after beginning his teaching career at Gainesville College (Georgia). Wallis holds a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science from North Carolina State University with his Master's and Ph.D. in Mathematical Sciences from Clemson University.

At Brevard College, Wallis is a past recipient of the Student Government Association's Teacher of the Year Award. This academic year at BC,

he has been teaching courses such as Pre-Calculus, Calculus 2, Modern Algebra, Probability & Statistics and a theoretical calculus class titled "Real Analysis".

"Dr. Charles Wallis has always been a strong supporter of students," said Dr. Jennifer Frick-Ruppert, Brevard College vice president of academic affairs and dean of faculty. "It is no surprise that he was recently recognized with an award from the North Carolina Council of Teachers of Mathematics that emphasized his support for mathematics education in the state. Brevard College is proud of its excellent faculty, and of Dr. Wallis in particular, who receives this prestigious award recognizing his quality in educating our students."

Brevard College joins a group of institutions that have produced past winners of the NCCTM's Rankin Memorial Award, including Appalachian State University, Duke University, East Carolina University, Elon University, North Carolina State University, and Western Carolina University.

The award represents the latest example of academic excellence at BC, which has been named one of the Best Colleges in 2026 by U.S. News & World Report, as well as being recognized as a College of Distinction both nationally and in the state of North Carolina. Additionally, Dr. Mel Bringle, professor of philosophy and religious studies at Brevard College, was selected earlier this academic year as the nation's outstanding teacher by the Association of General and Liberal Studies.

The North Carolina Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCCTM) is the professional organization in North Carolina for the teaching of mathematics. An affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, NCCTM's membership includes teachers from all levels, kindergarten through graduate school, and other professionals who work with curriculum and materials for the teaching of mathematics. For more information on the North Carolina Council of Teachers of Mathematics, visit [nctm.org](http://nctm.org).

## Book Review:

# 'The Housemaid' by Freida McFadden



Ivelysse Leighton

Staff Writer

I rated Freida McFadden's "The Housemaid" 4 out of 5 stars. It's a psychological thriller that genuinely knows how to unsettle its readers in the most subtle ways possible. From the very beginning, the novel establishes an eerie, uncomfortable atmosphere that keeps you constantly questioning what is actually happening behind the scenes. Nothing feels quite right, and that sense of unease never fully lets up.

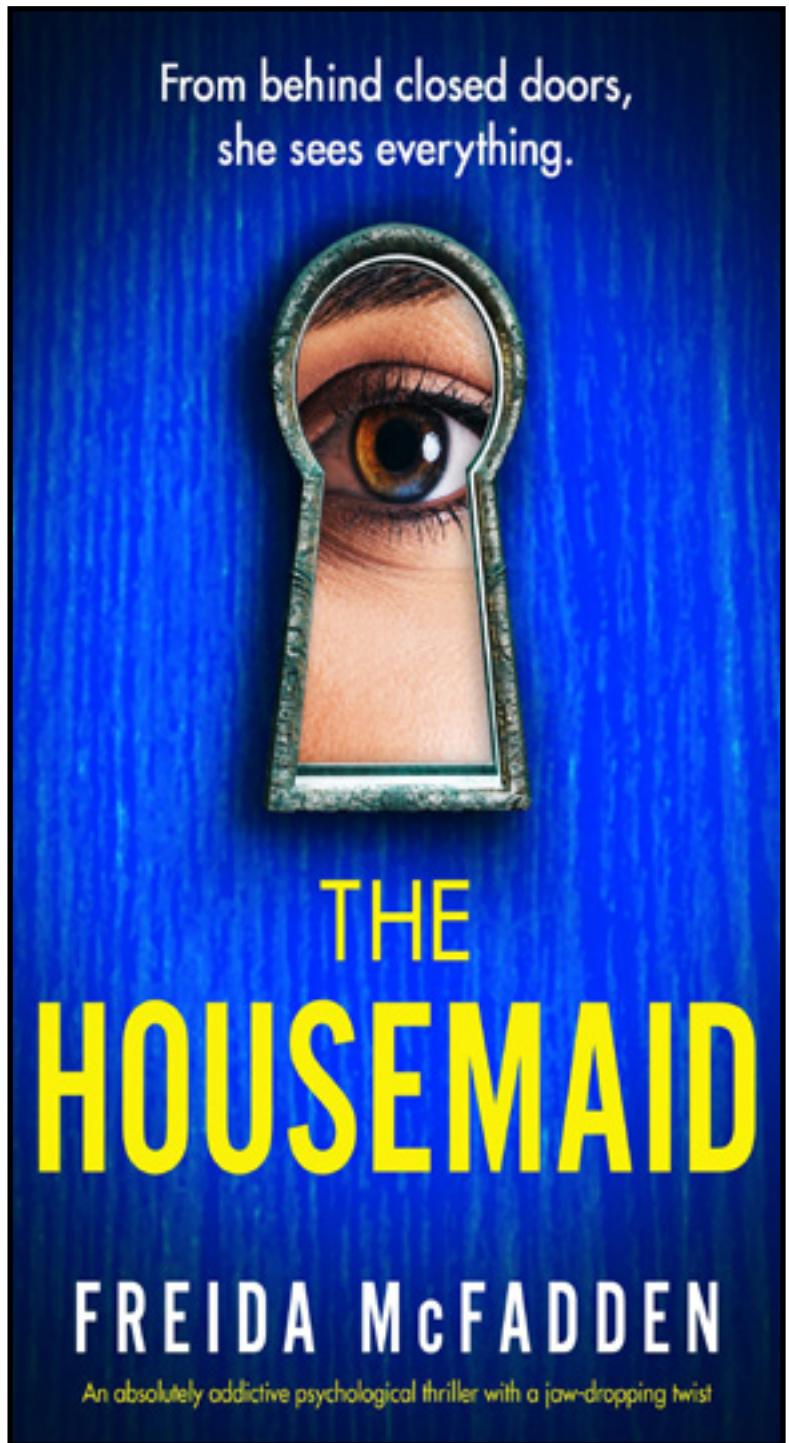
The story initially unfolds slowly and creepily, through the unsettling relationship between Millie, a young woman hired as a live-in housemaid, and Nina, the wealthy woman who employs her. Millie starts the story with an air of secrecy, while Nina, who presents herself as overly friendly, is almost too kind. Throughout the book, Nina's actions are increasingly strange, erratic, and frustrating, creating a tense environment that leaves the reader as uneasy as Millie. This early portion of the book leans heavily into psychological suspense rather than outright danger, which works incredibly well with building anticipation throughout the entire book. When the story reaches its second half, however, it shifts dramatically. What began as unsettling becomes genuinely dangerous, and the plot twist completely redefines everything that came before it. I can confidently say I never saw it coming.

One of the strongest elements of "The Housemaid" is Millie's mystery. As a protagonist, she is intentionally hard to read, and much of her past remains hidden throughout the novel. This lack of information heightens the book's suspense, forcing the reader to question her motivations and reliability constantly. Watching her backstory slowly unravel is engaging and adds depth and suspense to the overall narrative. That said, this same mystery also creates a slight disconnect between the reader and Millie. We know so little about Millie at the start that it can be challenging to form a strong emotional connection with her early on, which occasionally made me feel more like an observer rather than a participant in her story.

I also had the opportunity to see the film adaptation, and overall, it captured the book's essence exceptionally well. The movie stayed true to the core storyline and successfully translated the tension and twists to the screen. While Sydney Sweeney, who portrayed Millie, fell a bit flat in terms of emotional depth, Amanda Seyfried delivered a standout performance as Nina. Seyfried portrayed Nina's emotional shifts and eventual transformation with phenomenal skill, making her performance one of the adaptation's strongest aspects.

Although the movie's ending was slightly altered, it still followed the same general premise as the book, making the change feel intentional rather than disruptive.

Overall, "The Housemaid" is a gripping psychological thriller filled with tension, mystery, and a shocking twist that lingers long after the final page. Despite minor shortcomings in character connection, it is an engaging and suspenseful read. I would absolutely recommend this book to anyone looking for a dark, fast-paced thriller that keeps you guessing until the very end.



# Why you should visit the Asheville Art Museum

**Danniel Huestis**  
Staff Writer

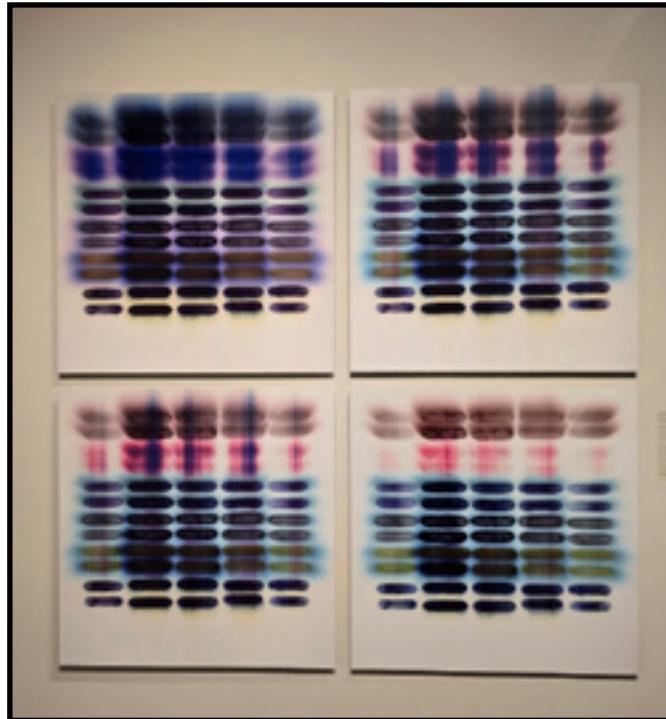
If you are bored, tired, and need ideas for things to do, think about taking a short trip to Asheville to see the Asheville Art Museum. You can find this amazing building in the midst of downtown Asheville. Although admission is not free, college students get half off at \$10 a ticket.

With adult tickets costing \$20 and seniors 65 and older paying \$15, it is not a bad price overall to get in. Each ticket allows you to see all the artwork they are showing, which spans across three floors, each with multiple rooms, with particular floors and sections being dedicated to specific exhibitions.

It would be a waste not to take advantage of this opportunity to see some pretty amazing art. They are showing six exhibitions in total, three of which are temporary exhibitions. All the info for these exhibitions can be found on their website by looking up the Asheville Art Museum.

The three temporary exhibitions are “Women of the Pacific Northwest,” showing from Nov. 21, 2025, to May 17, 2026. Next is “Highwater,” showing from Oct. 29, 2025, to April 26, 2026. The last of these three is “Look Homeward, Angel,” showing from Oct. 1, 2025, to Feb. 22, 2026.

The four pieces that stood out the most were Jaq Chartier’s “Suntest #1 (Day 2, 14, 17, 74) (2023),” Katy Stone’s “Ray (2016)” and Victoria Adam’s “Clear Blue” paired with “Long Tide,” both 2016. Although those listed artworks were my favorite, each floor was spectacular – each was filled with captivating art that will pull you in and steal your attention.



Jaq Chartier's "Suntest #1 (Day 2, 14, 17, 74) (2023),"



Katy Stone's "Ray (2016)"

On display, you will see art that has been created in many different types of media, like stunning abstract and representational sculptures, wonderful and gorgeous paintings of various kinds, amazing carpentry, brilliant blueprints, and much more!

So take time to plan a trip to the Asheville Art Museum. Go with your significant other, friends, family, or just solo, and get lost in truly breathtaking art while experiencing new things.



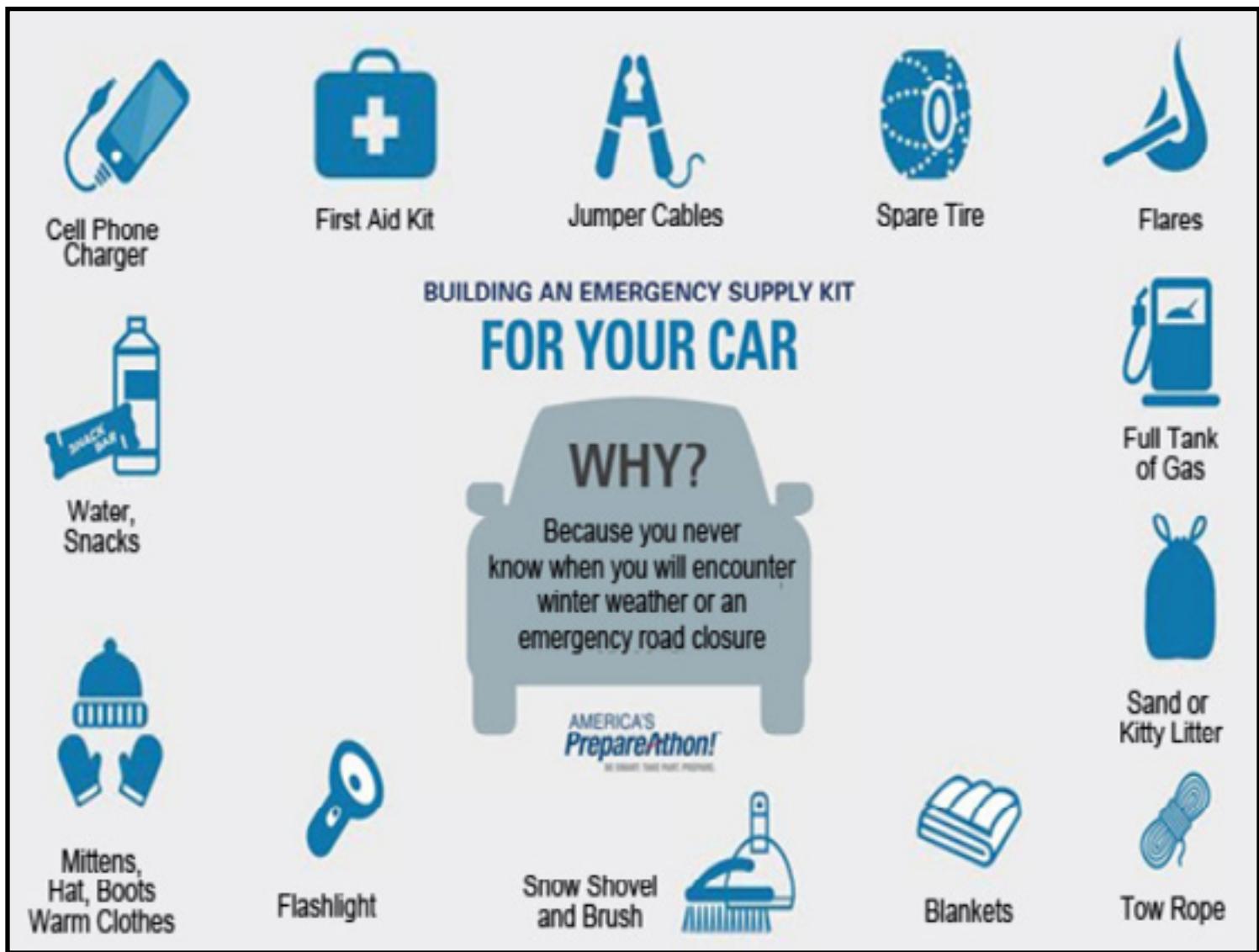
Victoria Adam's "Clear Blue"

# Brevard College cancels classes for Monday and Tuesday due to incoming weather

Due to a Winter Storm Watch for the region, Brevard College has canceled classes for Monday, January 26, and Tuesday, January 27, out of an abundance of caution. This decision prioritizes community safety while giving students additional time and flexibility to make travel arrangements should they choose to leave campus ahead of the storm.

The College will remain open and fully operational, with dining services available and staff on campus to support those who remain. Preparations are in place to ensure a safe and supportive environment throughout the event.

Classes are scheduled to resume Wednesday, January 28.



An informational graphic from the National Weather Service of items to keep stocked in case of emergency to prepare for a winter storm.

# What's not cookin' at Brevard?

## *Dining services leave many questions unanswered...again.*

**Zoe Hughes**  
Managing Editor

For the first two weeks of the semester, Brevard College's dining services have had a major pendulum swing; they have gone from fully ready to enact renovation plans to going back to square one.

In a mass email from Debora D'Anna, Dean for Students and Vice President for Student Life and Services, she said, "For several weeks, the College has been ready to start construction on the new Student Center and move to our temporary dining plan..."

The "temporary dining plan" refers to the food trucks that were outside Boshammer Gymnasium every day during the normal cafeteria hours, and Bill's Boiler House is being given an expanded menu and prolonged hours. According to the same email, D'Anna explained, "We are awaiting the county to complete its paperwork. Upon the county's completion, we will break ground on the new Student Center and commence the temporary dining plan."

As a student, it is hard to gauge the dining timeline because the college has not been forthcoming with information regarding these changes. They have provided surface-level information via written correspondence, but

these emails lack firm reasoning and answers to other questions. Some example questions: why is Coltrane not operating as promised last semester, why start alternate dining plans when paperwork has not been completed, or will there be more healthy options provided in the temporary dining plan? All of these questions and more are being asked by real students.

When emailed with questions regarding the new dining plans, Kaiser Whitfield, the general manager of dining services, said he was not privy to this information. He redirected me to Sophie Lynn-Heap, the culinary director, but she has yet to respond to any question sent to her.

This is an uncertain time for students and faculty alike. The normally trusted source of nutrition and community has begun to waver, and it is unclear why. Around two-thirds of the student body at Brevard are athletes, making knowing sources of nutrition and energy on campus vitally important.

The Clarion's goal is not to bash or defame our dining services. We understand that navigating the construction of the new student center has been rocky; the Brevard campus community merely wants to know what is going on with their main source of food.



A photo of the proposed student center. Via Brevard College.

# Dominant effort leads Brevard to eighth-straight victory

Brevard College women's basketball (14-3, 9-1 USA South) outscored Pfeiffer (9-7, 7-3 USAS) by 24 in the first half, including a 24-10 second-quarter advantage, and capped the contest off by outpacing PFU by 22 in the second half to drill the Falcons 87-41 on Tuesday evening at Merner Gymnasium in Misenheimer, N.C.

With the victory, the Tornados have now won eight games in a row, all against USA South opposition.

Sophomore guard Analee Morris paced four double-digit scorers with 20 points in 21 minutes, going 8-of-9 from the charity stripe. Fellow sophomore forward Kayden Johnson added 16 points with nine boards, four assists, and three blocked shots. Christena Rhone drained three 3-pointers in a 15-point performance to lead bench scoring for Brevard, while Olivia Miller notched her sixth double-double of 2025-26 with 14 points and 10 rebounds. Jada Petty-Wilkins stuffed the stat sheet with eight points alongside seven assists, five rebounds, and four steals.

Brevard opened the game up in the first quarter with a highly efficient 10-of-16 mark from the field, scoring 21 points to open up a 10-point lead, 21-11. The Tornados proceeded to begin the second quarter on a 15-0 scoring run, outpacing the Falcons 24-10 in the frame to push their lead to 24 points at the intermission, 45-21.

Morris led all Tornados with 13 points at the break, making four field goals with one 3-pointer in addition to a 4-of-5 mark at the free throw line. Miller joined Morris in double figures at the break, scoring 10 points with five boards. Johnson added eight points on four made field goals with five

rebounds and two blocked shots, as the Tornados logged seven first-half steals with three blocked shots in the stanza.

BC went 60% from the field in the first half, while the Tornado defense smothered Pfeiffer and forced the hosts into a 6-of-35 (17%) mark from the field and held the lethal Falcon offense to just one 3-pointer made. Pfeiffer trailed despite out-rebounding BC on the offensive glass, 12-3, as the Tornados dominated the paint in the first half, outscoring PFU 30-6 down low.

From halftime on, the Tornados had little trouble putting the contest out of reach. BC sprinted past Pfeiffer in the third period, 20-7, hitting three 3-pointers in the stanza. The Tornados then controlled the fourth quarter 22-13 to wrap up the 46-point victory.

Brevard shot 53% in the contest, hit seven 3-pointers, and shot 41% from beyond the arc. The Tornados went 17-of-18 at the free throw line, while Pfeiffer controlled the glass 51-44, including a wide 26-7 margin on the offensive glass. The Tornados have now defeated nine opponents in 2025-26 by 20 or more points.

Brevard now awaits a rematch of the 2025 USA South Conference Tournament Championship, as round one of the season against Southern Virginia is next on the docket. The contest is currently scheduled for Saturday at 2 p.m., but is subject to adjustment due to pending winter weather conditions. Stay tuned to BCTornados.com and @BCTornados on social media for updates regarding any potential schedule adjustments.

# Hoosiers win first national championship

**Jordan Ramey**

Staff Writer

On Monday night, the Indiana Hoosiers and their perfect record faced off against the impressive Miami Hurricanes for the National Championship. Coming into this refreshing format of playoff football, Indiana was the one-seed and Miami was the ten-seed out of twelve teams selected.

The Miami Hurricanes, aka the Canes, were seven and a half point underdogs heading into their matchup with the number-one Hoosiers. The Canes are led by head coach Mario Cristobal and sixth-year quarterback Carson Beck. Heading into the National Championship, it was obvious that the Canes' defense was elite and had clearly dominated every team in the playoffs; they would fall short against the Heisman-winning quarterback Fernando Mendoza and his Hoosiers.

The Indiana Hoosiers were a dominant force all season long, and it showed in the playoffs, when they both Alabama and Oregon by over thirty-points. En route to the National Championship, Fernando Mendoza was named the Heisman for being the best college football player in the country. In his second year as head coach, Curt Cignetti has brought life to Indiana football with a winning record of 27-2 in two seasons and brought a national championship to a university that historically has never been successful at football.

Wrapping up the 2025 football season, we see Bloomington, Indiana quite possibly becoming the new football capital of the world for collegiate athletes. It's going to be interesting to see if Indiana can continue its success with a large portion of their roster either graduating or heading to the NFL draft. To quote the Hoosier head coach, "We're going to enjoy this moment, take a day off tomorrow, get back at it Wednesday."