

PHOTO: Tessa Bonnema

Bible Conference fundraisers hit \$125,000 for World Cup, aviation projects

Bethany Brooks | COPY EDITOR



>> See **BIBLE CONFERENCE** p.5

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GOVERNOR CANDIDATE ATTENDS GAME

p. 2 >>

BIBLE CONFERENCE

p. 5 >>

BRIDGE TO GARDEN

p. 6 >>

TRAFFICKING FORUM

p. 7 >>

PUBLIC SAFETY

p. 7 >>

SPRING TRENDS

p. 8 >>

COMICS

p. 8 >>

Opera returns to BJU with performances of 'The Elixir of Love'

Abigail Vogel

REPORTER

Bob Jones University will perform "The Elixir of Love" March 3, 5 and 7 as part of the spring Concert, Opera and Drama Series. This opera was last produced by the university in 2005 and will feature a new set design, three guest artists and a 1950s twist on the 18th century story. It is directed by Mr. Jeffrey Stegall and will feature a live orchestra conducted by the new dean of the School of Fine Arts and Communication, Dr. Michael Moore.

"The Elixir of Love" is a comedic opera in two acts written by Italian composer Gaetano Donizetti in 1832. Donizetti wrote more than 70 operas and is considered to be among the most important composers of the bel canto opera style, which emphasizes lyrical beauty, particularly through arias. The university will use the English

translation of the opera by Ruth and Thomas Martin. The opera tells the story of Nemorino as he attempts to win the heart of the beautiful Adina. Fearing that Adina will fall for Sergeant Belcore, Nemorino drinks Dr. Dulcamara's love potion to see if the peddler's elixir will win Adina. The opera's assistant director, Elijah Gleiter, is thrilled that opera is returning to the BJU artist series rotation after a multi-year hiatus.

"The art form of opera is worthy of sharing and exploring," Gleiter said. "The Elixir of Love" may be the majority of the student body's first experience with opera, but they need not feel intimidated. Gleiter considers it a stepping-stone into the art form of opera. "We've modernized it, we're singing it in English, we've

See **THEATRE** p.3 >>

A rivalry continues: Bruins basketball teams bring busload of fans to Pensacola

Elizabeth Pfeiffer

REPORTER

The Bob Jones University Bruins basketball teams traveled to Florida on Feb. 13-14 to compete against the Pensacola Christian College Eagles. The stadium was packed with high attendance for each game, including a group of BJU students who made the trip for the rivalry games. "The atmosphere is the loudest and most electrifying to play in," said Caitlyn Dickerson, a guard on the Bruins women's team. Unfortunately, BJU lost to PCC in both the men's and women's games. The women played first and put up a fight, losing by two points after a missed buzzer beater.

The men's game was also very close. Both teams vied for the lead, tying during the first half, before PCC pulled ahead for a 40-30 halftime lead. Shad Vander Hart (22

points) and Trevor Pittman (15 points) led the Bruins in scoring. The game brought the crowd through high and low emotional moments as PCC eventually prevailed 74-68. BJU students rode a bus from South Carolina to Florida to accompany the Bruins and cheer on their school. While small compared to PCC's crowd, the BJU student section held its own.

"I always love hearing the crowd cheer," said Vander Hart, a Bruins starting forward. "The anticipation and excitement are something players feed off. We want as many fans as possible because it makes the game enjoyable, and we want to put on a show for them."

The rivalry dates back to 2012 when BJU entered intercollegiate sports, something PCC had already been involved in.

See **SPORTS** p.3 >>

South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson attends BJU Bruins' rivalry game

Candidate for governor comments on his campaign, running mate and BJU

Emily Fernet
REPORTER

Current Attorney General Alan Wilson, a Republican candidate for South Carolina governor, and his newly declared running mate state Sen. Mike Reichenbach attended the basketball game where the Bob Jones University Bruins played their rival Pensacola Christian College on Jan. 17. Right before the game, the two candidates sat down with the Collegian to answer some questions about the campaign.

After shaking hands and exchanging greetings, Wilson and Reichenbach sat down inside the Bruins press room. Since July of last year, Wilson has been campaigning all over the state, conducting in-person events and giving radio talks as well.

"One of the strengths of our campaign is that we want to hear from all parts of the state," Wilson said. "We'll be in the Upstate; we'll be in the Lowcountry." He said his campaign will travel all over the state, including the metropolitan hubs.

"And [we] certainly want to know what's important to these constituents," he said, "but the folks in the rural community deserve every bit as much respect and attention and consideration as the larger cities." The attorney general opened the men's basketball game in a word of prayer. With a background in Christian education, Wilson mentioned being familiar with both BJU and PCC.

"Bob Jones University is a major fixture up here in the Upstate, and it's an opportunity to talk to a large group of people at an institution that's widely respected. So, we are here, obvious-

ly to see the game, but also to see the people."

On Jan. 9 he selected Reichenbach, a businessman from Florence, as his running mate for lieutenant governor. While working closely with him on the South Carolina Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, they bonded over policy, faith and backgrounds.

"He's a big proponent of families," Wilson said. "That was when I asked him if he were to become my running mate, what would he want in his portfolio? And he said, 'families.'"

Through Wilson's career, he has pursued a crackdown on online child predators, a greater concern with the rise of AI. Both men share a background in leadership and law enforcement, but each of them mentioned their adoption stories as key motivators of their campaign.

"I believe there's a calling: to whom much is given, much is required."

Reichenbach said his biological mother chose to give birth rather than choose an abortion, "And I have every reason not to be here when a 14-year-old was scared."

"She gave me the gift of life," he said.

He was then raised by a German family who taught him that he would be identified in



PHOTO: Tessa Bonnema

life based upon the decisions he made, the God that he served, his work ethic and discipline, he said.

"And that really has now moved me throughout my entire life that I believe there's a calling: to whom much is given, much is required."

Lastly, Wilson commented on a current debate within the state – his stance on open or closed primaries.

"Well, the first thing I always say is, I want to read the bill first, but I'm always going to side on what makes an election more secure for the people of South Carolina," Wilson said.

The open primary system has been legal in the state for about 60 years, and it is how the Republican Party came into prominence in South Carolina, he said. The closed primary system allows registered voters to vote along their party lines.

"It prevents people from raiding primaries and voting for folks who probably wouldn't represent the values of that electorate," he said.

After explaining both systems, he concluded, "At the end of the day, it's

really about the security of a primary election, and that's what I'm always going to support."

Throughout the interview, both Wilson and Reichenbach spoke about their convictions to serve South Carolina families and businesses. Only halfway to the primaries, Wilson will continue to promote his campaign all over the state.

Dr. Bob III endorses Wilson for governor

Several weeks after Alan Wilson's visit to BJU, Dr. Bob Jones III publicly endorsed him as "the most pro-life candidate" and the "proven defender of religious freedom." Dr. Bob encouraged other conservatives to vote similarly. Wilson posted on Facebook showing his appreciation for the endorsement. "I am honored by his support as we work to lead South Carolina with faith, courage and humility."

information provided by Savannah Pack

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THEATRE

From **THEATRE** p.1 >>

cut it down to under two hours," Gleiter said. "I think it's very digestible for a beginner coming into opera."

The production will feature about 30 students and alumni in the townsfolk and soldiers' choruses. Most of these students auditioned last spring or early this fall, and many are experienced with one or more of the BJU choirs. The opera will also feature the talents of four professional leads.

Dr. Megan Stapleton is returning to the Rodeheaver stage as Adina, the soprano part. Dr. Stapleton appeared recently at BJU as Maria in "The Sound of Music" and as Belle in "Beauty and the Beast." She serves as assistant professor of voice studies at BJU and has performed at the Houston Grand Opera and the Lincoln Center.

Guest artist Mr. William Davenport will be performing the tenor part, Nemorino. A 2015 graduate of Philadelphia's Academy of Vocal Arts, Mr. Davenport has an extensive operatic repertoire and has performed with major opera companies worldwide. His experience includes leading roles in "Rigoletto," "Lucia di Lammermoor," "La Traviata" and others. He has won international opera competitions such as the triennial Veronica Dunne International Singing Competition.

Returning guest artist Mr. Timothy Renner will play the bari-

tone part of Sergeant Belcore. Mr. Renner is a BJU alumnus and has performed with opera companies such as the New National Theatre Tokyo and Opera Tampa. He also played Figaro in "Mozart and Figaro in Vienna," a movie filmed entirely in Florence, Italy, produced by Hershey Felder.

GRAMMY and MAC Award winner Adelmo Guidarelli, one of the opera world's most sought-after singing actors, will play Dr. Dulcamara. A voting member of the Recording Academy, Guidarelli has appeared with leading opera companies and festivals in a dozen countries. He has recorded multiple award-winning albums and has appeared on television. Previous roles include Don Pasquale, Dulcamara, Falstaff, Gianni Schicchi, Bartolo, Don Magnifico and numerous others. Guidarelli is known internationally for his humor and charismatic performances of Italian roles.



PHOTOS: Tessa Bonnema



From **SPORTS** p.1 >>



PHOTOS: Elizabeth Pfeiffer



The drive for the competition stems from similar Christian values and healthy competitiveness. Over the years, the schools have grown in their ambition to prove that they are the athletically superior school. Incidentally, the athletic directors from the schools, Denny Scott for BJU and Mark Goetsch for PCC, are brothers-in-law, adding a fun dynamic to the rivalry. "Rivalries are always enjoyable," Goetsch said. "There's something about the elevated intensity, the crowd involvement, and if the game is back and forth throughout, it makes it all the more energetic."

Scott compared the schools to siblings who want to beat the other in a game. "Especially," he said, "when the younger one gets good enough to defeat the older one." However, while the rivalry can be enjoyable, both men emphasized the importance of seeing the competition in the right perspective.

Scott said, "My goal as the athletic director at BJU is to make sure the rivalry still exists in the true spirit of competition." He referred to Philippians 1:27 and the idea of striving together for the sake of the gospel. "At the end of the day, we

must see that we are all 'on the same team' and we are all preparing to serve the Lord together after the college sports competition is long past."

Goetsch, the athletic director of PCC, said something similar. He mentioned that students from these competing schools could one day serve together, whether that be in the "ministry, marketplace, mission field, or military," and therefore should strive to develop a rivalry that will bond the universities.

Despite facing tough losses, it likely won't be the last time that the Bruins will face the Eagles this season, potentially meeting again in a playoff game. As the teams finish the regular season, they will continue to work toward playing well in the postseason.

"We need to continue to learn how to play with consistency," said Tony Miller, the head coach of the men's team. "The little things make all the difference in region games, and we need to keep getting better and being consistent in doing those small things. Road experience always gives you the opportunity to get better, and I think [the games] helped light a fire for the remainder of the season."

FUNDRAISERS



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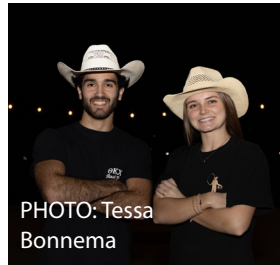


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2026

CONFERENCE



PHOTO: Tessa Bonnema

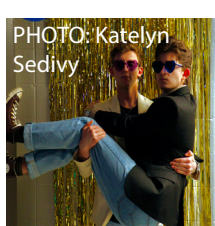


PHOTO: Katelyn Sedivy



PHOTO: Tessa Bonnema



PHOTO: Tessa Bonnema



PHOTO: Tessa Bonnema

STUDENT LIFE

»» From **BIBLE CONFERENCE** p.1

The 2026 Bible Conference at Bob Jones University surpassed its \$125,000 goal to support two missions-related projects: at home with Next Door Nations and abroad with a missionary aviation project in Papua New Guinea. This year's theme was Heavenward:

Pursuing God's Call Through Prayer. "Dr (Bruce) McAllister wanted the focus not only to be on prayer, but also to have a missions' emphasis," said Dr. Josh Crockett, the university's executive chapel coordinator. The home offering supported Matt Barfield with Next Door Nations. Next Door Nations will evangelize and distribute tracts to visitors from all around the world at the FIFA World Cup. They plan to share the gospel in the nine major cities during the global event. The fundraiser goal for the home offering was \$65,000.

"Matt Barfield spoke for the missions' emphasis week back in the fall and talked about how his home church has a ministry called Next Door Missions," Dr. Crockett said. "They use translation software so that when the preacher is speaking, people can use Airpods and their phone to hear it in their language." "Matt's vision would be in these big cities that are hosting the World Cup, local churches could use different outreach opportunities to bring immigrant communities into their church," Dr. Crockett said. "And through Airpods and translation apps, predominantly English-speaking churches could have a ministry to different immigrant communities and really connect through this big worldwide event at the World Cup." The abroad offering supported Josh and Natalie Perkins, two BJU graduates, with a mission-

ary aviation project in Papua New Guinea. The fundraiser goal was \$60,000. The Perkins and a team with Gospel Fellowship Association are raising money to build an airplane. "This airplane will help 15 different missionary team members to get to remote villages, to bring supplies, to bring medicine, to bring the gospel to different church plants that would otherwise be inaccessible," Dr. Crockett said. "Aviation is essential over there."

This plane would help them not just for short term trips but long-term gospel access." The theme, "Heavenward", emphasized prayerful dependence and focus heavenward, challenging students to seek God before taking action for God. Prayer is the starting point for obedience and gospel impact. Students had multiple opportunities to join together in prayer, with prayer meetings throughout the week in addition to the services.

The campus fundraisers for Bible Conference were a tremendous success. As usual, a few student body favorites were the Kangas' and Vikings' Speed Dating event on Tuesday night, the International Food Fest Wednesday afternoon, the Colts' late-night volleyball tournament Wednesday evening, and the Alpha talent show on Friday night. The faculty and staff basketball game on Thursday night and the Stallions' and Duskie's "Tailgate Toss-Off" on Friday night also drew large crowds. Among the many new fundraisers were "Sips and Sweets" hosted by Alpha and the Cardinals and the Bluejays' Thrift Formal event, both held on Wednesday night.

Bob Jones University as a whole had raised \$126,343.88 as of the Monday morning chapel service following the week of Bible Conference.

Pictured: Tyler Gregory making a quesadilla



PHOTOS: Tessa Bonnema



Pictured: Students attending the track and field fundraiser during Bible Conference

BY THE NUMBERS:

\$126,343
RAISED

\$125,000
GOAL



Pictured: Pastor Rick Gregory, Grace Bible Church in Fair Oaks, California, speaks during Bible Conference

Artist's Rendering



BJU front campus redesign project timeline takes shape

Preliminary work starts in major renovation to bridge and fountain

Emily Fernet

REPORTER

The front fountain on campus has been a topic of discussion in the past few months. Two administrators commented on the front campus project.

Last school year, announcements were made about fixing the leaking fountain. Another semester began, and another announcement was made. Then, in December, Dr. David Fisher, as the executive vice president who deals with campus operations, communicated the plans to renovate the fountain all together. His team has been planning this major renovation, and he recently gave an update about the project.

Concerning his chapel announcement in December, he said, “the initial design has gone back to the landscapers and architects and then has gone to the contractor, and they’ve got to fine-tune all those drawings in order to get the permits from the city. And that’s going longer than what we anticipated.”

Chief Operations Officer Brian Burch, Drew Ellis of Facilities Management, and Vice Provost Laurilyn Hall are some of the many people involved on the project.

Mrs. Laurilyn Hall is the design specialist and member of the Building Use and Construction Committee.

She commented on how the project is going and said, “Preparations for construction continue to progress, and we look forward to the demolition phase beginning in the coming weeks.”

While the front campus project has taken longer to begin than expected, the BJU facilities team has begun preliminary landscaping and irrigation excavation.

The project right now is in the permitting phase. Dr. Fisher said, “We’re working on the contractor, and everybody’s working on the permits with the city. ... So were doing as much as we can to get ready when [the contractors] start, but we’re at the mercy of the city permits.”

But this large of a project is not

without its challenges. Hall commented on one such obstacle. “The biggest challenge in the design phase was to refresh this landmark space with a fresh look while preserving the signature front campus aesthetic and achieving that goal within a responsible investment range.”

“We look forward to the demolition phase beginning in the coming weeks.”

The new designs reflect the look of front campus from its beginning years. A straight sidewalk will connect the two sides of campus rather than by a bridge crossing a fountain.

Dr. Fisher mentioned that the team is already planning to assist in

vehicular and pedestrian traffic as the construction begins.

Even though the front campus project has taken longer than initially thought, Hall said, “Any construction project requires a detailed process, and there are multiple parties involved. It can sometimes move slower than we would like, but that slow and detailed process is key to ensuring a successful outcome.”

While the project will not be complete by commencement, the events office and administration is already planning to still make this event special.

Dr. Fisher mentioned an updated timeline for renovation to begin. “We’ve been told around April 1st, and it’s a four-month process.” The plan is for the construction to be complete for the university centennial celebration in August.

Commenting on the front campus project, Hall said, “We are excited for what is to come!”

PHOTOS: Naomi Floyd



STORIES

Public Safety relocates office to Reveal for central location on campus

‘We’re student facing. That’s where we need to be.’

Josie Santopietro

REPORTER

Public Safety is transitioning its office from near Facilities off campus to the Earnest Reveal residence hall. Both Public Safety and Bob Jones University administration support the decision.

“There has been a strong push for this move in the last couple of years,” said David Champ, commander of Public Safety. “We’ve given a lot of thought to it, but the best location is to be on campus.”

Champ explained that Public Safety offices were originally near the front entrance and then moved near Facilities. Their relocation to Reveal was planned to occur after commencement in 2025 but was delayed due to unfinished work in Reveal. The new Reveal Public Safety offices will be near Student Care and Student Health Services.

With an on-campus office, Public Safety can be more central and present.

“We’re student-facing,” Champ said. “That’s where we need to be.”

An officer on campus enables quicker response times to calls, enhances safety and increases accessibility to the student body. Public Safety secures the main campus as well as the Press, Elementary School, Primary Center and Campus View Apartments. It

also provides assistance to protect Greenville Downtown Airport.

Champ described the role of Public Safety as to “provide security for the campus and support the mission of BJU.” Public Safety accomplishes this role through many different practices, including vehicle and foot patrols, providing first aid and CPR. Public Safety also conducts safety maintenance and provides student assistance in various ways, like vehicle lockouts, flat tires and getting stuck off campus.

Public Safety members are South Carolina Law Enforcement Division security officers trained by the state. SLED training involves first aid, CPR and pepper spray training, as well as how to handle situations with mental health patients or homeless individuals. Public Safety consists of six full-time supervisors and 14 students, with two night-watch officers and four patrol officers. A group of faculty members with SLED training carry weapons, but the student officers do not.

The role of Public Safety is connected to the overall mission of BJU. “We have opportunities to encourage our staff officers in our walks with the Lord,” Champ said. He loves building relationships with the students, faculty and staff. Public Safety also participates in ministry by giving

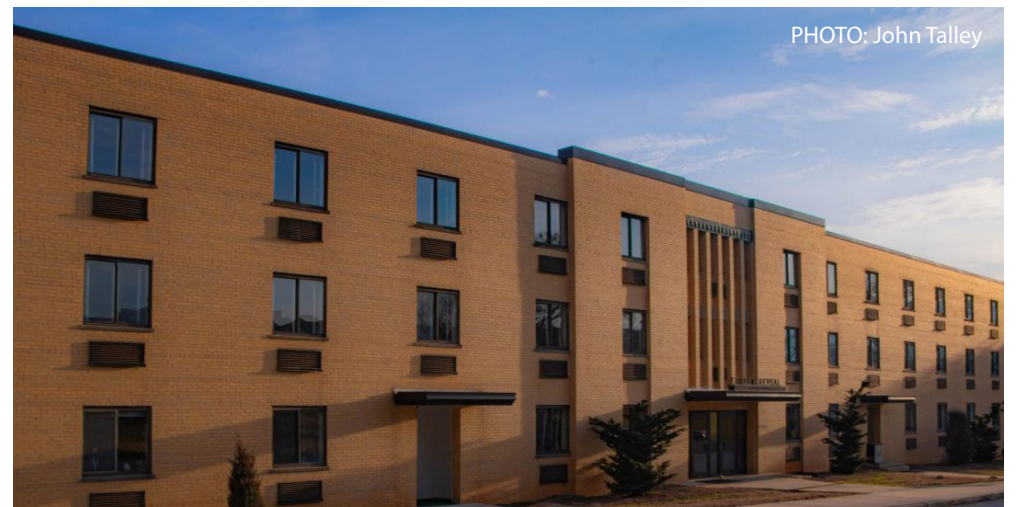
food and tracts to the homeless.

Champ compared the ministry of Public Safety to the building of Jerusalem’s wall in Nehemiah, where the workers held a tool in one hand and a weapon in the other. Public Safety is prepared to protect the campus but also serve the community. It used to be part of the Greenville EMS system, running an ambulance out of the campus hospital, both on and off campus. Because of its qualifications as part of the EMS system and fire department, SLED gave Public Safety its title. It is rare for a university security to have this title because of the requirements to achieve and sustain this position. While Public Safety no longer runs these operations, SLED allowed Public Safety to continue with this title.

Public Safety participates in the law enforcement leadership

luncheon, a monthly meetup of police forces from all over the Upstate. Sometimes BJU hosts this luncheon, and the culinary department provides the meal. This relationship, especially with the local city police, is positive and vital to the role of Public Safety, Champ said. For instance, while Public Safety handles campus safety, any criminal matters must be reported to and handled by Greenville Police. Greenville Police often use Barge as a training facility, providing a venue for practice and additional protection for campus.

The ultimate mission of Public Safety is to protect the student body. Champ assured students that “we’re going to help in any way that we can.” Public Safety is constantly working to protect a safe environment for the students and faculty at BJU.



Greenville Police officer speaks about fight against human trafficking

BJU graduate Sterling Crowder shares his story of a recent trafficking crackdown

Zachary Edmondson

REPORTER

A Bob Jones University alumus spoke to students at a Criminal Justice Association forum, Feb. 3, about his experiences fighting human trafficking in South Carolina. Sterling Crowder, who graduated in 2021, serves in the 100th Platoon of the Greenville Police Department. As a police officer, Crowder fulfills various roles, including certified firefighter and licensed drone operator. He also is certified to perform the PIT maneuver; the Precision Immobilization Technique is used to stop cars with minimal risk in a pursuit. However, Crowder’s passion is combating human trafficking. He got his start when his chief assigned

him to the east side of Greenville, where he solved several drug and narcotics cases.

“We made some good dope cases,” Crowder said, “but somewhere in there I started thinking to myself, ‘I’m finding this dope, but where is the dope coming from?’”

That question led Crowder to the world of human trafficking, a billion-dollar operation that often involves the illegal trade of guns, drugs and counterfeit purses as well as sex slavery. At the forum, Crowder explained how human trafficking became a major problem for the country, including the state of South Carolina. Greenville County has the greatest number of human trafficking cases in the state, he said.

Contrary to popular belief, most of these slaves are not the kidnapping cases from Amber alerts. Crowder said that most cases are actually false labor trafficking, where migrants are tricked into coming to the U.S. for jobs, only for their visas to be stolen. Many migrants are blackmailed and manipulated into prostitution. Sometimes they go unnoticed because police do not recognize them for who they are. These operations often are rooted overseas in Asian crime syndicates, with American nationals managing businesses as fronts for the trafficking, he said.

Crowder shared a recent case where over 150 law enforcement agencies and police departments participated in “Operation Coast

to Coast,” raiding massage parlors suspected of being fronts for traffickers. While the authorities were successful, they found deeper ties to Chinese organized crime than they had expected. While the massage parlors were shut down and the victims rescued, the investigation is still ongoing.

Crowder said that it’s difficult to stop the traffickers, since they continue to work right outside of the Greenville Police Department’s jurisdiction. However, as Greenville locals and county officials become more aware of the problem, Crowder has hope that all authorities can work together to curb human trafficking.

OPINION

Coastal vibes, 'cloud dancer' and Adidas Sambas: Fashion trends for spring 2026

Apparel design major predicts trend styles for campus wear

Bethany Brooks | COPY EDITOR

This spring season will welcome coastal, boho styles as popular outfit trends for women on campus. Outfits may feature trending colors like "cloud dancer" white, teal and powdery blue.

Olivia Crute, a sophomore apparel design major, predicted fashion trends for this spring and reflected on what was popular during the winter.

This past winter, popular colors included an old money palette of browns, greens, blues (especially navy) and pops of red. Old money persisted as a frequent aesthetic on campus, emphasizing classic pieces and layering. Outside of class, many girls appreciated gray sweatpants, a pair of Uggs or potato shoes and a crewneck sweatshirt. Guys stayed

consistent with athletic outfits and workwear styles, like Carhartt, flannels and boots. Nationwide, PARKE mockneck sweatshirts were popular for women, with variations beginning to find their way into stores.

Trends will change with the new year and the shift into warmer weather. "Cloud dancer" white, the 2026 color of the year, may be reflected in a white pair of pants or a white skirt paired with a fitted colored top. The long, white tiered skirt is an especially popular piece as boho and coastal styles (flowy, relaxed, beachy) are on the rise. Old money, a campus mainstay, will transition into linen pants, button up shirts, knitted polos, white dress pants and overall lighter styles. Many girls will also enjoy wearing spring dresses with floral patterns and sundresses as the weather becomes warmer. Sweetheart necklines are increasingly popular on dresses in stores.

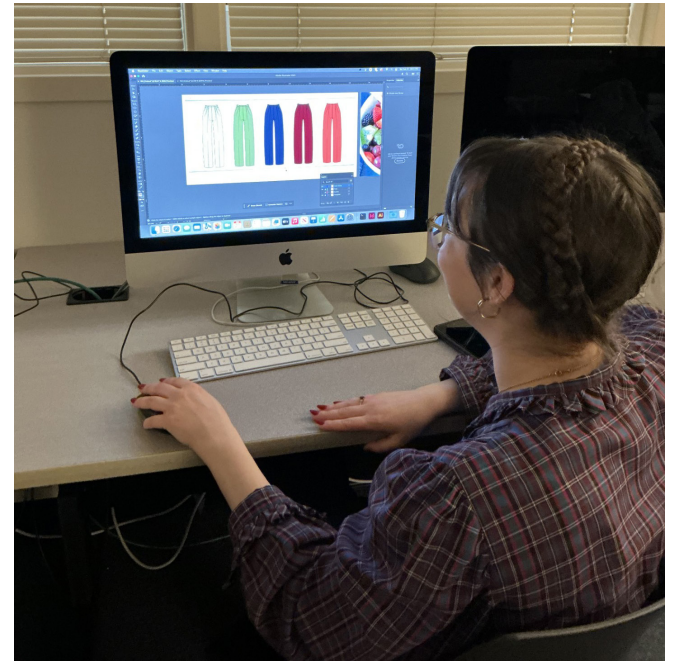
"The 2000s are coming back," Crute said.

Another 2000s trend was lace layering. She predicted a rise in lace at the next artist series in March. She also expects to see greens, teals and whites in sundresses and floral-patterned spring dresses.

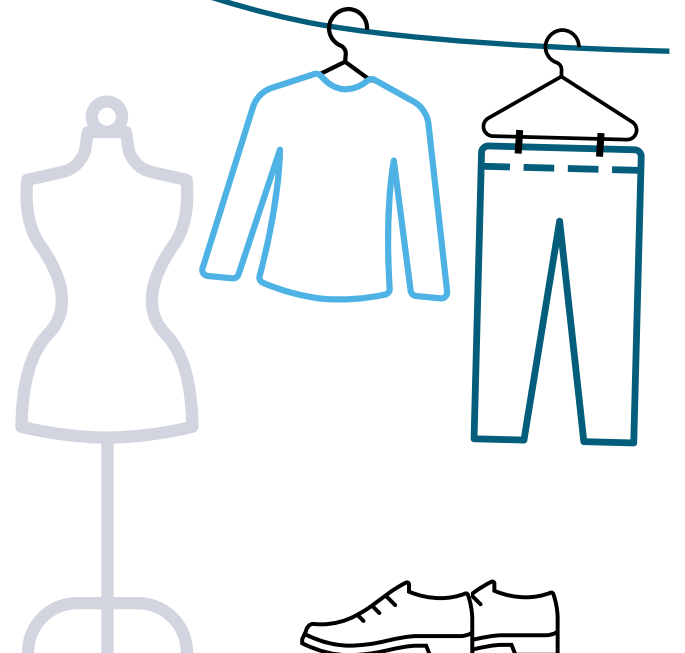
For casual attire, Crute expects to see fitted tees with straight leg jeans. She noted that the jean leg width seems to be narrowing, from wide leg last year to straight leg this spring.

"I wouldn't be surprised if skinny jeans were back in style by this fall," Crute said.

With the warmer weather, shoe choices are quickly transitioning into lighter shoes like Adidas Sambas and strappy sandals. Crute even suggested some students may pull out beachwear shoes like flip flops and Crocs (though not for classes). For accessories, jewelry will likely transition from minimalistic to chunky, with larger pendants, layered jewelry or charm necklaces. Owala dominates as the primary water bottle brand, leaving Stanley's behind in 2023.



PHOTOS: Submission



COMICS by ANDREW FIGUEROA

