The CLARION
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BC community grows as faculty welcome new family members
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'Bigger than words': A letter of gratitude from Stixx & Janelle

Editor's Note: The following is a joint letter written by Brevard College student-athlete Stixx and his mother, Janelle, following his recent football injury. The piece weaves together both of their perspectives—opening and closing with Janelle's reflections, with Stixx's personal message to his coaches, teammates, and medical staff in the center.

From Janelle:

This injury has been devastating for Stixx, our family, and everyone who loves him. There really are no words to describe the emotions that come with something like this. The fear, the uncertainty, the questions, and not knowing exactly what the road ahead will look like. But through it all, one thing has been abundantly clear: we are surrounded by some truly incredible people.

From Stixx:

I am beyond humbled and deeply grateful for the overwhelming outpouring of love, compassion, and support that the Brevard community has shown us. What started as a college experience for me has become so much more. The staff, the coaches, the professors, and the people who have stepped in along the way have become an extension of our family. And that is something I will never take for granted.

To all of my coaches, and especially Coach Alvarez, who waited at the hospital for my mom to arrive, thank you. That gesture may have seemed small to you, but in that moment, it meant more than I could ever explain.

Sharad, Nacole, Debbie, Angie, Rachel, all of my professors, and the countless others at Brevard who have checked in, shown up, offered help, and wrapped their arms around us — please know that your kindness has not gone unnoticed. There are so many of you, and I wish I could name every single person. And to Ken, thank you for coming to pray with me.

And to the incredible team at Mission Hospital, you have somehow managed to make a hospital feel like a hotel. The nurses, doctors, and everyone overseeing my care have been nothing short of wonderful. Thank you for your patience, your compassion, and for putting up with all of my antics along the way. You have made an incredibly difficult experience a little easier to navigate.

Molly, Casey, Noah, Cam, KP, A.G., Sam, Tori, and the whole Jones RA team— and the list goes on….I honestly don't have the words to express how much your support has meant to us. From the very beginning, you've shown up in ways that I will never forget. As we begin what may be a long road to recovery, having people like you in our corner means more than you know.

Scruggs !!! You good, brother! It's love. It's football #2.

From Janelle:

Brevard has given Stixx experiences, life lessons, friendships, memories, and football — things he will carry with him long after his playing days are over. But what I will carry with me is something even greater: the way this community has shown up for my son and our family when we needed it most.

I am forever indebted to you all. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

As his mom, I have been overwhelmed since the very beginning of what has now become Stixx's road to recovery. Every day brings a different emotion, and while I still struggle to understand why this happened, I have been reminded time and time again of the goodness that exists in people.

Every single person I've encountered since Stixx arrived here has shown him genuine compassion, kindness, and care. Not because they had to, but because that's simply who they are.

And as difficult as it is to say, there's a part of me that feels grateful this happened here, at Brevard, surrounded by the people who have become such an important part of our lives.

I wish I could adequately put into words what your kindness, prayers, calls, messages, visits, and acts of support have meant to us. But some things are simply bigger than words.

You have reminded me that even in the most unexpected and difficult chapters of life, we don't have to walk through them alone.

Thank you for loving on my son. Thank you for showing up for our family. And thank you for being part of Stixx's story.

We will never forget it.

We love you.

Stixx & Janelle



Last week, prayer for Stixx was held on the Ives-Lemel field. Students, faculty, and staff showed their support for him and his recovery. Photo by Tori Gates.

General Education Reflection Prize

Submission Deadline: ***February 8th, 2027***

Cash Awards!

Two submissions will be selected to receive $250 each

Guidelines:

You may compete in one of the following categories:

- Best Essay (750–1500 words)
- Best Creative Submission (any medium — visual art, music, drama, video, podcast, etc.)

Your reflection should explore how your General Education coursework has shaped your intellectual development, personal growth, and preparation for life after college.

Scan here for full Guidelines:

Scan here to Submit by 2/8!

Questions? Email buschelk@brevard.edu

Brevard College science division hosts speaker event with Dr. Sydney Moyo

Tom Webb
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, Nov 18th, the Science and Math Division hosted a speaker event with Dr. Sydney Moyo. Moyo is a professor at Louisiana State University and came to speak to students within the science department about the process of pursuing a master's and doctorate.

Moyo's presentation focused on recent research he conducted regarding how ecosystems in Louisiana change when the salinity of the water varies. He studied several different levels in the food chain and how each level's diets changed as the salinity of the water was reduced.

Changes in salinity are a pressing issue in Louisiana, as, due to rising water levels, Louisiana residents are running out of land. Historically, the solution has been to pump water out of certain areas to create more access to dry land, but this has resulted in large alterations in the natural habitats within these areas. As the habitats themselves change, the organisms present within them, as well as the food they eat, change.

In terms of advice, Dr Moyo recommended that science majors pay attention to details when applying to graduate and doctoral programs. Something as simple as reading a professor's website and following the instructions they give on reaching out to them immediately sets you aside when reaching out about a program they are interested in.

Moyo also recommended that students find something that they are truly interested in and find ways that that interest can relate to a professor's master's program. He stated that there are rarely going to be perfect matches, but by finding a way to connect your interest to a professor's program, you'll still be able to move towards your goal.

While not every concern or fear was mitigated by Moyo's talk, it did give valuable insight into what the path forward for many of us might be. The world of graduate school is a complicated one, and there will be failures, but the important part is going to be not giving up when those roadblocks occur. Through perseverance and diligence, graduate school is going



Dr. Moyo

BC alum Jess Wiegandt Gomez brings 'A River Called Home' film to campus

Cruz Zarco Santoyo
Contributor

Jess Wiegandt Gomez is a Brevard College graduate who turned a childhood spent on the water into an award-winning short film, "A River Called Home. Wiegandt brought the film to Brevard College this past Wednesday, where she screened it for students in MG 125 at 7 p.m.

Wiegandt's film follows four women who follow the James River in Virginia and paddle 350 miles to Chesapeake Bay. The 27-minute film follows them through the three weeks the team spent on the water, and explores themes related to waterways protection and education.



A still from "A River Called Home," the film BC alum Jess Wiegandt Gomez produced for her master's degree at American University. The 27-minute film has aired on PBS and can be viewed on her website, https://www.jesswgomez.com/.

Wiegandt first earned a bachelor's degree in wilderness leadership and experiential education, as well as a degree in English from Brevard College. After Brevard, she attended American University in Washington, D.C., where she received her Master of Fine Arts in environmental and social impact filmmaking.

According to American University's School of Communication, Wiegandt had planned a documentary about jaguars in Panama; however, the COVID-19 pandemic canceled the trip.

After the previous trip was canceled, Wiegandt realized she had a great story in her own backyard. Wiegandt had her own kayak at the age of six and paddled regularly with her parents, who were both paddlesport instructors.

Wiegandt told Sony Alpha, "This project was really special to me because I got to feature the river that really kind of raised me into who I am today." And in the opening of her film, she says that the James river shaped who she is today: "It raised me."

For this journey, Wiegandt brought along Grace Eggleston, who served as the director of photography, Beth Ebisch, who was in charge of water quality data, and Sejal Kinker, Wiegandt's Canoe instructor, who managed river safety.

Along the route, the team collected water samples and did a water quality study. From the water test, the team was able to see how agricultural and industrial runoff and sewage overflows have affected the James for years.

Collecting these water samples opened up experiential education opportunities for a high school IB science program along the James where the class was able to do the testing on the water that the crew collected. According to Wiegandt, the interest in that program doubled the year after their expedition.

This film allows people to follow and see how a historic river like the James can be polluted, and in 2021, when the film was being created, the river was rated a B–. In 2023, the film received a Capital Emmy from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. It also won recognition at the Chesapeake Film Festival.

Wiegandt now works as a freelance cinematographer, editor, and producer through Jess Wiegandt Productions, which she established in 2023.

What are the Clarion staffers doing for Thanksgiving break?

“For Thanksgiving this year, I'll be joining my boyfriend to visit his family in West Virginia. There's apparently going to be an insane amount of turkey and some very yummy pies! I think I've convinced them to add in a tarte Au Sucre, which is basically just a Quebec sugar pie haha. We've also signed up for the 5km Turkey Trot, which will be totally new for me.”

—Elli Clark; Staff Writer

“I’ll be going home to Yadkinville, NC. Plan on just finishing up schoolwork and spending time with family. We have a big family gathering where we have around 100 people. I like fried apple pie.”

—Jordan Ramey; Staff Writer

“I will be at home. I don’t really do anything for Thanksgiving, so I'll likely just be at home catching up on schoolwork over break. Sometimes my dad makes Chex mix when I'm home for Thanksgiving, though!”

—Emma Murray; Layout & Design

“This break I actually plan on staying here until Tuesday. This weekend there is a cyclocross race in Hendersonville that I plan on spectating on Sunday. The following Monday is actually my birthday; though there is nothing super duper extravagant planned, I'll find something cool to do with the friends I have still around.

On Tuesday, I will be meeting my family halfway to home (Florida) on Jekyll Island, GA, where my grandparents live on the beach of the state border. From that day until Sunday before break ends, it will be jam-packed with working on a boatload of late and important assignments. All the while, I will be enjoying the warmer weather down south.”

—Liam Smith; Staff Writer

“I will be hanging out mostly in Brevard and then heading to Charlotte for actual Thanksgiving dinner. I am hoping to have some time to get caught up on sleep and to get some fun bike rides, runs, or hikes in! Canadian Thanksgiving is quite similar to the US one (although it is in early October), so a lot of our foods are the same. I think my favourite Thanksgiving foods are pumpkin pie or the maple-bacon Brussels sprouts that my dad makes.”

—Madeleine Pollock; Managing Editor

“I will be at home! I want to spend time with my family before I begin student teaching next semester, so I will be making them participate in a bunch of games and activities. I am beyond excited to eat my mom’s mashed potatoes and baked mac-n-cheese.”

—Autumn Jones; Editor in Chief

The Brevard College community grows as faculty welcome new family members

Madeleine Pollock
Managing Editor

In the past few weeks there has been a baby boom; four new babies have been born to different faculty members. The Clarion staff would like to extend our congratulations to all the families!



Baby Frederick Hugh Taylor

Baby Frederick Hugh Taylor

Professor of Communication Dr. Sam Taylor and his wife welcomed a baby boy on Oct. 28. He weighed in at 7lbs 5oz. Dr. Taylor says, "Freddie and Mum are both doing well!" What an adorable little Nado!

Baby Waylon Jo White

Assistant Softball Coach Taylor White, and Director of Security Emily White announced the arrival of their baby boy on Nov. 15. He is 19.3 inches long and weighs 6.12 pounds. Look at that smile!



Baby Waylon Jo White

Baby Cannon Stefanos Hayward

Men's Lacrosse Head Coach Cameron Hayward and his partner welcomed a baby boy on Nov. 16. He weighs in at 7.44 pounds and measures 19 inches long. By the looks of it, he can already play lacrosse, too!



Baby Cannon Stefanos Hayward



Baby Owen Alexander

Baby Owen Alexander Whitaker

History Professor Dr. Abby Whitaker and family welcomed a baby boy on Nov. 14. The Dean of Spiritual and Religious Life, Dr. Sharad Creasman shared in a campus-wide email that "Abby, Clay, and Owen are doing well, and big sister Norah is already doting on him." Welcome to BC, Owen!

THE CLARION

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Late Bruins run sinks Tornados in home opener

The Brevard College men's basketball team (1–3) fell in a close matchup to Bob Jones (4–1), as the Bruins used a late run to earn an 89–85 victory on Tuesday night at the Boshamer Gymnasium.

The Tornados held a seven-point lead with 5:32 left to play after a steal and transition dunk by Jordyne Sutherland ignited the crowd at The Bosh. The Bruins would erase BC's 79–72 advantage with a 17–2 scoring run over the next five-plus minutes of play. The Tornados hit a couple late buckets, but ran out of time as Bob Jones secured the four-point win.

Reigning USA South Conference Rookie of the Week Carter Abernethy posted a career-high with 23 points, hitting six field goals and 10 free throws while hauling in a team-high eight boards. LeCedric Brown scored a career-high 15 points with four made 3-pointers, and Brock McKnight reached double figures with 14 points. Ryder Block provided a spark off the bench with seven points and six boards, while McKnight and Sutherland led the Tornado defense with three steals each.

The BJU trio of Braxton Murray, Lewis Robinson, and Brandon Wilkins paced the Bruins on Tuesday evening. Robinson scored a game-high 26 points with 10 rebounds for a double-double, and hit four 3-pointers. Murray added 24 points with three 3-pointers, and Wilkins put up 21 with three made 3-pointers as well. The trip combined for 10 of BJU's 12 made 3-pointers, as Carter McCarn hit two off the pine.

Brevard created several second-chance opportunities, turning 16 offensive rebounds into 20 points. BC scored 17 points in transition, its bench produced 19 points, and it turned its 11 steals into 23 points off turnovers. The Bruins shot the ball at a highly efficient clip, knocking in 58.6% of their field goal attempts, while holding the Tornados to a 41.4% mark. The contest featured 13 total lead changes and 12 ties.

Brevard hits the road for a DII exhibition at Lees-McRae on Saturday at 4 p.m. in Banner Elk, North Carolina.







Photos by Chris Fortman.

Hendersonville cyclocross race

Elli Clark
Staff Writer

This coming weekend, on Nov. 21 and 22, the Brevard College cycling team will participate in their local cyclocross race, just 30 minutes down the road in Hendersonville, NC. The venue of this race is Jackson Park, and the races begin as early as 8:10 a.m. for the Collegiate Cat 4/ Novice men's race, all the way till 3:25 p.m. for the Elite UCI men's race.

On Saturday, sophomore Wilsen Degarmo and freshman Eason Vaughn will lead the team off in the first race of the morning, lining up on the asphalt in 42°F to 46°F weather. After them, freshman Matilda Gentry will hear the whistle blow an hour later at 9:10 a.m. in her Collegiate Cat 4/Novice women''s race.

At 10:05 a.m., senior Madeleine Pollock, junior Ayana Gagne, sophomores Elli Clark, Lily-Rose and Cecilia Link, and freshman Lacey Dennis will start with the Collegiate women Cat1/2/3. To start the afternoon races, at 12:05 p.m., the Collegiate men Cat1/2/3 will head off with seniors Drew Degarmo and Elliot Salisbury, junior Max Canterbury, and freshmen Émilien Belzile, Asher Boegner, Grayson Franks, Griffith Watson, and Ethan Wood. Pollock and Clark will race for a second time that day in the women's Elite UCI at 1:15 p.m.

On Sunday, the schedule will look much the same, but will have a slightly smaller team competing on Brevard College's end.

In addition to a strong team from the college, there are some other college-adjacent racers to watch out for. That includes the team's head coach, Bradford Perley, racing in the single-speed category at 12:15 p.m., and alumni and 2026's Canadian National Champ, Tyler Clark, in the men's Elite UCI. There could also be sightings of Brevard's hall of famer, Cypress Gorry.

The map of the 2026 course can be found on the NCCX website, and it has a very similar outline to that of last year's, though riders will know for sure during their pre-ride this Friday, Nov. 20. If the courses are indeed the same, it will certainly be entertaining to witness. With a mixture of tight corners, off-camber sections, barriers, and steep and punchy climbs, riders will have their hands full.

If the thrill of the racing is not enough to motivate you to stop by and cheer, perhaps the offer of food will be. Local food options will be available at the venue. In previous years, vendors such as Flatrock Village Bakery, Runaway Cafe, Smookies (Pizza), and Beefie Boys Food Truck set up camp well within the proximity for spectators to grab a quick coffee, treat, or lunch and watch as the racers flew by.

Though cyclocross is a lesser-known discipline of cycling, it is certainly not the least exciting. We encourage you all to make the short drive out to cheer on your fellow Nados! Bring a cowbell and maybe even a rain jacket if you're lucky.



Women's soccer falls in first round of NCAA tournament

Brevard College women's soccer concluded its stellar 2026 campaign with its second consecutive appearance in the 2026 NCAA Division III Championship Tournament on Saturday at Foster Field/Tassos Paphitis Soccer Complex.

The Tornados (14–2–5) fell by a final score of 3-0 to No. 17 Swarthmore (13–2–3), concluding another championship season for Brevard that resulted in the program's fourth trophy in the last three seasons.

Senior goalkeeper Abby Nunez stopped nine shots in her final collegiate match, while also shooting one of BC's two on-target attempts, with Mikayla Rubin registering the other.

Swarthmore took control early as Celia Kanellakos scored in the third minute. Aminah Evans doubled the Garner lead just 14 seconds before the intermission, while Ava Gizzie added an insurance goal in the 50th minute.

Brevard concluded a successful 2026 campaign in which it did not drop a home match for the fourth straight season, and a conference match for the third season in a row. Nunez earned the inaugural IWSOC Golden Glove Award and



her third straight USA South Goalkeeper of the Year nod, while six Tornados secured USA South All-Tournament honors and six earned All-Conference plaudits.

Nados flowered with honors

Jordan Ramey
Staff Writer

The Tornados campaign on the gridiron has officially come to an end. The Tornados secured another victory against the Battling Bishops of North Carolina Wesleyan on November 14th. It was a nail-biter as the Tornados special teams unit returned a kick inside field goal range, and the Tornados kicked a field goal with seconds left to secure a 24–20 victory. Freshman QB Christian Conley earned offensive rookie of the week honors, and sophomore linebacker Andrew Phelps also earned defensive rookie of the week. Senior defensive tackle Caleb Melton earned national team of the week honors with his performance as he recorded a career-high of nine total tackles, three for loss and one sack.

The awards don't stop there for our Tornados, as all-conference selections were announced this week as well. Freshman running back Marvin Reed Jr. was able to secure offensive rookie of the year with his performance on the field. He is the first player to receive this honor for Brevard College since 2018. He was second in the league with 703 rushing yards, averaging almost six yards per carry and totaling ten rushing touchdowns for the Tornados. He was also able to tally fifty-five yards receiving in games this year. With the rookie of the year award, Reed Jr. was able to earn a place on the first-team all-conference list.

Four other Tornados were honored with being listed as first-team all-conference in their efforts on the field this year as well. Junior offensive lineman Garrett Hall earned his second nod to the all-conference list, as did senior offensive lineman Laroddrick Rucker. Very rewarding for the big guys up front, as they helped a freshman become one of the most dangerous offensive weapons in the conference this year. Two special teamers also earned the nod to first-team: freshman returner Gavin Pegram as well as sophomore kicker Spencer Crum. Congratulations to all these guys!

Four more Tornados earned their place on the second team list. Senior offensive lineman Bernard Wertz, junior running back Zion Fauntleroy-McDaniel, junior defensive lineman Deshon Hadden, and junior safety DJ Stevenson. Freshman punter Declan Sweeny was also able to get his efforts recognized as a member of the honorable mention team. Senior wide receiver Alex Bolton was given the honor of representing the Tornados as a member of the all-sportsmanship team.

What a finish for the Tornados and what a way to honor the members of the team. Make sure to congratulate these guys as you see them around campus!

Sad to say, this is my last report on the football season. I am not only a fan of the sport and friends with a lot of our players, but also a former member; this is a bittersweet farewell to the team that taught me so much. As always, Nados by 90!