“In order to appreciate something, you have to know about it and understand.”
Welcome.

Research is an essential part of the undergraduate experience at UNCG and at the Residential Colleges in particular. Regardless of their majors or career paths, our students learn from our faculty the importance of scholarly inquiry and are encouraged to first ask important questions and then seek creative and innovative ways to find the answers. At the University Teaching and Learning Commons, we are honored to have the opportunity to encourage the work of our students through initiatives like our Residential Colleges, faculty mentorships, and the Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Office. In this magazine, we present to you a sampling of the projects our sophomore, emerging researchers are producing in the Residential Colleges written by students in the Capstone Courses of Ashby and Strong Residential Colleges. Together they are shining examples of the high quality of work being produced by our undergraduate students.

The name of the magazine, Minerva, pays homage to the Roman goddess of wisdom, who has served as an unofficial mascot since the school opened in 1893. The image of Minerva has graced every diploma, appears on the official college seal, and welcomes visitors with open arms from the east courtyard of the Elliott University Center. And in these pages, we offer you stories that reflect UNCG’s dedication to academic excellence and creative inquiry.

We believe that Minerva would be proud.
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by Christian Moss
The United States alone houses a staggering number of human trafficking survivors, approximately 100,000 individuals. Belle Downing, UNCG sophomore, student in the Ashby Residential College, and a Parks and Recreation Management Major with a concentration in Therapeutic Recreation, has personal passion and insight on how we can better support our survivors as they transition back into normalcy. Through her knowledge of the benefits of recreation therapy, participation in research, as well as direct work with survivors, she emphasizes how much providing recreation therapy can ease the process these survivors must endure.

Downing argues for the urgency of engaging in this topic, because we can't expect people who have just come out of these situations to be immediately thrown back into life and have...
the ability to re-acclimate. Support is necessary. Everyone has a responsibility to care because when human trafficking survivors enter facilities where they are supported by psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers, but lack activity that brings them joy, the likelihood of a shorter recovery drops. Providing access to activities that can help survivors redefine who they are, who they think they are, and who they want to be will decrease the amount of time spent in these facilities increase healing increase. This in turn reduces expenses which is an important issue to consider.

In her research, Belle explains that therapeutic recreation empowers survivors in three specific aspects: developing coping skills, improving social capital, and reforming identity. Downing says that implementing this type of therapy in housing organizations dedicated to helping survivors will be effective in achieving the three aforementioned benefits, and there are many ways this can be achieved (meditation, painting, etc.). Honing these skills allows survivors to be more successful once they transition out of facilities.

Her project says a lot about Belle as an individual. She says in an interview “I’m extremely passionate about this, I live and breathe this; it is what I do, this is what I want to do, and I really see a huge need for it.” Her inspiration stems from how much recreation therapy can improve the quality of life for everyone. Through her concentration in Therapeutic Recreation, she’s been able to see how it helps all sorts of people. Her aunt is the CEO of a facility that houses survivors and expressed to Downing that recreation therapy is not currently used for this population of survivors. From there, she became inspired to

“Therapeutic recreation empowers survivors in three specific aspects: developing coping skills, improving social capital, and reforming identity.”

create a program within one of these organizations so that the survivors can receive the benefit. Downing says that her personal demographic didn’t really influence her interest, but she did grow up in a household that supports women in every aspect of the world, workplace, and career. Working with survivors is what she plans to do long-term as a career. Belle explains, “…my goal is to create recreation programs in these facilities all around the country.”

In conducting her research, she hopes to reach recreation professionals and individuals who run and or work at facilities that house human trafficking survivors.
survivors as these are the people who understand how important this is to making a difference in the lives of the survivors. Raising awareness about human trafficking and its relevance can reach the UNCG community too, by communicating with the Recreation Department right here on campus, and sharing information with the faculty and the community about the currently unreached population yet to be helped. On a wider scale, the more people gain knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity to the prevalence of the human trafficking population, the more they will understand how human trafficking causes a lingering toll on mental health (Depression and Anxiety Disorders, PTSD, Schizophrenia etc.), and this understanding can make a difference. An important element of her research was the field research she did herself. One of the survivors, while working with Belle, was living in a semi-independent care facility. The survivor reported that she was able to critically think about her future while engaging in guided painting. Belle also organized a picnic for survivors, and her research revealed that this population benefited from this form of recreation therapy because of an improvement in mood, and they were able to connect to other people on an informal level. Gardening is effective, too, as it empowers survivors to exercise a form of control.

Though she enjoyed the fieldwork, Belle found it challenging because it was something she hadn’t really been done before, so although she thought recreational therapy would be helpful, she didn’t really know for sure until diving into her research. Belle plans to continue her research in the future, looking at how age could affect interventions. In her field research she mostly worked with individuals 19-56, and she hopes to expand this range in the future. She also intends to look further into how gender differences might influence results.

Belle’s advocacy for the inclusion of recreation therapy to improve the lives of survivors demonstrates her dedication to this population. It is in the work of people like Belle that helps change people’s lives.
With the exponential growth of social media movements such as #mycultureisnotyourtrend, accusations pertaining to acts of appropriation dubbed as “appreciation” committed by fashion companies, celebrities, and everyday citizens gain more and more attention. Sophomore Midori Hill wanted to explore the differences between these two behaviors. When asked what she wanted to achieve, she first sought to explain precisely what these two words meant and to find the differences between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation. During her research she came up with this answer: “The line between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation lies where credit is given and how black culture is accurately portrayed respectfully.” Giving credit where credit is due is the key difference between appropriation and appreciation.
and paying homage to a culture and appreciating it.

“I am passionate about anything relating to black people and black culture,” says Midori, and “I was irritated with constantly scrolling down my time line to see multiple posts about brands and celebrities wearing black culture as if it were a costume at times when they thought would benefit them. And to see such ignorance and misconceptions about cultural appropriation, especially when it came to black culture, was something that fueled my drive to take on this research question.”

Midori is a biracial (black and Japanese), 20-year-old, gay female. These factors influence her position and contribute to her sense that she wants to protect black culture and shed light on how it is being taken for granted. She wanted to show how, in particular, black culture has become a significant target for cultural appropriation and misrepresentation, and how black is a fluid, often multifaceted culture, that has led to the development of many subcultures. Yet, being black in America involves a process of moving through and adopting from many different cultures. To define what’s authentically black is virtually impossible, as there are as many ways to be black as there are black people.

Cultural appropriation affects almost every minority group in one form or another. Cultural appropriation can be very detrimental to a culture and its people because it doesn’t give people credit for their own culture, and can create stereotypes. Midori hopes to shed light on this issue as it will help the communities grow stronger by eliminating cultural ignorance and stereotypes.

At first, she struggled to find as many authoritative sources as she would have liked, but to her surprise, the library had a variety of books about black culture appropriation. Midori also faced the challenge of illustrating the difference between appropriation and appreciation in a way that would be clear for non-black people not familiar with the culture. Her target audience was anyone who doesn’t know what black culture is and those who do not know the difference between appreciation and appropriation. She chose this as her audience because it affects more than just black people.
It has also become a growing issue, especially among many celebrities and brands who have been accused of cultural appropriation while they claim it is appreciation. Midori suggests that the Kardashian clan falls into this category, for the ways they appropriate black culture and wear it as a costume. Black culture is more than a trend or aesthetic. It is filled with a history that is often untold and forgotten and then misrepresented.

Career-wise she is still trying to discover what she wants to do and what she feels would work best for her, leaning towards being in the technology field whether it be programming, coding, or web design. The media has much to do with how cultural appropriation and appreciation are portrayed – how cultures are seen. In some ways, her research project is a natural outgrowth of her possible career paths, since most of her career choices are related to media and technology, or maybe it’s the other way around! Both connect to media and its cultural role and impact.

The choice of pursuing this area of inquiry is deeply connected to and reflective of Midori’s values. She is passionate about black people and black politics, so naturally exploring the ways that black culture can be taken for granted was something she wanted to work on. As she extends this research into the future, Midori hopes to gather more information and opinions from others and what they think cultural appropriation and appreciation are, especially fellow students. She feels like it would only help to strengthen some of her arguments.

It’s critical for people to take an interest in this issue. Yet many people do not think of this topic often or its effects and implications on black culture and black people, or the larger culture in general. However, because Midori is so passionate about participating in black-centered events and groups, this issue was something she felt needed to be discussed, and her research project reflects that commitment.

Midori captures her passion for her research project about black cultural appropriation.
As society is becoming more alert and understanding of the good and bad things that happen daily, more people are beginning to speak up about issues that used to be kept secret. According to the National Center for Victims of Crime, statistics show that 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys are victims of child sexual abuse. Ryan Peace, a junior majoring in Political Science, decided to explore this research question: What are the various long-term effects of childhood sexual abuse on black men? Although his interest in this topic does not reflect his major or intended career, he admitted that it was because someone he knew opened up to him about the sexual abuse he had endured as a child. Ryan says what this person experienced alerted him to how this issue was a real problem that affects whoever goes through this type of abuse. Ryan also realized that not only women get sexually abused, but men can be affected just as badly as women.

He decided to narrow his focus to the effects of sexual abuse on victims who are black men, hoping to understand what the victims go through after the abuse, seeking to understand...
why victims are hesitant to speak about their abuse and how the negative effects of sexual abuse impacts their lives.

Using information collected through academic journals, an interview and his observations, Ryan discovered that there are many different longterm effects that vary by type and severity. The mental effects range from shame and anxiety to PTSD and depression. There are social effects that range from trust issues and social anxiety to sexual dysfunction and an inability to form lasting relationships. He also found that black victims of male childhood sexual abuse are at a higher risk for suicide, alcoholism, and self harm, among other problems. Seeing the range of long term effects that stem from childhood sexual abuse (CSA), it proves the urgency of why it’s important to support victims. These effects can harm victims’ physical, mental, and social stability, which causes difficulty for the rest of their lives.

It is vital that people speak up about their abuse because people go through other abuses, such as bullying, which can worsen the negative effects even more. These problems can make individuals more fragile as they grow up, which can make them more prone to taking risks and losing control. The associates of the victims may not know why the victim may be acting out and judge them harshly for acting the way they do; in reality, it’s because friends and family are unaware of the traumatic experience the victim went through as a child. These effects associated with CSA are why it’s important for people to be aware of the effects of child sexual abuse, for it can help them understand why a person is the way they are and be more alert to the sensitivities and triggers caused by their sexual abuse.

“I would like to investigate the black community and try to figure out all of the origins of their rules and cultural that are negatively impacting victims.”

Ryan explains that as a black man himself, he understands how society’s standards for black men can be crippling, especially while coping with serious trauma. As a homosexual, he says that it also added fuel to his general frustration with the black community’s unwillingness to let go of their homophobic culture. This tends to be true in lots of cases. Society still sees men as strong and believes that they are not supposed to show weakness, for that can weaken their masculinity. According to a 2003 National Institute of Justice report, 3 out of 4 adolescents who have been sexually assaulted were victimized by someone they knew well. This is one reason why people refrain from speaking up because abusers tend to be family
members, friends, employers, leaders in
the community, and religious leaders. In
the black community, people sometimes
speak up, but it can result being accused
of lying, and victims are told to hush up
to protect the abuser’s reputation. Also,
black men would be humiliated, to be
seen as weak, by “allowing” themselves
to abused. Black males who are muted
as they try to speak up can feel mentally
tortured, knowing their abusers are still
allowed to abuse them and others, and
their abusers are still living their lives
as if they aren’t doing anything wrong.
This trauma can consume the victim
because their abusers go on without
being punished while victims continue to
live with the burden, which affects their
mental and physical well being.

As revealed in the research question,
Ryan’s targeted audience is mainly African-
American males, because of the unspoken
rules and norms embedded in their own
culture. This potential for silence is why
it is important for everyone to be aware
of what goes on, regardless of victims’
demographics. This knowledge can help
people be more aware of how to spot signs
of abuse early on.

Ryan’s research sheds light on a relatively
ignored issue that many people don’t
even think about. His hope is that society
will change how they handle black male
victims of child sexual abuse, and that
research like his can spark a conversation
that can cause people to be more
forthcoming about their abuse as children.
This kind of research can also help spur
more efforts and resources to support
these victims and implement strategies
to help prevent further abuse in children
and adults. Lastly, I asked Ryan what he
hopes to do with his research in the future:
“I would like to further investigate the
black community and try to figure out all
of the origins of their rules and cultural
norms that are negatively impacting
victims.” Ryan’s research about the long
term effects of child sexual abuse on black
men can helps victims know that there
are others who are aware of the pain they
have endured and encourage more victims
to speak up about their abuse rather then
repressing it. Society being aware of issues,
and then taking action to resolve them,
can help alleviate the occurrence of sexual
abuse in the future.
Everyone has experienced stereotyping whether they were the person who was being stereotyped or if they were the person using a stereotype about another person. Stereotypes are when a person groups someone into a category without knowing if they actually fit there. Brandon Banner decided that he wanted to learn more about how stereotypes are formed because he had bad personal experiences with being stereotyped. He wanted to understand how someone could have come up with those stereotypes about him and if it was personal. Since most people have been affected by this issue at one time or another, Brandon quickly discovered how important it is to research the issue. Through his research Brandon has come to see that “stereotypes are incomplete portrayals that could severely affect views about
that person or thing and that person’s self-esteem.” He believes that his research could help people and communities grow and learn from their mistakes. Many people use stereotypes without realizing that they could be hurting someone’s feelings. So, by learning more about them people can have the chance to speak about the issues and understand the power that stereotypes can have.

“I am not a person who believes what appears to be on the surface. I don’t think someone is one way without knowing them, and I don’t let that affect how I treat a person.”

From his experience with stereotypes, Brandon has learned that he can choose not to be influenced by stereotypes which helps him not let what other people might say affect how he treats people. Stereotypes are pervasive and can affect individuals as well as people they may know. Awareness is key. If people are educated about this issue, they can be better prepared not to fall into the habit of using them when speaking about others and to understand what is happening when being stereotyped.

Stereotypes can also make a person feel down or depressed because stereotypes are so believable, and people believe take them to heart, even though they are not true. Stereotypes are essentially assumptions made about a person without fully knowing who that person is. When those assumptions and stereotypes turn into gossip and are spread around, it leads to groups of people having beliefs about a person without realizing where those beliefs and assumptions come from. Brandon’s research suggests that it is possible for people to better understand when they are using stereotypes, how they happen, why they are wrong, and how to prevent them. This research can also help people who are stereotyped better understand how the stereotype was formed and understand that stereotypes mean nothing after people find out the truth.

Brandon says that “stereotypes are natural and happen with everybody no matter where they come from.” They apply to gender, age, and race. Gender is affected by stereotypes because guys are expected to act a certain way or portray a certain level of masculinity, according to Brandon. Age is affected because he believes that young adults are under appreciated and seen as reckless or careless and do not have much to bring to the table. He also believes that race is a factor because, as a black man, he says the people in his race expect him to behave in ways that conform to that culture, and Brandon believes that people should not be defined by those expectations.
Most stereotypes are formed with little information provided and based on gossip or half truths. People usually spread stereotypes throughout society even though most kids learn in lessons from elementary school that stereotypes are bad and based on false information. Brandon argues that stereotypes form from human cognitive limitations. After conducting the research, he concluded that stereotypes are passed in a chain effect and people will group people and assumptions together without knowing much about them.

However, according to Brandon’s research, he found that stereotypes lose their power and become meaningless once the stereotype is found to be untrue. Unfortunately, there are significant consequences to this practice. People who stereotype can cause the victims to question themselves and to question why someone would think something like that about them.

Brandon determined that his research would benefit from additional fieldwork. If he could change anything in his research this far, he would do a campus-wide survey or questionnaire to have additional, local statistics on how people are affected and feel about stereotypes. In the future, Brandon would pursue research that explores the relation between mood, self-esteem, and stereotypes. He would also explore the ways to help people handle being stereotyped and specific ways people feel degraded by the experience. He said that he hopes to try to figure out, and teach others about, problems such as mood disorders and low self-esteem that can result from the experience of being stereotyped.

In fact, there was so much he wanted to learn about relating to stereotypes that he had trouble narrowing down his topic into something specific enough. Though deeply curious about stereotypes, Brandon’s research is not directly related to his career, but he does believe that stereotypes can affect anyone in any type of job. One day, he feels certain his research can help him to better see how stereotypes work, so that he can be a better employee and have a greater ability to understand others.

Brandon’s photograph depicts a group of people engaged in the act of stereotyping.
Ancient Rome was a curious place, as Barrett Woodruff states, known for its architectural styles, religious practices, and mythology, but perhaps less known for the city’s progressive ways with water and water systems. With Ancient Rome’s advancements, people in other countries started following every step the Romans took. Ancient Rome has captured the hearts of many people by drawing them in with their history and architecture but also, and perhaps most of all, their water systems. One of the many people captivated by Roman history is Barrett Woodruff, who not only took her love for Ancient Rome by studying classics, but also decided to do her research project on comparing ancient Roman water systems to modern U.S. water systems. Barrett has combined her two passions into one research question: “How do ancient Roman water systems compare to modern U.S. water
systems?” She states that her two passions are Ancient Rome and learning about different environmental problems. These are her two passions because her major, Classical Studies, requires her to have discussions and write papers on ancient Rome. Barrett learned quickly that this topic was very broad, so she had to narrow her topic down to something that is not only narrower but more manageable.

The Ancient Romans were not the cleanest nation on earth, but they did try to come up with solutions to their ongoing environmental issues that left the empire polluted. Early on, Romans did not have a proper way of disposing of their garbage, so they threw the garbage out the window or took the trash to the river and disposed of it there. Even though Romans were fairly unsanitary, they fell in love with the idea of taking baths, to the point where bathing became a part of social life, and they established public facilities for families and rich people to take baths and relax.

Barrett never used to be aware of environmental issues or Ancient Rome’s issues. She states “as a child I was not concerned with Ancient Rome,” and it was not until college that she started to become more aware of her environmental stances. Now that she has entered college she is exploring the two possible options of careers: “I am exploring becoming a Classical Civilizations librarian or archivist at a museum.” She feels as if these two career choices really focus on the past and how it affects the future, which is part of not only her major but her research project too.

Barrett hopes that her research capstone project and website will be useful for people who are interested in Ancient Rome, the environment, classics, or anyone who else who is curious about the ways understanding the past can affect the future. Barrett hopes people will see that you cannot erase the past and instead can learn from it.

“ASHBY College, as a whole,” says Barrett, “puts a very big emphasis on how they want us as students to learn from others and how important it is.” Barrett just turned it up a notch, stating, “we should continue to learn from Ancient Rome and possibly continue to learn from them.”

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Imagine a small girl around 5-foot, with glasses, pink hair, and tacky clothing. She walks up to you with a warm smile and welcomes anyone into a conversation and is open to all opinions. Little do you know from this first impression, that this is also someone who carries flaws and when sad, eats the weirdest food possible. This person is Tennah Murphy, and while she’s the strangest person I’ve ever met, she’s also the best and most genuine of them all. When first meeting someone, it’s easy to jump to conclusions and try to determine if someone is entirely good or entirely evil. This exact same phenomenon happens when reading a book and analyzing characters through their actions and personality. In Tennah’s research she addresses this problem by looking at how people see characters from literature and how readers are inclined to compartmentalize characters’ qualities, applying personality traits from characters to different aspects of their own life. This compartmentalization process, though seemingly innocuous, can be detrimental to readers. Tennah’s research
suggests that if readers can acknowledge how to understand and see the flawed characters in favorite Arthurian tales (or other stories), they can learn how to understand other people better. Tennah’s research also dives into how one can use this new view of flawed characters to provide insight into examples of real-life situations and use those circumstances to help improve social interactions. People are social creatures, and looking at the ways people interact can help create an understanding of different opinions, viewpoints, and positions.

As someone who is interested in storytelling and how people interact with one another, Tennah wants people to recognize how important it is to analyze flawed characters and realize that flaws don’t make someone entirely bad. While stories will sometimes separate characters into a good or bad side, that doesn’t mean the characters on opposite sides are completely good or evil. Everyone has flaws and graces, whether good or evil. According to her research, taking time to fully analyze a character can help people see that fullness of personality traits. Tennah says, “you need to have a conversation with a character before being able to take them seriously, and it’s the exact same way with people in real life. Get to know a character, see how they live, what exactly it is that makes them good or bad and use their flaws as a form of self-reflection.” In this way, characters in literature can help provide perspective on life by helping people either see through a character’s point of view or using your own powers of analysis to help see other people’s views.

Tennah believes that the way people read reflects how they interact with others and interaction is what helps build a better and more inclusive community. While it is a challenge and almost impossible to understand another human being completely, putting in the effort to understand someone else’s struggles and one’s own flaws can provide perspective. People tend to jump to conclusions when first meeting others, whether it is a person in real life or a character in a book, but it is better to get to know people. Everyone has flaws, and instead of seeing this as something bad, it is helpful to realize that no one is perfect; there’s never only a completely good or bad side.
In America, a large portion of our livestock is housed in small spaces and fed diets that are meant to prioritize cost-effectiveness for companies. The method measures productivity based on profit margins. Though the nature of this industrialized system has often received criticism on ethical grounds, the system itself also brings to light food safety and health issues that may stem from our way of keeping animals. Sophomore Sydney Chamberlain, Ashby Residential College member and Biology major, was interested in the practice of feeding animals their own kind in the modern food processing industry and the lack of regulation thereof, or, in other words: cannibalism. Following her research interest, she learned that a number of food companies have tried to maximize profits by feeding animals products made from other livestock of the same species. This cannibalistic practice led to the spread of prions, or misfolded proteins. After eating the tainted food, animals spread prions to other animals, leading to incurable, deadly diseases that are passed on to humans. These diseases attack the brain.
and nervous system and leave the brain with a sponge-like appearance filled with holes.

Most notably, the discovery of Mad Cow Disease in 1996 brought prions and their danger to the attention of the wider community. Though unfamiliar in popular culture, prion-related diseases and their possible spread by way of mutation are still a concern for professionals.

When asked about how she came across her topic Sydney pointed to a lack of readily available information on prions: “I was in a Bio class and the professor was talking about it, and he pulled up a slide and he was like, “I don’t really understand this”, and he flipped past it, so of course I had to [go understand it].”

After interviewing Sydney and asking her to open up about her career interests she noted that some day she hoped to get into pathology research. Looking into prions and their lack of government regulation is not much of a step away from her ambitions to study research pathology. She also admitted that although her interest and biology and pathology led her to her topic, in the beginning the direction wasn’t so clear. As for many researchers, the process of transforming interests into a concrete research question is not always easy: “I started out wanting to research something but I didn’t have a clear question so I just kinda winged it until I found a question.” The topic developed and the ideas were allowed to flow unadulterated. As an interviewer, it was very interesting to listen to Sydney talk about the way in which her research changed and developed. Along the way there were redirections and the course was not always clear. Sydney commented that, “I fully expected to just study a one case situation that affected just one

“Not everyone will pay attention to research, but as Sydney said: ‘I don't know about you, do you like your nerve endings?’ I couldn't help but answer, ‘yes, yes I do.’”

population subset because of one thing. And then it turned into multiple species and then the whole population.” In this way, the research as well as the researcher grew through the process of struggle. She didn’t set out to solve any problem at first. Her interest in the topic carried the research further.

Armed with all of this new information and fired up about the danger of prions, the issue then turned to one of government regulation. Sydney says, “I concluded there’s no real reason other
than money.” When confronted with the dangers of prions in our food system, most people would be alarmed. But she found that the medical community had not done much to try to address the situation. The reasoning behind this may stem from a relatively small number of prion-related cases a year compared to what the community deems more pressing concerns. Although the federal government’s regulation of the food industry regarding prions is slim to none, based on her research, the issue needs more attention. Because of this she wanted to focus on awareness and providing correct information in the hope that people can at least be informed. Sydney suggests, “…it has to be a government thing, and I highly doubt this issue is ever gonna reach that level.” After seeing the real danger of prions through Sydney’s research process, government involvement seems a logical, if futile, hope. The possible repercussions of prions spreading through our food system are large, and government intervention is what Sydney’s research argument calls for.

Sydney made it clear that much more can be done to further this research and she sounded excited when speaking about further pathological research. In the future, Sydney noted that she “would have done lab work…[to] help find a solution that might be applicable.” Her research project led to an opportunity for an internship in a local lab. Though time constraints prevented her from pursuing the opportunity, it was exciting to see her research project lead to real opportunities in her field.

The room for continued exploration is definitely there. Not everyone will pay attention to research, but when asked why she is interested, Sydney responded: “I don’t know, do you like your nerve endings?” I couldn’t help but answer, “Yes, yes I do.” In a straight forward and unapologetically raw way Sydney’s research sounds the alarm in the face of a medical community that at times belittles the significance of research on cannibalism in food production.
Everyone has a passion for something and that something for Shanelle Ypema is to help others by being a dietitian and improving the health of many in a more natural way. Shanelle is a sophomore with a major in Nutrition who one day hopes to be a dietitian, and she felt that her topic would be a great start on something that she could possibly build on one day when she is in her career field. Her research is on nutritional therapy and how it can be as, or more, effective as other conventional methods of treatment for managing the symptoms of Inflammatory Bowel Disease or IBD. IBD is inflammation occurring in all or some parts of the digestive tract, which can increase a person’s risk of getting colon cancer. Currently it is said that this disease requires lifelong treatment and that there is no cure, but Shanelle’s research is testing that statement. It was through her research and fieldwork that she was able to discover that
different nutrients play a huge role in a diet that can help manage the symptoms of IBD and relieve the extra stress that those who have this ailment feel all the time.

Shanelle’s passion comes from not only wanting to be a dietitian one day but also from having a personal background with this disorder. When asked what influenced her position on this topic, she answered, “There’s a few people in my family who have had gastrointestinal issues and so it just makes me want to help even more since it is so personal to me.” With this being not only a dream career for Shanelle, but also a personal goal to find out more, it’s not hard to see what drives her passion for this issue. She also believes that her goal of trying to find out more about this topic is attainable because she is curious and open-minded about her research. She finds herself in a constant state of not giving up and wanting to help everyone, those in her family and those who are living with this disease.

During an interview to find out more about Shanelle’s research, she stated that her research was about trying to prove that, by changing your diet, you can fight the symptoms that come from IBD without having surgery, which in the long run could lead to future complications. Her research has concluded that those who do end up using medication or having surgery tend to be left with the side effects of weakened bones and nutritional deficiencies.

Also during the interview, Shanelle was asked how she might have improved her research if given more time to study this topic or if she could change her research what would she do, and she responded with “I would have gone to an actual hospital and talked to people who have actually had the disease in order to better my research.”

If having a personal background with this wasn’t enough, she also chose a topic known for being controversial. She says, “This topic is controversial because not a lot of research has been done on dietary approaches to managing symptoms of IBD, and most people who do end up with this disorder feel that they won’t ever get better because there is no actual cure. So finding a way to help people that doesn’t involve surgery or medication but that relieves these people of their pain is very important to me.” Curiosity has also been a major factor in Shanelle’s
drive to find out more about what could help others with bettering their lives and relieving them of the problems and pain that they are facing every single day with this disease. She simply wants to help others and will not stop until she finds peace with making sure everyone is able to get better treatment for the condition that they are facing.

Here at our university we have many who are always looking for a way to improve our world. Shanelle is also one of those people. She stated that “The campus can grow to help the people who face this by being more informed and having more foods to help those with special diets.” Our campus already has options for students who are vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free, and so much more, so this would mean reasonable adjustments for the school.

Shanelle believes that by sharing this research that students or faculty with IBD can also have their dietary needs met. Looking at us as a community, she also believes that some can feel excluded, so by adding more options to our campus and informing more people, they can have their voices heard and thus no longer feel like the out group.

Shanelle conducted a lot of research to help her prove her point that a simple change in diet can help relieve the many symptoms that those with IBD face on a day-to-day basis. Her look into different studies even showed that when analyzing the inflammatory effect of food she found that saturated fats and trans fats scored much higher values than any other food, meaning they caused the most inflammation. She constructed a dietary outline that also explained what increased inflammation and what decreased or didn’t affect it at all. The dietary outline, provided a detailed accounting of foods, listed by category that would be helpful or harmful to sufferers.

With research and a strong passion, Shanelle was able to come up with simple guidelines for those dealing with a disease that they didn’t ask for. It was her dedication, hard work, and overall drive for greatness that allowed her to not only grow as a researcher, but to use her talent and passion to help others simply because that it was she loves to do: help.
Is there such a thing called discrimination in the workforce? Well of course there is, and it has been around for a long time, stemming mostly from attitudes toward differences in gender, race, ethnicity, and immigration status. These attitudes have shaped the way the workforce has come to function now. One behavior that Brianna’s research explores is how members of the black community have to adapt to employers by changing a very important aspect of their lifestyle: their hair. Her research focuses on how there is discrimination towards the African-American community when individuals want wear their natural hair while at work, as opposed to certain synthetic hairstyles. In particular, she illustrates how there are many cases that show how African Americans have been denied jobs or been reprimanded at work for wearing a natural hairstyle. Though workplace expectation to adapt hairstyles to the dominant norm is important, she is more interested in the underlying reasons behind why some employers or companies prefer styles that are not natural and how the expectation...
to adapt affects identity. There is much research that supports the importance of the relationship between hair and identity, and this connection is actually one of Brianna’s main focal points in her research. A person’s hairstyle is something that helps distinguish one’s individuality. Now imagine this distinguishing part of identity being taken away because of workplace norms.

The cultural norm is for hairstyles that look as straight and smooth as possible, in other words, as white as possible. To expect African-Americans at work to stick to a weave and not braids or natural hair is to ask them to do more than just look nice for a job. It asks them to change their sense of self, to change their identity, to be less black. For example, for African-Americans one of the natural hairstyles that is looked down upon most often is dreadlocks. Many African-Americans have been discriminated against because of their dreads while on the job. Many more have been put on the “do not call” for an interview list because of their dreads. And many more have actually been asked to remove their dreads all together in order to maintain their jobs or to be hired.

Brianna chose this topic of research because of how highly intersectional it was to her. These discriminatory practices have shaped the way the workforce community has come to function today among many identifiers: not only race, but gender and immigration status as well and how all those elements are intersecting and influencing each other. For example, as an African-American woman she sees that in the workforce her gender and race play a huge part in how she is perceived not only by customers but also by employers. Her research shows that even in modern America there are still harmful attitudes toward certain groups of people. People today might think that we have slowly progressed past this level of discrimination. On the contrary some argue that America has been stuck in this position for decades and that this was no new discovery. With African-Americans being such a large minority and this problem affecting thousands of young black individuals, Brianna feels compelled to bring awareness to this issue so that people can help put an end to the practice.
Though you may not know much about who he was or the names of any of his specific paintings, you have certainly heard the name Picasso, and you more than likely know that he was some famous artist. The fact that the name alone sounds familiar is a testament to the lasting importance of Picasso’s artwork. Ally Whitman is an art major whose research explores and analyzes how Picasso’s non-western influences, in particular his African influences, helped shape his style and, in turn, helped shape a big part of Western modern art.

Ally’s interest in art came about at a young age. Her family consists of both artists and teachers, so she had always been pushed towards learning more about art. “I had always aspired to be an artist myself.” One of the main, personal draws to her art education was learning about the processes of other artists and the factors that...
influenced them. Ally’s curiosity about Picasso and his influences stemmed from an art history class she took over winter break. This interest has only continued to grow since then. “Before that, I wasn’t that familiar with the influence of African art on modern western artists such as Picasso.”

Though Pablo Picasso is mostly known for his cubist paintings, he started out painting much more contemporary art, that is to say, pieces that were more in line with what the rest of Europe was painting. His cubist style can be defined as the emphasis on geometric shapes with a collage-esque structure to each painting. Around 1907 he began painting with African art, namely masks that he had supposedly seen at an exhibition at the Louvre, as his main influence. Though this period did not last very long, it clearly had an impact on his art style in the years to come.

Picasso’s African period only lasted a few years, and a number of his paintings after this period of time continued to mimic those of contemporary European artists. What she did gather, however, was the idea that influence can come from anywhere. The idea that an influential figure such as Picasso could himself find influence in something as different artistically and culturally as African mask art is a testament to the concept of cultural exchange. It can be said that because African art had an influence on Pablo Picasso, it therefore also had something of an influence on cubism, which in turn had a major influence on Western modern art as a whole.

At first Ally was mildly interested in studying art history, but now she admits that, through studying Picasso’s African period, she has realized that “[your] source of inspiration can come from anywhere.” This is an idea that I imagine we can all take to heart, as it can only be a detriment to focus merely on western sensibilities for inspiration. If Picasso had no problem being inspired by something outside of his cultural boundaries and trends of the time, then anyone can do the same.

Examples of African masks of the kind that inspired Picasso.
The world of pharmaceutical medicine is always changing with new discoveries and techniques being implemented every day. These advancements have brought in a lot of revenue to the pharmaceutical industry which is now worth nearly 934 billion dollars. Despite medicine generally becoming safer and more effective, there are still many problems associated with traditional pharmaceutical medicine. Some people experience bad side effects from medicines. Also, with higher effectiveness comes higher costs that some consumers can’t afford even though they may really need the medicine. All of these problems sparked a young researcher’s interest to find alternatives to traditional medicines. Destiny Hayes is a sophomore at UNCG where she began her research into alternatives to pharmaceutical medicine. This topic is perfect for Destiny because it is
related to her desire to pursue a career in healthcare administration. Doing research on alternatives to traditional pharmaceuticals can prove to be very beneficial for Destiny, because she will be able to understand a variety of methods of treatment for patients. In fact, having general knowledge about various treatment options can help anyone pursuing a career in the medical field because it enables you to be able to make better decisions for patients.

Her research focused on three main areas of comparison: long-term effects, overall effectiveness, and costs, and it became clear that the natural option of Cannabidiol, more commonly known as CBD, was worth researching more deeply. Found in the cannabis plant, CBD is used for pain management, anxiety, depression, and even for cancer-related symptoms. One of the main benefits of CBD is that it is not psychoactive, meaning that you won't experience that high feeling you may get from the other chemical properties found in cannabis. Destiny reports that CBD oil can be a better option than other well-known and problematic drugs like oxycodone. Destiny found that natural methods overall are better than pharmaceuticals in many ways. One way is that the costs are much lower. Pharmaceutical companies often have high prices, even when they are not really effective. Insurance companies may lift some of the burden, but, even so, many consumers are finding it harder and harder to pay for their medications. Natural methods like CBD oil are reasonably priced in many drug stores, while pharmaceutical companies and retailers continue to raise the prices of their drugs.

Destiny also found natural medicine to put less strain on the body, and her research revealed that many pharmaceuticals had detrimental side effects in both the short and long run. Patients experienced negative long-term effects like liver damage, and some patients even developed other diseases like cancer. CBD has only minor side effects which are all manageable, and since it is natural, there are not any serious detrimental long-term effects from it. She hopes that everyone will be making better life choices in terms of healthcare. There are way more options available to you than only traditional routes, and it is important that you are aware of all of them.
This project started off with just wanting to discuss how eating disorders could develop from feeling the pressure of body ideals. However, Autumn Davis realized that she wanted to talk about how social media messages can have a subtext. This subtext can create an ironic situation where social media posts that were promoting healthy practices were actually leading to unhealthy, poor body image, spreading messages about false body ideals.

Autumn is a Nutrition major, pursuing her dietitian’s license. Her primary focus is on what people are eating and the special cases that involve an individual’s mental health, which will help her better understand the pressures that may lead people to make decisions that don’t necessarily benefit their health. This project was inspired by misinformation. On social media, impossible standards communicate the illusion that perfect people are the norm, which
can make people feel like they must do anything necessary to be perfect like those they see online. Inspired by her own experiences with social pressures and norms, social media and ideal body image, made her feel like she had been pressured to make bad health choices in order to be accepted, Autumn wondered whether there were others like her. For her research project she wanted to look at how the rise of health trends in social media could cause poor health choices for people, and also if social media actually promoted healthy lifestyles or not. She found that social media use had dramatic effects on users’ mental health, which subsequently led to worsening physical health.

However, during this preliminary study, Autumn’s research revealed that these effects vary from person to person. This study looked into what would happen when social media users compared themselves to the ideals posted on other people’s sites that discuss diets or juice cleanses, for example. The comparison between what users see as healthy and ideal and how they feel about themselves creates a tension. So even though posts might seem to advocate for healthy choices, the result of never measuring up to the ideal creates an unhealthy cycle. These comparisons can cause people to see a supermodel and be discouraged because they can’t reach these self-set goals of perfection. This sense of discouragement can cause anxiety and body dissatisfaction, leading people to become self-conscious and depressed, supporting the speculation that poor emotional health contributes to eating disorders, disrupting the balance between an active lifestyle and healthy approaches to eating.

Like many researchers, this project revealed a lot to Autumn about herself that caused her to reflect, contributing to her goal to reach individuals who don’t accept themselves, who need body love and positivity. Yet, people in general benefit from acknowledging the existence of social ideals and pressures on social media. Autumn is bringing awareness to the negative effects of seemingly innocent social media messages, so that we can better safeguard against diminished self image and improve and reinforce messages about body acceptance and well being.
As sad as it is, our society is no stranger to the impact that gender bias can have on our daily lives. Though biases and inequality between men and women have been around for centuries, we have only just begun to acknowledge the depth of the problem and how it affects women’s experiences. While there may be access to many of the same opportunities, men do not often face the same challenges that women do when it comes to achieving success.

Danaye Connor, a sophomore biology major, has taken notice of the role that this sort of bias plays in the education system, specifically in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Danaye has been working towards developing awareness for the struggles that women face in STEM-related fields; she notes how “women’s achievements in education and career are often overlooked and overshadowed by the achievements of men.” In her research, she argues that gender-
based biases affecting this field largely diminish a woman’s desire to strive for a career in STEM, which has undoubtedly contributed to the shockingly low proportion of women in the discipline. Danaye recounts the many personal experiences with feeling discouraged due to the lack of support for women in the field; she also found that many other college-aged women have faced similar ordeals. While this is not hard to believe, it is shocking nonetheless, especially if you consider that our society is at a point where gender inclusivity is more of a priority than ever before.

Danaye comments on how it isn’t hard to understand where these women are coming from, and it certainly wasn’t difficult to find people to talk about their experiences, “people really wanted to talk;” and why wouldn’t they? STEM is at the forefront of careers as we start preparing for the next generation of technologies and scientific discoveries, and it is only natural that these fields would attract women as well as men. Danaye finds this situation to be quite perplexing, not only as a woman who currently studies STEM subjects but also as someone who is working towards becoming a high school STEM educator.

But what are we to do about this? Gender bias is not something that can simply be wished away. It takes hard work and a good fight to challenge these societal norms. Danaye’s research argues that we take a look at how to encourage and improve support systems for women and young girls who are interested in going into STEM: “I wanted to look into how mentoring for college-aged women and high school girls would help with the stress that comes with being in a field predominantly populated by men.” The issue isn’t that women in STEM are simply being overlooked or that the significance of their success is often downplayed, Danaye says. Instead it is that “the field seems unappealing to women because of this lack of representation. The field is not strictly for men!” She feels that developing programs designed to encourage women to seek mentors and peer-tutors, especially on campuses such as UNCG that focus heavily on STEM and the sciences, would ensure women get the support they need to maintain their desire to work in STEM.
When it comes to looking at the surrounding world, art is undeniably a part of it. But how much of it do you actually see as art? Can you name the artists involved in enriching your surroundings? Unfortunately, you probably can’t name the artists, and art is so abundant that it can escape notice quickly. However, this abundance also leads to an unexpected problem: the theft of art happening right in front of us, most of us unaware. Kaiden Davis aims to create awareness of this art theft and help us come up with ideas on how to stop it on both the individual and societal level.

But what is art theft? Kaiden explains that art theft is the taking and modifying of any art for business or popular use, without explicit permission of the artist who made the original art. Of course, if one is learning, it is a little different. To copy a work is to understand...
how the other artist thinks so that one can find their own style, and this is done within many technical art classes. However, if one begins to pass the copy off as one's own, it becomes theft.

As a primarily digitally-based artist, Kaiden, and many others like him, face threats of art theft daily. Thus, Kaiden is passionate when it comes to his research and his beliefs: “I guarantee that I could walk into a room right now and find ten different shirts with stolen art on them and the person wearing it wouldn't even know.” He believes that artists and social media corporations need to work together to effectively reduce social media art theft. Kaiden’s research found that the copyright laws involved did not protect individual artists, and that even blatant art theft, like a copy of someone else's Instagram post but colored slightly differently, or modified in any way, was difficult to have removed. This, he also found, leads to a sense of frustration in sharing work, decreased sense of self esteem when the post with copied artwork gets more notes than the original work, and less funding going to the initial artist.

In order to combat this problem, Kaiden explains that working with social media administration is crucial so that the offenders are blocked and the offending posts taken down completely if they continue to plagiarize. This harmony of working together is important so that the artists are protected and can feel a stronger sense of self within the art community. Art is very personal and very public at the same time, so finding individuality can already be tough without the added worry over stolen art, which often means lost time or money. Consumers can also make sure that the products they buy are legitimate, and if not, recognizing the ethical consequences of buying stolen art. Alerting the artist is appreciated so that artists can work with those who can help with removing posts with stolen art.

Imagine no signage, or cool T-shirt design, or food style: there would be nothing to flood us with color or capture memorable experiences. Everyone benefits from everyone else’s creative endeavors to thrive in our society, so it is important to respect artists’ livelihoods by giving proper recognition and recognizing that help for them needs to come from all sides.
Listening to Noor talk about her research it is apparent that when faced with knowledge of the oceans’ current polluted state she became understandably angered by our neglect of an environment we rely so heavily upon. For some time now the world at large has had an issue with pollution. Whether it be trash being improperly disposed or car emissions, there’s no doubt that pollution in all its forms is a hazard to us and our environment. As they make up the majority of the earth’s surface, oceans are unmatched in their contribution to human survival. For this reason, the ocean became the main focus for Noor Ayesh and her research during the past three months. Noor, dissatisfied with the current state of our environment, sought out a solution. After research on the topic, Noor came to fix her gaze on those solutions that could be carried out by the everyday person.

Noor sees her research as an opportunity: “I wanted to learn more for myself as well as spread awareness to others.” The accessibility of Noor’s findings definitely comes from her understanding of the scope of the issue. Noor said it best herself during our interview: “The
oceans affect all people and if we lose
the wildlife currently present because of
human pollution, all the earth’s balance
will be off.” Noor’s research, while
aimed on those already interested in
environmental preservation, can easily
bring anyone into a state of awareness
about the subject. Noor says her choice
to research the topic comes from her
own care for the earth and its animals,
something that had become apparent
throughout my time interviewing her.

Through her research, Noor herself came
to realize the sheer amount of trash
that everyone produces, mostly plastic,
which finds its way into the world’s
oceans. While many people have a slight
awareness of ocean pollution, Noor feels
that most people fail to grasp the scale of
the problem. Currently, ocean currents
circulate human trash in great patches
of non-biodegradable waste. Noor
brings to light the many detrimental
habits and items that exacerbate the
issue. Items such as face wash, sanitizers,
or glues which contain plastic glitters
easily become tiny pollutants which
find themselves within sewage systems,
rivers, lakes, and then oceans. A lack of
recycling and constant purchasing of
items such as plastic water bottles and
plastic bags increases the amount of non-
biodegradable trash which finds its way
to our oceans.

Noor’s research suggests that increased
awareness will lead to increased

investment in new technologies
and solutions, and in the future she
would like to do more research into
technological advances that may aid in
the cleaning of our oceans.

Would this kind of project strengthen the
UNCG community? Her answer is short
and simple: “UNCG’s student body will
be made more conscious global citizens.”
Though simple, this statement reveals
what’s at the heart of her research, people
and the difference we make in the world.

Just by increasing awareness on a topic,
large scale change can take place and
Noor’s research makes this awareness
its main goal. Noor’s time researching
ocean pollution would change her own
perspective on potential solutions from
broad government changes to the more
personal awareness she has now.
Picture this: you’re at the beauty supply store, looking for some foundation. You search all around the store, looking for a foundation that suits your skin tone until you come to the realization that there isn’t any foundation for your skin tone at all. You see dozens of shades for specific skin tones, but not yours. This is an issue that Jana Nolan has noticed within the beauty industry. Growing up, Jana was always fond of makeup. She would even practice applying makeup on her father while he slept. One day while shopping for makeup, Jana noticed the lack of color ranges among many makeup brands and the noticeable bias towards those with white and pale skin tones. Jana’s love for makeup is even shown through social media, following beauty channels on YouTube. “A lot of beauty gurus on YouTube like NickieTutorials, Tati, James Charles, and Jeffree Star posted videos about Fenty Beauty’s foundation line, and after watching those videos I realized how sad it is that not all companies make a good shade range.” Sometimes brands post images or ideas that make people angry...
enough to post responses on social media that cause popularity and conflict, which in turn produces more revenue and money for the brand. “Over the winter break,” says Jana, “I went shopping for makeup and wanted to try new things and as I was looking I realized that a lot of brands didn’t sell to the wide color spectrum and only marketed towards white and pale individuals, which made me sufficiently angry, and I realized that is what I wanted to expose to others who may not know.”

These events inspired Jana and her research on race and racism in the makeup industry. Jana says, “as a white female, I didn’t see the actual problem itself until someone else, like the people on YouTube, told me to go look for this issue. I think that my race caused me to have tunnel vision when looking at shade range because I was only looking for myself.” She explained, “When I began the project I assumed that I’d find a different reason other than racism for companies not wanting to sell darker shades. But I quickly figured out that I was wrong and everything I thought and feared before the project was actually true in terms of not being able to find any other underlying cause for the lack of shades in the market.”

A sophomore at UNCG, Jana Nolan is part of Strong College, majoring in Human Development and Family Studies. Jana plans to assist those who feel excluded. “I want to get my Master’s and become a counselor for teens and young adults in middle and high school age groups. I feel like a lot of people go to therapy for self-image problems, and if the makeup community changed what they sold then maybe more people would feel beautiful.”

“I want to understand why the lack of darker foundation shades isn’t being fixed or isn’t changing. It is 2019 and this should have been taken care of a long time ago.”

When researching, Jana came to a realization that her topic of race and the makeup industry is a relatively unexplored subject. In spite of this, Jana’s research yielded many discoveries. Despite makeup brands’ variety of shades for white skin tones and the lack of variety among dark skin tones, Jana found out that there is no cost difference to manufacture different pigments or light or dark shades of foundation. This is due to the fact that all shades of makeup are made up of a combination of four pigments: white, red, yellow, and black. Jana also discovered that despite having the largest range of shades available to choose from, white people wore the least
Images of cat paraphernalia adorn the walls of Greensboro’s Cat Café. CAT CAFÉS
amount of makeup among racial groups in America. Jana believes that race and the makeup industry is something that the public should be aware of.

Consumers should be allowed to evaluate the products they purchase and reflect on how it not only affects them but also how the support of a company might affect others. According to Jana, “my target and goal was to have people who aren’t aware of this issue become more aware and look into the brands they are buying. They should see what companies are producing and what kind of a message that they are sending.”

This is a message that can not only be shared to those at UNCG but across the United States, where there are thousands of Americans who struggle finding their shade. Race and the makeup industry is an important topic to Jana because this issue goes deep. “Inclusivity is a problem,” Jana states, “in all aspects of America, not just in the makeup industry, and taking even small steps in the right direction could lead to a lot more.” Makeup is just another example of how there are others who are excluded in a market that should have been accessible for everyone since the beginning, and the first step in fixing something is to acknowledge that it is broken.

Despite the number of discoveries Jana encountered while researching the subject of race and the makeup industry, there were many topics Jana wished to further analyze. Hoping to find a more definite reason why the makeup industry excludes darker skin tones, Jana realized the issue is quite difficult and rooted in the fact that there is not one singular brand of makeup, but there are multiple companies that create makeup, each of which might possibly have a different explanation as to why they offer a large range of shades for white skin and limited choices for darker skin tones.

It is clear the makeup industry still has a long way to go to be more inclusive, including shades for all skin tones, but there is evidence of slow change. Jana proclaims, “I want everyone to feel confident and beautiful in their own skin, and I think that I have always wanted this and I always will.”
Have you ever found yourself in a battle between your love of all things café and all things cat? Well, that’s all about to cease! Started in 1998, cat cafés seek to blend these two loves. Cats and coffee, cats and coffee, say it with me! Cats and coffee! So is that all, just a café with cats in it? Well, to answer that question you’d need Google, but why use Google when you have someone that is as enthusiastic and compassionate about these magical cafés: Aidan Ward. Aidan decided to do her Strong College Capstone project on cat cafés because she’s always had a love for cats, starting with her own cats, named “Cat” and “Cous Cous.”

After visiting the Crooked Tail Cat Café, in Greensboro, she became instantly inquisitive about cat cafés. Her initial question was “Are cat cafés good for cats?” Of course, she couldn’t just go up the owner of Crooked Tail Cat Café
and ask them if their café was actually good for the cats. Instead, she started to research the subject.

Aidan is a sophomore at UNCG, majoring in Entrepreneurship, from Creedmoor, a small town near Durham, NC. She hopes to one day use her entrepreneurial skills to open a cat café of her own. Not just a regular cat café, but one with improved designs, and a candy store. She’s still at the beginning of her major, but that doesn’t stop the creativity and ambition from flowing. Using the research done for this project, Aidan would like to learn from the other cat café owners and use that knowledge a guidebook to make sure that her cat café is the best it can possibly be.

With all this talk about cat cafés, you’re still probably wondering what is it? A cat café is essentially a café that has cats in it. However, these cats aren’t just there for human entertainment, they’re there to be considered for adoption. Any cat that is seen in a cat café is available for adoption. Cat cafés aim to raise awareness for the cats, so that they can find their forever homes.

So that’s it, right? Just a café used for gaining awareness about adoption for cats? Unfortunately no, there’s a lot more logistics that go into cat cafés that aren’t immediately visible on the surface, with questions that need answers: How are the cats being treated? Do the cats like being at the café? Are there health concerns? These are all similar questions that Aidan sought to answer.

Her primary concern was wanting to find out if cat cafés were beneficial to the cats? Are the cats being harmed, or are they uncomfortable in any way? Upon researching cat cafés, Aidan found contradicting stories. Some sources say that cat cafés are great for cats; they gain a potential for adoption awareness, and they get to be loved on all the time. Others say that cat cafés are bad for the cats due to the potential spread of disease, such as ringworm and hookworm between both people and cats and the fact that cats being placed in confined spaces with other cats can cause them to be uncomfortable enough to spray to mark territory or to fight with each other.

So, what did Aidan do with this conflicting evidence? She took points

“Being with cats can help people with their mental health. I saw people walk into the cat café with a blank face and then right away they started smiling and laughing when they saw the cats.”
from both sides of the argument and formed those points into a more complete picture of what a cat café actually is, a picture that showed that cat cafés have positives as well as negatives. The cafés may not be good for cats because they aren’t social creatures, meaning that many don’t like to be around other cats, especially not in a confined space. Because of that, some cats are often stressed and may behave aggressively towards each other by fighting each other or spraying.

However, those issues don’t overshadow the beauty of a cat café. These cafés are great for gaining awareness for cats and have also been shown that they can help with people’s mental health. Cats have been shown to relieve stress, and as a result can easily help with people’s overall well being, which became a very important aspect of her research project because it answered her second research question: “Why are cat cafés good for people?”

Mental health was an unexpected benefit of cat cafés. Aidan’s research revealed that cats have been known to affect people’s moods, and when cats help people take their minds off of their personal issues, they are lowering their stress levels significantly. For additional support for her study, Aidan said that she would have liked to compare the quality of life of cats being housed at a pet store and a cat café.

Clearly, cat cafés are more than just cafés with cats in them. They are cafés filled with lots of fun and life. These cafés have been shown to be mutually beneficial to both people and cats. People love a good stress reliever, and cats are a tried and true option.

There are a number of cats that need good homes to go to, and being in the café provides them the opportunity to find permanent homes. Although there are some issues with the cat cafés, Aidan believes that after her research she can work to address the negatives. When she opens a cat café of her own, with a few key modifications, it will be a place filled with benefits for cats and people alike.
Colorism is defined as prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group. It is essentially a bias towards people in the same racial category based on the depth of pigment of the skin. Colorism, though present in many contexts, is commonly seen in movies and television shows. In a time when racist tendencies should be declining, discrimination within one’s race should be non-existent. Yet society continues to be reminded of the prejudiced views of society every time a black woman comes on television. Think back to when you were a child or the last time that you watched a cartoon with an African-American woman in it. What was she like and how was she depicted? There are two ways she may have been depicted or shown. She probably either had a lighter skin tone, was very smart and polite, or the complete opposite. She had a darker complexion and was stuck-up, mean, or portrayed as ignorant.
Because cartoons are typically designed for children or younger audiences, this is extremely important because what people see in the media affects the way people see and react to society. Young people and children look to media and television to see how they should feel and fit into society.

However, the act of colorism in the media affects more than just the way children’s minds are forming; this affects adults and adult behavior as well. When the media portrays a specific group of people as unintelligent, bad, or ignorant and another group of people as smart, poised, and intelligent solely based on skin shade it begins to show in society. Malaika Nzau’s research shows the risks and potential dangers of colorism in the media. She says, “what we put in fiction influences how we live in society, and what we consume in fiction can change how we view the world we live in.”

Colorism in the media is more than just an inaccurate representation of a group of people, it is allowing others to create stereotypes and make assumptions based on the wrong representation.

Nzau grew up noticing this ongoing problem and began to wonder about the different ways that colorism in movies and television influenced the way people viewed themselves and others in society. Nzau says, “I always had a problem with how black female characters were shown in television and film. Many of the ways they were portrayed were the stereotypes of the typical black woman: sassy, head rolling, and angry. It was extremely rare for there to be a well explained, well rounded or fleshed out black female character and when there was, it’s almost always a light-skinned black woman.” Nzau argues that the way light-skinned and dark-skinned black women are seen in society influences their characterization in television and film and vice versa. Stereotypes have a bi-directional influence with society and media. For example, some stereotypes are based on real-life events and some are based on a presence of prejudice and discriminatory values that are portrayed in media. Although many people are taught at a young age that not everything on television is true, viewers internalize what is portrayed in the media and use it to interpret reality. Another problem with this is that depending on the level of exposure people have to differences, they might not understand that these films and shows are racist, so they might just accept...
these representations as true statements and conform or assimilate their views to what they see in the media. Media is one of many ways that we socialize and are socialized. Socialization is one way of illustrating how to behave in culturally acceptable ways. That is, humans learn by seeing or hearing ideas and then repeating them to see what is and is not accepted in a given society. Other ways people are socialized include parents and friends, but if they are also watching media where black women are portrayed in such negative ways.

Watching media contributes to further conversation that can reinforce socialization of racist values. Considering the fact that stereotypes have a bi-directional influence, the only way to change society’s views is to change the depictions of black women in the media, and Nzau says, “the only way to fix colorism within the media is to break the stereotypes that are common within it.” Those involved in the production of media can, and do, affect change by showing that personality does not always correlate with skin color or shade. For example, directors and casting crews can begin by portraying some dark-skinned black women as being shy, timid, or quiet. They could also begin portraying light-skinned black women as assertive, strong, or humble. These changes could have a long lasting impact.

It is important for this change to occur because the media is showing this misrepresentation to people of all ages, especially children in television shows like That So Raven and The Proud Family. Having this misrepresentation warps minds into a closed-off way of thinking and categorizing people. Changing the way society thinks as a whole can change thousands of opinions, changing opinions can change stereotypes, and changing stereotypes can change the way the world functions.

Nzau is a media studies major who wants to improve the way black women and men are represented and tell engaging stories along the way. Nzau says, “the media has a heavy influence on how black women are perceived in society, and the only way to change the negative stereotypes that are connected to skin tones is to include positive representation.”
Bailey always felt like the strange person growing up in Bible Belt Arkansas, where most of her family was very conservative. She, on the other hand, was very open-minded and did not agree with most of her family's ideas, leading some of them to exile her from their lives. She left Arkansas and now she's at UNCG pursuing a major in sociology with a minor in criminology. She picked this major because she's always been fascinated with crime, especially crime prevention. Her family has a background in law enforcement; however, she is more focused on the origins of crime in children. She decided to research this topic because she had previous experience researching causes of sociopathy in adults, and she concluded in her earlier research that the reason for criminal behavior is solely biological due to genetic mutations. However, she did more thinking and completely changed her

Drugs, alcohol, and social isolation are all factors than contribute to criminal behavior.
point of view. This research project reveals her new thinking on how biological and sociological factors all work simultaneously to influence delinquency in adolescents.

That’s why she shares a different point of view then her family. Even though her cultural background does not directly influence her research, she is very interested in how physiological aspects such as sex, gender, and age can play a part in the origin of criminal and delinquent behavior in adolescents. Bailey states, “people should care about the research of the origin of delinquent behavior because it ultimately affects everyone, like it or not, crime is very prevalent in our society. Therefore, the better we understand why people become criminals the better we can create programs for crime prevention.”

There are many reasons why children become criminals. A biological reason might be they have a brain tumor in the area that affects emotions and violence. Another reason might be environmental factors such as where the child grew up or if their parents had criminal behavior. Your brain is also very important to your personality. Bailey relates the story of Phineas Gage’s brain injury. In 1848, Phineas had a very interesting brain injury, a three-foot-long iron pole went right through his head. Though he survived the injury, his whole personality changed because of it. Before the incident, Phineas was one of the nicest people in town and was a frequent churchgoer. After the incident, he became very mean and impatient. People that he worked with did not trust him any more. It was concluded that damage to his frontal lobes was so severe that it caused his whole personality to change. This is just one example of how biological reasons can affect behavior.

Another example that Bailey spoke about is Albert Bandura’s social learning theory. Bandura conducted the Bobo Doll Study where 66 nursery school children divided into three groups. The first group saw the doll being rewarded by the adult. The second group of children saw an adult yelling at the Bobo doll for aggressive behavior. For the last group, the Bobo doll was neither punished nor rewarded. The children who saw the adult beating up the Bobo dolls were more likely to beat up the doll, and they did. When the child was left alone with Bobo dolls the child was mimicking the behavior of adults by hitting the dolls violently. The social learning theory model can be used...
Bailey argues that with all these theories being used to try to explain the reason why children become criminals, it is important to look at these components holistically. The theory of nature vs nurture is the debate, whether genetic factors or environmental factors are more important in determining child development. Bailey believes we need to stop arguing which factors are more important because both of them are. Environmental and genetic factors work side-by-side in child development. Bailey says, “Many crime causation theories related to youth development explain the importance of understanding the concept of nature vs nurture. This procedure had limited success in exploring the motives of violent crime and should be altered to include the sociological aspects that have direct causation of these behaviors.” Basically, the better understanding people have of this concept the more effectively we can create programs for crime prevention.

Bailey’s study can help educate people about programs of crime prevention work best. If Bailey had more time for her research project, she would have done a regional comparison of different areas, for example how conservative Arkansas compares to diverse Greensboro. She hopes that one day someone else will see her research and expand upon it. Overall, she experienced a lot of ups and downs during her research process, such as struggling to find sources and making sense of all the information she’d collected in a way that made sense to people. Bailey states, “I would like to do more research, in general. I would go further into depth, using more examples that are relevant to today.” However, she is glad she went through the process; ultimately, her research has expanded her way of thinking.
For years, mental health concerns of various populations have been swept under the rug and been deemed less important than physical health concerns. However, recently advocates for mental health awareness have spoken up about treating individuals with depression with the same level of care as individuals with a physical concern like the flu. While these advocates have been making great strides, there is a population that needs attention:

African-American men. Sophomore Aby Musa recognizes the unique struggles that African-American men face when it comes to mental health. As an African-American woman, she has seen family members and close friends in her community (especially men) suffer from depression. She was inspired to research this topic: she says, “I have seen people I love go through depression; they would not be forthcoming. These people exhibited clear signs
of depression but were afraid to admit it.” Because of Aby’s experiences, she was determined to explore why there was a stigma surrounding African-American men with depression.

Aby’s research reveals the stereotype that black men are strong, independent, and do not need help. Though many people believe this, it is exactly what she stated: a stereotype. Aby wants men to know that they do not have to maintain the tough persona society expects them to have: “Depression in any African-American community is an unspoken word that is highly frowned upon because that means you do not know how to make yourself happy. If men say the word depression, that may be a sign that they are fragile, not strong enough, or mentally weak, which is not the case at all.” This stigma means that many African-American men are afraid to seek help when managing their depression for fear they will appear weak.

Though African-American men don’t necessarily have higher rates of depression, Aby did find evidence that suggests they may have a harder time coping with depression. There are many obstacles black men face when trying to cope, and “there were factors that contributed to this problem: environment, family issues, relationship issues, and the overall stigma against black men.” Aby mentions the impact families can have on how young men manage their depression. “Black men have so many responsibilities and obligations to their families,” states Aby, and “having other stressors in their lives means it may be harder for them to seek treatment while maintaining a strong face.” Aby notes that part of the problem is that “black men are overlooked in society; the only way they are noticed is if they commit a crime.” In the media, black men are often depicted as criminals or accused of crimes they didn’t commit. If the media and the general community start portraying African-American men as humans and not criminals, this population may have a more positive outlook on themselves.

Aby made it very clear: “depression is hard to deal with and the public needs to come to an understanding that African-American males suffer from it too. It may worsen if we do not get them the proper help that they need.”
High school students across the country take courses in many different subjects range from math to science to literature classes. In addition to standard subjects, many people find themselves taking courses in the arts, including visual arts, band, dance, theatre, and chorus. These classes are geared to help students develop creative skills that students can use when pursuing jobs or applying to college. Many jobs and colleges are looking for those students that stand out from the rest.

However, since the K-12 school system is very standardized, most students find themselves focusing on STEM classes or the humanities. Ashley Bonner, sophomore art education major, explains just how and why creativity in the classroom is so important and how school systems should incorporate more art education within their systems. As an art education major, she picked this topic because on a personal level she understands just how important it is for a student to have creative skills for...
future endeavors. A student can find themselves succeeding more when they develop creativity skills at a younger age or build some skill while they are in middle/high school. Jobs and companies have a set foundation that has been established for many years, but these places are consistently seeking young minds with creative ideas to help that company move in a larger direction. The importance of arts in young students can have lasting effects on a developmental level. As Ashley mentioned, “Creativity can boost skills like problem solving, organizational skills, communication skills, and many more.”

Creativity that develops from these arts courses can also promote skills in STEM, which is great for students who struggle with problem solving or who have trouble with organization. Ashley’s research reveals that children develop better when exposed to stimuli like music or art from an early age. Studies have shown that those children who develop these skills early flourish more in social environments. Ashley realizes just how important these skills are to herself as well as to other people. Companies are actively seeking people with new, creative ideas to build their organization’s people who can think more abstractly find themselves moving up quickly in the business world. These individuals are engineers or members of other professions that involve creative ideas or require developing something new. Companies that have young and creative minds can promote new products to their consumers and adapt to current social contexts, which makes them more competitive.

Ashley’s largest priority is the point is that creativity should be a focus for more school systems. The majority of students may take only one class to fulfill a credit or requirement, but students spend all of their time in grade school from kindergarten to twelfth grade taking science and math courses which, limit their exploration of creative talents. Yet, because of the benefits it provides, creativity is a very powerful skill for students and people in the job market. However, though some people may have access, a majority of people don’t have access. School systems should find ways to increase opportunities arts education for the current generation and future generations.
Have you ever wondered why it seems so difficult to try something new? Whether it is talking to someone new and making a new friend, joining a student group on campus, or trying to open up more in general, it seems as if doing these things is impossible. This type of difficulty is what inspired Viola Byass to conduct her research about hesitancy to try the unfamiliar. Viola tackles this issue at a psychological level in an attempt to understand why humans find this situation so challenging.

Viola’s inspiration started with wondering why it is difficult to make new friends. However, this changed when she realized that the very same difficulty applies to a wide variety of tasks, such as “...getting into anything new, like a club or an activity, or trying something new like a food.” After realizing this, Viola was determined to investigate why there is reluctance whenever people move outside of their comfort zone.
Viola found a large amount of research that she had to sort through in order to find relevant evidence. Viola had to take all of the information and shape it into the kind of facts that she needed, to take out the irrelevant and keep the necessary. Viola found that she had doubts about the project. She had the idea that her topic might be negative because as she says, “... I know that sometimes fear is good because it can protect us from lots of problems we could have,” but it is also inherently negative as it prevents us from taking advantage of new opportunities. Viola was eventually able to use this doubt she had about her own topic as a counter-argument where she was able to dispel her hesitancy at her own research concerns.

After conducting her research and compiling her evidence, Viola was able to come to a conclusion about her research. Viola found that the reason for the innate nature of hesitancy towards attempting new things goes back to events in the past where an individual may have experienced some embarrassment or other negative emotion. This negative attitude, as Viola found, is the primary reason for hesitancy about new experiences.

After the reason behind the hesitancy was established, Viola discussed potential solutions for an individual’s hesitancy. The first solution is to change a negative for something positive. In order to overcome hesitancy that is rooted in a past failure, an individual must examine that failure and learn how to change what went wrong then apply it to another goal. The second idea is to alter your outlook on the world around you. If you are able to see the world as a more positive arena, there will be less hesitancy emanating from within when attempting new challenges. The third and final solution that was discussed is to educate oneself about what they would like to do.

By informing and self-educating, the risk of hesitancy associated with trying something new is diminished. Viola believes all people should understand the reason behind their hesitancy and how to fix it. When people don't educate themselves on how to overcome their hesitancy, as Viola would say, “...it just holds them back. It holds us all back.”
The Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Commons through its Residential Colleges Office supports co- and extra-curricular engagement of undergraduates in faculty-mentored research projects through its three Residential Colleges: Ashby, Grogan, and Strong. It is the goal of the Residential Colleges’ curriculum to engage students in learning the elements of the research process, working on semester-long projects of their own design. With articles and photos generated by students, Minerva magazine profiles a few of these projects every year. Front Cover Photo: Midori Hill makes a statement about black cultural appropriation. Back Cover Photo: Emma Stevens aims her camera at raising awareness for arts educators.