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By SHANNON MCCARTHY

From Sept. 1 to 26 of this year, there’ve been 55 incident reports filed by the JMU Police Department concerning drug use; many of these calls were reported by people who suspected others of smoking or possession of marijuana.

In contrast, there were 32 incident reports filed concerning drug use in September of last year. Although not every one of these calls resulted in a guilty party, the reports ranged from suspected smoking of the illegal substance to finding contraband outside dorms. Many students and community members are concerned about this potential increase of marijuana usage.

“The culture in this country, it’s kind of dangerous,” said Daniel Long, a detective with Harrisonburg Police Department who specializes in drug enforcement. “[Marijuana] is a drug, it affects the chemistry of your brain, of your body, it’s not good for you.”

According to a study found by the University of Michigan, nearly one in 17 college students smokes marijuana on a daily or near-daily basis. The National Institute on Drug Abuse has found that since 2006, daily marijuana usage is at its highest levels since the early 1980s with 4.9 percent of college students reporting daily usage.

Erin Formulak, a junior media arts and design major, noticed attitude changes in regards to marijuana usage on campus between her freshman year and this past year as a First year Orientation Guide.

“This year, the RAs were saying that students should not be smoking in the dorms,” Formulak said. Instead of lecturing the students about the dangers of drug use, Formulak noticed that her resident advisor simply told students the university’s protocol on marijuana usage on campus.

With states such as Colorado and Washington legalizing recreational marijuana usage, there’s been a noticeable shift in how people perceive the drug. A Gallup Poll conducted in October 2016 found that 60 percent of Americans agreed with marijuana legalization — the highest in 47 years.

“I think marijuana is stigmatized because of what was taught years ago,” Formulak said. “A lot of people in the older generation haven’t mentally made the switch yet regarding how dangerous it is.”

Long has found that many young people believe that marijuana isn’t as harmful as older generations make it out to be.

“In my experience as a law enforcement officer, [the assumption is] false,” Long said. “There’s a lot of innocent people that are affected. Any drug use does affect them.”

Molly Reynolds, a senior hospitality management major and resident advisor in the Oak Hall, believes that the relaxed demeanor is typically a facade, and that RAs are trained to call the police in situations when drug use is suspected.

“For RAs, if we smell it, we call the police immediately,” Reynolds said. “We don’t try to confront the situation, we wait for them to arrive and then we wait for [the police] to tell [the police] where we smelled the marijuana.”

During the 2016–17 school year, Reynolds was an RA in the Grace Street Apartments. She noticed many changes from when she was a resident in the hall, to when she was an RA.

“I never smelled it at all my sophomore year in the dorm,” Reynolds said. “My junior year, once I was an RA, I smelled it on a biweekly basis.”

Although this change may be due to increased training and awareness, Reynolds noticed that students are able to hide their usage with relative ease.

A specific incident on Sept. 7 sheds light on the issue. Police found drugs in a package that was sent to the mailroom. Later that evening, three students were found smoking behind White Hall. Although unrelated, these incidents took place within 12 hours of each other.

“There were almost 100 arrests for drug use last year, including drug use paraphernalia, and collected property as well,” Major Kevin Lanoue with the JMU Police Department said.
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Lanoue has noticed that drug usage on JMU’s campus is relatively consistent.

“[Drug use] has been pretty consistent as long as I have been here ... we get cocaine, meth and opiates on occasion,” Lanoue said. “The numbers are insignificant compared to those that are of marijuana.”

The Office of Communications at JMU didn’t immediately respond to The Breeze’s request for comment. Their response will be included in the online version of this article when it’s received.

Lanoue has been with the JMUPD for seven years, and has noticed many people make decisions when they’re under the influence that they normally wouldn’t make when sober.

“It just seems at that age [college age], your brain is not fully developed,” Lanoue said. “People tend to be more self-centered, and more of the mindset of ‘it won’t happen to me.’ But you are not at the point to realize that bad things can happen to you. You have seen a fewer percentage of your friends consumed by drug addiction. Most people grow out of it, but unfortunately some never do.”

Marijuana’s health effects are still being studied, but some of the long-term effects range from breathing problems, increased risk for heart attack and brain development issues like impaired memory, according to the National Institute for Drug Abuse.

Law enforcement isn’t always focused on those who are addicted, but rather other players in the hierarchy.

“We combat the people who are selling the drugs,” Long said. “As far as people who are users, we may use those people to get to the distributors, but as charges, it’s not necessarily to go after the users.”

Even with the changing attitudes around the country toward marijuana, many are still afraid of the potential consequences that come with smoking marijuana. Virginia laws state that marijuana usage of any kind is still illegal, and its charges range from fines to jail time.

Long has noticed that people’s views of marijuana in the country have shifted, yet the way it affects the body hasn’t. Long recalls seeing many people lose their lives to drug addiction.

Many of Long’s suspects aren’t in the Harrisonburg community, but the JMU population.

“Most of the dealers that I go after are college students,” Long said. “They are selling to JMU students.”

Long says his purpose isn’t to pursue those who are addicted, low-level users, but rather to find and have the courts prosecute the dealers and distributors of the substances.

He noticed that students tend to put their time and energy into drug usage, instead of investing in personal growth, relationships and studies. He said that based on his personal experiences, Long notes that drug use affects not only the user, but everyone around the user as well.

“People who would rather let the drug consume their lives and affect their lifestyle will,” Formulak said. “That’s not the drug at work, that’s the person’s mindset.”

Although the country’s attitudes are still divided between young and old, there is one constant: Marijuana is a psychoactive drug that affects the mind and body.

“Any time you are putting a substance into your body ... that affects the way your brain functions is a dangerous thing to do,” Long said. “When you are putting substances into your body, that substance has more and more control over it.”

CONTACT Shannon McCarthy at mccarts@dukes.jmu.edu. For more coverage of JMU and Harrisonburg news, follow the news desk on Twitter @BreezeNewsJMU.
When the Alcoholic Beverage Board was established in Virginia in 1933, beverages containing 3.2 percent alcohol were made legal and distributed publicly in an effort to discourage bootleggers. As a result of this law, students were able to drink at a restaurant in the Warren Campus Center on Madison College’s campus.

“It was pretty lax because if you were a college student, it was assumed you were 18, so they never checked IDs,” Steve Smith, JMU’s former associate vice president for constituent relations, said.

In 1974, the legal drinking age for beer in Virginia was set at 18. As time passed, law enforcement cracked down on illegal alcohol consumption and raised the Virginia drinking age to 21 in 1985, which became the national drinking age for the United States a year later.

The Warren Campus Center was created in 1972 and is currently referred to as Madison Union. Likewise, the restaurant that served alcohol on campus, Duke’s Grill, was on the top floor and is now known as Madison Grill.

Some students who experienced Duke’s Grill are currently employed by JMU.

Smith was a student of Madison College (’75). He had firsthand experiences with the lax attitude society held about alcohol in the early 70s.

“You could buy burgers, sandwiches, french fries and you could buy a pitcher of beer,” Smith said. “You could buy what’s called 3.2 [percent] beer which is a very weak beer.”
The most common percentage of alcohol in a drink in the time Smith was a student was 6.4 percent, but the smaller percentage may have encouraged students to drink more, according to Smith.

"The beer they were serving on campus was watered down. The joke was that you just had to drink twice as much," Smith said.

According to Smith, when the drinking age in Virginia was 18 for beer, local bars and gas stations typically didn’t ask for an ID as long as the customers were at least college students.

"I remember I was going into a 7-Eleven to buy a couple of six packs of beer and they didn’t even ask for an ID because we were college students," Smith said. "They knew that we were at least 18. I mean nowadays, you can get carded at 40 years old."

The drinking age for beer in Virginia was then raised to 19 in 1981, which sparked controversy on campus.

"There was a lot of conversation at that time about how if you can go to war at 18, why can’t you have a beer?" Smith said.

Because of the higher age requirement for the consumption of alcohol, underage college students began producing fake forms of identification. This illegal activity still occurs today.

According to the Harrisonburg Police Department officer reports released by Lt. Pete Ritchie Jr., the impersonation reports which often involved fake IDs have remained at a similar rate for the past three years.

"In 2015, there were 74 reports, 2016 had 77 reports and so far, there have been 54 reports in 2017," Ritchie Jr. said.

As a result of fake IDs, many businesses enforce extra training for their employees in hopes of preventing underage alcohol purchases.

Sheetz is a part of Responsible Retailers, a forum that aids in the prevention of underage alcohol and tobacco sales in stores across the U.S.

"TIPS (Training Intervention Procedures) is a class to teach employees how to sell alcohol responsibly and how to intervene when a customer is intoxicated or underage," Nick Ruffner, Sheetz’s public relations manager, said in an email.

"TIPS is not mandated by law but is required by Sheetz for any employee to sell alcohol because we want our employees to safely serve their community."

Sheetz has been participating with TIPS training for approximately nine years. With every alcohol transaction, each Sheetz worker must follow specific protocols.

"When a customer comes to the counter, the employee might make small talk to ensure they aren’t intoxicated," Ruffner said.

If the customer is notably sober, the cashier will continue with the next step of the procedure.

"They will ask for an ID if the customer appears to be under the age of 30," Ruffner said.

Once the cashier obtains the ID, they may use a scanner, which catches those with fake IDs. Since many businesses use scanners or require two forms of identification to be present, the likelihood of obtaining alcohol with a fake ID has become more difficult.

If an underage JMU student gets caught by the police, the student will not only get a punishment from the officer but will also have to go through the Office of Student Accountability and Restorative Practices to receive a strike and take an informative class about the harmful effects of alcohol.

"Every university’s position is to try to educate their students about what will happen if you take a drink [and] what the repercussions may be, but again it’s allowing you to make your choice," Smith said.

The Office of Communications at JMU didn’t immediately respond to The Breeze’s request for comment. Their response will be included in the online version of this article when it’s received.

While some parties may argue to lower the drinking age to reduce the amount of fake IDs in circulation, that’s easier said than done.

"No matter what the age may be, people are going to try to enjoy the privileges that other people have. One of those is being able to purchase alcohol,” Ritchie Jr. said.

While college allows individuals to continue their education, it also allows students to develop their maturity and decision-making skills.

"Young people leave home and try different things and college is a time to try different things," Smith said. "It may or may not be the best choices for people to make but I think they are learning experiences."

**CONTACT** Katelyn Waltemyer at waltemkb@dukes.jmu.edu. For more coverage of JMU and Harrisonburg news, follow the news desk on Twitter @BreezeNewsJMU.
SafeRides searches for funds

SafeRides may be on the back of JACards, but they’re not financially backed by JMU. However, this doesn’t stop them from serving JMU students every weekend.

SafeRides is a nonprofit, student-run organization that provides free, nonjudgmental rides for students on Friday and Saturday nights. However, because of the liability involved in driving students, JMU cannot use state money to fund them. This causes the organization to have to fully fund themselves through fundraisers, membership dues and donations from sponsors.

Because SafeRides rents the cars they use, operating costs amount to $1,000 each weekend, according to financial director McKayla Sims, a senior marketing major. Gas costs about $25 for each car per weekend. On a normal night, they operate five cars, but on holidays such as Halloween, they operate seven cars.

“I think we get criticized a lot for our wait time ... However we just don’t have the funding to run enough cars,” said Caitlin Carlson, a junior interdisciplinary liberal studies major and executive director of SafeRides.

Last year to raise money, SafeRides held their annual Gala event where they had a silent auction with donations from businesses in Harrisonburg. In addition, they held a 5K and hosted various proceeds nights. In the past, they’ve also gotten annual support from various apartment complexes.

Although the Health Center gives to SafeRides, this money must go toward paying for the phones they use, rent on their room in the Student Success Center and advertising. This money cannot be used for operations, which includes renting cars and fundraising.

According to Sims, SafeRides raised between $38,000 and $39,000 for operations during the last academic year, but their total operating expenses were about $41,763 for the entire academic year.

In response, they’ve had to cut back and use five cars on a normal night, when they previously used six. Membership dues have also gone up for the 185 members, now at $35 for returning members and $40 for new members.

“Everyone’s really trying to help out with fundraising as much as they can because we are a nonprofit — it’s the sole reason that we are here,” Sims said. “If we don’t fundraise, we don’t operate.”

In September, SafeRides was granted contingency from the Student Government Association. They requested and received the full amount possible — $2,597 — to help pay for their gas. Once SafeRides uses this money, they’ll have a follow-up meeting with the SGA to make sure that the full amount was spent on gas.

“It kind of stinks to go up in front of a bunch of people and tell them you’ve been losing money every year you’ve been operating” Sims said. “But we knew that by being transparent with them was the only way that they were going to feel comfortable with giving us the money. So we made sure to have accurate numbers and that kind of thing, and just really preparing ourselves.”

According to Alex Grant, a junior finance and marketing major and executive treasurer of the SGA, each organization that requests contingency is subject to strict scrutiny, as they are reviewed by the SGA Finance Committee, Student Senate, Executive Council and finally University Unions. In the past, SafeRides has requested money for car rental expenses but were denied.

“Gas is the only expense that is not a liability issue,” Grant said. “Like renting a car, there’s insurance problems, liability problems if they get in an accident, that kind of stuff. So, we don’t put SGA funds towards those things that have liability issues tied to them.”

With this in mind, Grant said the SGA agreed SafeRides needed the money, but wanted to be sure they would only use the funds for gas.

“They went through the process and they followed all the rules,” Grant said. “I think the way they carried themselves through, they definitely ended up deserving that money.”

Sims said the money from the SGA gives her some peace in regards to how they’re going to pay for gas, therefore allowing them to continue to serve JMU students.

“It’s so great to see that once we tell people about what we do and how we have to fund it ourselves, how much support you really can get,” Sims said.

CONTACT Christina Ziu at ziuct@dukes.jmu.edu. For more coverage of JMU and Harrisonburg news, follow the news desk on Twitter @BreezeNewsJMU.
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There are over 30,000 visits to the University Health Center each year, but the UHC is putting on an event that’s helping the community take preventative measures to avoid the upcoming flu season. JMU’s annual flu clinic will be held Tuesday from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the Festival Highlands Room and Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in Room 1075 of the Student Success Center. According to the Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report on the Center for Disease Control, there’s a rapid increase in the number of positive tests for influenza beginning in late November.

The UHC takes care of general medical needs while also offering events such as the flu clinic that are a convenience to those who are part of the JMU community. It’s part of their mission to help students be well, stay well and do well. “We’ve been doing it for over eight years and it is a service to try and offer some prevention to keeping the flu at bay,” Ann Simmons, coordinator of marketing and graphic design for the University Health Center, said.

Turnout varies from year to year for the event, but the health center can usually expect between 1,000 and 1,500 people to participate. Students, faculty and their families (ages 5 and up) are all welcome at the event. While pharmacies offer a flu vaccine to anybody looking for one, the UHC’s goal is to provide convenience for anybody that may not be able find medical care outside of the university. No appointment is necessary for the flu clinic, which is being offered for $30. “Our goal is to have students get vaccinated,” Simmons said. “If they choose to go to a pharmacy in the area, that is great. This is a convenience that we bring it to campus.”

The event follows the guidelines of the CDC, which recommends getting flu vaccinations in October, well before the flu season becomes the most rampant. “With the flu shot, you want to get it at the beginning of the flu season so that you’re obviously protected, but you also want it to be timed right so it’s still in your system at the end of the season as well,” Angela Ritchie, assistant director of communications and marketing for the UHC, said.

The specific shot being offered is the quadrivalent flu vaccine, which is designed to protect against four different flu viruses. This cost of the vaccine is also covered by most health insurances, since this is a preventative measure.

The flu clinic is spread out over two days on both sides of campus, and will be offered all day so that it can accommodate anybody’s schedule. For the event, they are partnering with Maxim Healthcare Services. “We do home health care most of the year, but we also do flu clinics for flu shots, and wellness screenings,” Connor Jones, a recruiter and head of the flu program at the Roanoke office for Maxim, said.

They recently put on a clinic at Virginia Tech, but each event they participate in is always different. The plan for the JMU flu clinic is to have seven different nurses’ stations as students and faculty arrive, as well as easy methods of payment for those getting the shot to avoid long wait times. Payment methods include cash, credit card or Maxim-accepted insurance.

While the UHC is a resource for students, it’s still advised that students who already have the flu don’t come in, since antibiotics won’t help them. There’s a nurse’s phone line which can assist and provide further information for those who need it.

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Let’s talk about it

Speaking up about the prevalence of mental illnesses on college campuses

I remember the first time panic took hold of me with its suffocating grasp and wouldn’t let go until I slammed the floor three times and gave up.

I was nine and at the time I didn’t have the proper knowledge to explain to my small, yet, stupendously fierce mind what had just occurred. So I brushed it off like a spider hanging loosely from my bed stand, and did what we all do about the spiders we think we killed — I forgot about it.

That is until I woke up sometime during my freshman year here at JMU and found it hanging once again from my ceiling. I woke up that day during freshman year and recognized that I had to find a way to conquer the fear and depression that had found its way into my life and I knew I wasn’t strong enough to face it alone.

But that’s what I did.

Heartbreak, anger and drunken frat boys — those I can handle like a pro. I throw on my cape and remember who I am. I fight those feelings with feminine gladiator strength — and all before breakfast.

However, this crippling anxiety and fear I’d found myself face-to-face with, this was a whole new breed of monster and no one had given me the proper tools to fight it. Not only did they fail to prepare me, they refused to even talk about it. I was facing something uncomfortable in a society that avoids the uncomfortable like the plague.

So, I went through the first two years of college terrified of being terrified. I walked through campus feeling extremely isolated and alone. I wondered if anyone could tell that I was falling apart.

Entering my junior year, things began to worsen and I found myself turning to the only solace I knew to bring me peace: writing. I took my feelings of despair, darkness and fear and began to articulate them in a way that made sense to me. The unspeakable suddenly felt less daunting.

Finishing my piece felt like a weight that had been lifted from my chest. I felt like I could breathe again.

A few weeks later, a good friend of mine confided in me that he was also experiencing intense feelings of anxiety and depression. As I looked at one of my best friends so broken, I realized that this act of confession felt sacrificial to him, just as it had for me.

Let’s be honest, admitting that you struggle with any mental illness feels a bit like you’re admitting to being insane — when in reality, you’re simply admitting that you’re human. After witnessing my friend’s Herculean bravery, I knew I had a duty to follow his lead. So I published my first personal piece on mental health — a piece that held all of me.

I was admitting to the world that I, Hannah Robinson, was in fact human and it felt so good. After I posted my writing, I began to get so many beautifully positive responses. People thanked me for sharing my story. The amount of love and support I received was mind blowing. I soon realized that this whole time, there were so many people just like me who were dealing with their own invisible monsters.
The American College Health Association (ACHA) 2015 National College Health Assessment survey found that one in six college students had been diagnosed and/or treated for anxiety. It makes me wonder how many students are struggling with anxiety and/or depression that aren’t seeking help.

In this society, if you break a leg, you get people lining up to sign your cast. Yet if you say you struggle with a mental illness, you get uncomfortable side glances and hushed whispers.

So I ask you, why, on a college campus full of community and advocacy, are there not enough conversations about mental health?

The lack of conversation can be attributed to the embarrassment and fear that surrounds the stigma of mental health.

If people are too frightened to talk about the issues prevailing their lives, there can be no addressing of the problem, no coming together of a community of individuals.

There’s power in words. There’s power in unity. The moment we as students take that power and use it as a catalyst for change will be the moment that this campus makes a shift to an even better future — a future where we stand alongside our peers in love and empathy.

Every day may have its struggles, but if you look close enough and move a few branches out of your way, you can catch a glimpse at the beauty that surrounds you. That beauty is enough to last you an eternity. So for anyone reading this who’s ever felt isolated, afraid or hopeless, I’m here to tell you that I’ve been there and that I’m still there. I promise you that there’s always hope for a better tomorrow. No matter how big that monster feels, it has no power in the presence of courage and love. You’re not alone.

Now, let’s talk about it.

Hannah Robinson is a senior communication studies major. Contact Hannah at robinshl@dukes.jmu.edu.
As we enter the realm of adulthood, we’re faced with one chore after the other. Opinion writer Tess Gibson gives tips on how to use an extrinsic reward system in order to make these everyday tasks more enjoyable.

TESS GIBSON | the art of nonconformity

We’re motivated the most by what gives us pleasure, through meaningful and rewarding actions. The obligations in our lives that require us to do slightly undesirable and almost profitless acts can take a bit more convincing. Things such as busy work, laundry or late-night meetings aren’t always on the top five of our to-do lists, but they’re required of us anyway.

Nonetheless, it would be impressive if we could somehow take these undesirables and create a more positive purpose in finishing them. Things such as busy work, laundry or late-night meetings aren’t always on the top five of our to-do lists, but they’re required of us anyway.

The first step is deciphering what category the chore falls under: work or personal. When a deed is work-related, there’s usually a domino effect involved. For example, you’re in business and you have to call sponsors so your industry continues to be funded. In return, your boss can continue to run the business so that there’ll be a job for you to work the next day. One action affects the whole system. In this instance, we understand there’s a greater purpose and the reward is in your boss’ approval or a check in the mail.

When we’re on our own, however, it’s harder to stay motivated when your personal chore completion is riding simply on you holding yourself accountable.

Repitition and the monotonous, mechanical feel of day-to-day endeavours become colorless, and many would say that’s just how some things are. I believe they don’t have to be, that we can change this.

It may not be as easy as it is with our pets, for example, who can be taught to sit down or roll over for a treat. But, we do like our rewards. This can be thought of in terms of a bonus system, where we begin to use association to our advantage.

I use this method to make even the most dull necessities become gratifying. This may not be a terrible activity to everyone, but for me, grocery shopping is the worst. I assume I acquired the distaste from my mother, who to this day will write out a long food list and send my dad out to the store when the fridge looks sparse.

Faced with situations like these, we need a pick-me-up for when we’ve gotten through the task. With grocery shopping, I’ll usually unload my bags, and then sit down with my new bag of popcorn and let an episode of “That 70s Show” ease my mind.

The issue with this arises when we think about time management. Sometimes, we don’t have the pleasure of binging on TV when there’s a paper to write that’s due the next day, or a group presentation to prepare for. That’s okay — there are less time-consuming rewards too, like grabbing a milkshake to celebrate.

We also don’t need to be rewarded after every little thing we complete, but maybe after a cluster of multiple accomplishments completed by the end of the day. Rewards don’t have to be immediate either. More long-term fulfillments could be a weekend trip to the beach with friends after a hard week.

There’s many ways we can create a placebo for chores. The important part is to make sure we continue to reward them, because it can become easy to start feeling worn out and rundown due to our tedious, endless life necessities.

So the next time you’re looking at your to-do list for the week, manage to pencil in a gift to yourself, whether that be breakfast for dinner or a Friday-night concert.

Tess Gibson is a sophomore writing, rhetoric and technical communication major. Contact Tess at gibson10@dukes.jmu.edu.
Alpha Tau Omega has closed at James Madison.

Alpha Tau Omega National Fraternity has placed this ad to provide notice that the ATO chapter at James Madison has been closed by the National Fraternity. Students who were members of the Fraternity no longer have authority to operate an Alpha Tau Omega chapter and may not organize any event, sponsor any activity or participate in any endeavor representing Alpha Tau Omega on the James Madison campus or elsewhere in the Harrisonburg community.

“Alpha Tau Omega” and other distinctive letters, marks and insignia of the Fraternity are federally protected trademarks owned and managed by Alpha Tau Omega National Fraternity. Any use of these marks without the expressed written permission of Alpha Tau Omega National Fraternity is strictly prohibited. No group of students at James Madison is authorized to use the name “Alpha Tau Omega” or any of its service marks. Only chartered chapters and qualified members of Alpha Tau Omega are authorized to operate a chapter and use the distinctive marks of the Fraternity.

If you have reason to believe that students on campus continue to operate as though they make up a recognized chapter of Alpha Tau Omega, please alert the Dean of Students office and the Greek Life office at James Madison or contact Alpha Tau Omega.
Friendship paradox

When comparing your social life to other students’, the grass seems greener on the other side

RISHMITA AICH | pride and prejudice

If I had a penny for every time I thought my friends have more friends than I do, I’d be able to pay off my student loans. The swarms of “hi’s” and “hey’s” that casually sweep your friend’s way as you walk with them down the street may always make you wonder about their popularity or pity your own lonely existence.

However, this feeling is universal and may also be happening to your friend at some point. According to a joint study conducted by Cornell University, University of Michigan and Facebook, this phenomenon is a scientifically proven pattern of the “weighted average,” oddly dubbed as the friendship paradox.

It’s true that your friends are probably more popular than you are, but the phenomenon is ubiquitous. It applies to most people and, as cliché as it sounds, you’re not alone in this. This theorem follows some basic math, which I’d like to explain without the arithmetic of it:

The average number of friends of friends is always greater than the average number of friends of individuals. So, no matter how many parties you go to or how many coffee dates and house parties you splurge on people to climb up that glorious social ladder, you’re still going to have less friends than your peers.

This might be some earth-shattering news for social butterflies, but it’s pretty eye-opening for the ones who live in the illusion of floating among a sea of “friends” because they spend most of their time poking, tweeting and “friending” people rather than cultivating friends in flesh.

The theorem actually applies to most social situations where one feels like the odd man out. The grueling need to own a pet on a bright sunny day on the Quad because all you see is people playing with their pets or the feeling of looking around in the gym and finding everybody else in better shape than you are; well, you’re probably right.

Public places like the Quad or the gym are already full of “above average” people. They’ve been pet owners for a long time and not just on that sunny day; or the people in better shape are usually the ones that sweat around in the gym the most. Which is why you see them in the first place.

The couch potatoes are dozed off at home where you can’t count them or people who don’t own pets aren’t lying around with them on the Quad, so you can’t see them. Thus, these pet owners or the body builders make the most of the weighted average — the majority, in this particular place or situation — while you are just average. The weighted average is just a form of overestimation in a social situation.

“"When we find our friends eating or studying with others in cafes or libraries, we overestimate how much our peers are socializing because we don’t see them eating or studying alone.”

Rishmita Aich

RISHMITA AICH | pride and prejudice

If I had a penny for every time I thought my friends have more friends than I do, I’d be able to pay off my student loans. The swarms of “hi’s” and “hey’s” that casually sweep your friend’s way as you walk with them down the street may always make you wonder about their popularity or pity your own lonely existence.

However, this feeling is universal and may also be happening to your friend at some point. According to a joint study conducted by Cornell University, University of Michigan and Facebook, this phenomenon is a scientifically proven pattern of the “weighted average,” oddly dubbed as the friendship paradox.

It’s true that your friends are probably more popular than you are, but the phenomenon is ubiquitous. It applies to most people and, as cliché as it sounds, you’re not alone in this. This theorem follows some basic math, which I’d like to explain without the arithmetic of it:

The average number of friends of friends is always greater than the average number of friends of individuals. So, no matter how many parties you go to or how many coffee dates and house parties you splurge on people to climb up that glorious social ladder, you’re still going to have less friends than your peers.

This might be some earth-shattering news for social butterflies, but it’s pretty eye-opening for the ones who live in the illusion of floating among a sea of “friends” because they spend most of their time poking, tweeting and “friending” people rather than cultivating friends in flesh.

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When we find our friends eating or studying with others in cafes or libraries, we overestimate how much our peers are socializing because we don’t see them eating or studying alone.

According to another recent study conducted by the Harvard Business School, this might even be an incentive or challenge to make new friends or to make yourself more socially available. The research says that it’s particularly acute when people strive to establish their identity in a new social environment, like college freshmen entering universities. The fear of missing out on parties, the feeling of getting singled out in class or the embarrassment from eating alone in public places are all the effects of just the honeymoon phase of this phenomenon.

Gradually, people work toward building wider social circles and developing better socializing skills in the process. However, the important thing to realize is how we all aren’t alone in our fears of being left out. Feeling socially disconnected in the warm, friendly surroundings of college campuses is paradoxical, but widely common. Moreover, the rose-tinted glasses of social media often elevate the feeling of always lagging behind on the friend curve.

It’s important to understand the phenomenon so that we realize how the whole thing is just a situational overestimation, where we’re victims of a particular circumstance. College campuses are breeding grounds for new friendships. While it’s true that your friends are always going to be a little quantitatively privileged when it comes to making friends, no one can stop you from fostering fewer but stronger bonds, which is all it takes to have that sense of belonging.

Rishmita Aich is a senior media arts and design major. Contact Rishmita at aichrx@dukes.jmu.edu.

DARTS & PATS

A “disappointed-beyond-belief” dart to JMU sports marketing who handed me a “My Martins” koozie after I intently watched our awesome JMU volleyball team and filled out the volleyball bingo card. Lesson learned — you want something for nothing and you often get nothing.
From a volleyball fan who has given up on bingo.

A “really-man” dart to the people who thought a combination mailbox was a good idea.
From a student who still spends 45 minutes trying to get the box open.

A “you-tasty” pat to garlic knots.
From a girl who appreciates some comfort food after an exam.

A “are-you-there” dart to myself for losing my glasses and being unable to find them due to the lack of sight.
From a student wearing dried out contacts for the rest of the week.

A “there-should-be-more-of-you” pat to the person who watched my laptop for me while I went to the bathroom in Carrier.
From a student who appreciates the Duke step up.

A “your-smile-makes-me-smile” pat to Halle Groter for being the best little in the game.
From your biggest fan.

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217 South Liberty Street
At The Ice House
Downtown Harrisonburg, VA
By ABBY CHURCH
The Breeze

As her finger idled over the blue “share” button at the top right corner of her Instagram post, Bella Heidenreich was terrified. She stared at an old picture of herself with a caption she carefully crafted over five hours, documenting the story of her sexual assault that had taken place three years prior. Bella had been reading it over and over for three weeks until she was emotionally ready and solid in her words. Thoughts reeled through her head about what her over 1,000 followers would say and how they’d react when they saw the post. Her family also inquired whether she was sure about sharing such intense and personal information on such a large platform.

“The mindset that I had then and that I have now is like if someone does treat me differently, then no hard feelings towards them but they won’t really be in my life anymore,” Bella said. “Because if someone’s [going to] hold that against me or think of me in a negative light ... then that’s good because that’s one less person I have in my life that I have to deal with.”

Then, she hit the button. Shutting off her phone and laptop, the deed was done. Few victims of sexual assault choose to share their stories, and for Bella, the decision wasn’t made easily.

Heading back home to Atlanta, Georgia, Bella found herself in a state of turmoil following the loss of her sport. One day at the gym, Bella was working out when all of a sudden, she started crying. Unaware of what was happening, all at once, all the monstrous memories flooded back to her.

Three years ago, Bella attended an after-prom party with friends from her high school. She only recalls the first five minutes of being there.

“I remember getting there, saying hi to people and then having a drink of something,” Bella said. “Like, someone handed me a drink. I was not drunk before this, I had had nothing to drink ... You know, you read the stories of being roofied. You remember some sounds, some things that you see.”

Brought into a bedroom with five other guys, Bella was gang-raped. She woke up the next morning on the kitchen floor of the house where the party was held with a horrible headache, wrapped in a towel with her clothes lying nearby and her phone in the pocket of a guy passed out on the floor near her. She called her dad and he came to pick her up, and she told him she thought she was drugged the night before. He asked if anything else happened, but Bella had already buried the nightmare.

“At that point in high school I was dealing with horrible anxiety attacks and I was seeing a therapist ... and I think subconsciously I knew I couldn’t deal with that on top of it, like I would just totally break,” Bella said. “So I buried it so deep down. I told everyone, ‘Oh nothing happened, I was just drugged and that’s it’.”

‘Your spirit, your soul are bigger than what happened to you’

Student uses her story to speak out against sexual violence in hopes of inspiring others

causing Bella to choose to medically withdraw and forfeit her position on the team.

Raised in Napa, California, Bella, a junior communication studies major, grew up playing tennis. A talented athlete with multiple national titles, it came as no surprise when Bella was recruited to play for JMU’s tennis team while she was at a tournament in Tennessee. However, her career came to an abrupt halt when she sustained a foot injury her freshman year and a severe concussion this past semester,
Bella “didn’t tell a soul” about her assault for three years. She knew deep down something unthinkable happened to her that night, and suffered terrible visceral reactions whenever she read about or watched rape scenes in movies or on TV. With all the memories coming back to her at the gym, Bella went outside and called her best friend Chessa Ramirez, the first person she told about her assault.

“I have never really heard her cry, like that was one of the first times I heard her cry and I knew something was wrong, like really wrong,” Ramirez, a former JMU student and member of the women’s soccer team, said. “She said that she felt like she’d been blocking this part of her life out for [three] years … She said she felt like she’d been a warrior for so long and she just couldn’t put that front on anymore.”

While Ramirez knew Bella had been drugged that night all those years ago, she didn’t know the extent of the situation. Ramirez had transferred miles away to Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, and was there for her soccer team’s preseason training when she got the call.

“I just listened,” Ramirez said. “I just let her talk. She needed it and I was just shocked and I just felt terrible that I wasn’t there with her. I wanted to be there and tell her it would be ok. All I could say was, ‘I’m going to be here for you.’”

After the phone call, Bella slowly told the rest of her immediate family, unaware of how it would affect them. She was met with the utmost support from her mother, Colleen, and her brother, Finn. Bella’s mother knew something was wrong after she got home from the gym, and when she found out what happened, she was devastated, but didn’t inquire why Bella didn’t tell her sooner.

Later on a family vacation, Bella told Finn during a nighttime walk. While Bella received cruel backlash at school following prom weekend, Finn also received the brunt end of the treatment. He knew who was at the party that night, and slowly they put the pieces together.

Her dad, Heinz Heidenreich, was the last person Bella told about her assault. She was the most scared for his reaction, solely because it was a hard thing to face as a father and she didn’t want him to be angry. Unable to tell him herself, Bella’s mom let him know what happened. When Heinz heard, his reaction was out strong, so happy.

“Bella, You can survive this, you’re strong.”

Sharing her story on social media wasn’t an easy decision for Bella to make, but in the end, she decided it would be for the greater good. She typed out the details of her assault one night for a grueling five hours, a process Bella described as extremely cathartic.

After she hit the “share” button, Bella slowly called her best friend Chessa Ramirez, the first person she told about her assault. Ramirez had heard her cry and knew something was wrong, like really wrong, ” Heinz said. “I said, ‘Bella, I know you’re going through this tough time right now and you probably need me-time, but you’re a fighter, Bella. You can survive this, you’re strong.”

“Sharing her story on social media wasn’t an easy decision for Bella to make, but in the end, she decided it would be for the greater good.”

She was the most scared for his reaction, solely because it was a hard thing to face as a father and she didn’t want him to be angry. Unable to tell him herself, Bella’s mom let him know what happened. When Heinz heard, his reaction was out strong, so happy. While Bella received a beautiful outpouring of love and support that she didn’t know she had. Within 20 minutes of posting, she’d gotten 30 text messages. The next day, she shared the post on Facebook. Bella’s friends reached out to her, some admitting they too had been assaulted, saying they’d never met another who’d been in the same situation. Her friends and mom shared her post, and one old friend from California who’s now a police officer even offered to find the guys who committed the heinous crime.

“I was so shocked and so happy that it was being shared,” Bella said. “I couldn’t care less how many likes I got … The point of it, I want people to know that this stuff happens and feel comfortable speaking out, and I’m so glad the friends that saw it were comforting telling me it had happened to them as well, because we had conversations about it.”

While she posted about her assault, Bella says she isn’t always confident. She’s grateful for the boost of courage she collected before she hit “share.”

“It’s not like I feel confident all the time or brave all the time,” Bella said. “That was two minutes of bravery that I’m really glad I did, and I talk about it openly because it helps me get over it … Actually, most of the time I feel like s--- … But I feel like there’s a bigger issue out there that I’m trying to, like, further that along, like to prevent this.”
Bella has received an enormous amount of unconditional support from her parents and her brother.
When the sweet smells of waffles, doughnuts and bacon fill the air, it’s hard to wonder how a huge purple-and-yellow school bus could be responsible for this. Located in the Strite’s Donuts parking lot on Port Republic Road, the new Breakfast Bus in Harrisonburg isn’t your average food truck. A little over two-and-a-half years ago, owner Christian Heafner left JMU early to start his business of making breakfast out of a completely refurbished school bus. After much time and effort, Heafner made his dream a reality.

While most food trucks operate strictly during the day, this unique truck is open all morning Monday through Sunday from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. and even for late nights from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. Thursday through Saturday with the promise of a quick, delicious breakfast.

Even though the Breakfast Bus has only been open for about two weeks, it’s already a huge hit among JMU students and locals. The bus uses local and tri-state area products to make its homemade recipes, which currently include an array of breakfast sandwiches made on rolls, bagels and even doughnuts. As of Monday, Heafner and his crew expanded their menu to include breakfast empanadas and vegetarian options, such as lettuce wraps as a base for the sandwiches.

While sandwich creations such as a doughnut with fried chicken, guacamole, tomato and syrup may sound wacky, the food isn’t the only aspect that makes the breakfast bus so special. The bus itself, as well as everything on the interior, is made entirely of recycled materials. Even the cleaners the staff uses inside are chemical free, making this bus entirely environmentally friendly.

“In the future, we really hope to completely eliminate our carbon footprint from the bus by installing solar panels on top and using Biodiesel under the hood,” Heafner said. “But for now we’re doing the best we can by using all-natural cleaners and making all the seating from recycled materials.”

The crew believes that its environmentally conscious approach to business sets it apart from other food trucks in the area. Breakfast Bus regular and JMU freshman interdisciplinary liberal studies major Sarah Ketchum frequents the bus on Thursdays with her friends during their special nighttime hours.

“I really just love the atmosphere of the bus and how happy everyone inside is,” Ketchum said. “They play really good music and everyone just has a really good time.”

With the bus already being a tremendous success, Heafner and his crew are confident in beginning their delivery service in mid-October in hopes of getting their name out there even more. The bus currently has a Facebook and an Instagram page (@thebreakfastbus) to feature new editions to the business, such as their nitro cold-brew coffee coming this week. They also use social media to showcase their works of art and the people who eat it.

The comfort and familiarity of the bus is what hits home for JMU junior communication studies major Marissa Quander, who loves the bus, calling it a “nice before-class treat.”

“I like the nostalgic vibe of it because it reminds me of riding the bus in high school except the bus is decked out in food which makes it even cooler,” Quander said. “From the moment I tried my first sandwich, I fell in love with the food and could really see all the hard work and dedication that the staff put into their product.”

CONTACT
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T.G.I.F.
The Arts Council of the Valley to hold monthly ‘First Fridays’ event with art done by locals

By JAZMINE OTEY
The Breeze

This Friday, warm chatter will fill the air as patrons venture through the streets of downtown Harrisonburg, celebrating the prodigious artistic capabilities of many community members during First Fridays Downtown. From showcased artwork to visual literacy and live music, “First Fridays Downtown” gives attendees the chance to explore the artistic talent that exists within Harrisonburg while socializing with mutual art lovers.

The event originated in 2009 and is an expansion of the biannual Art and Gallery Walk, an event that occurred from April to October and involved 15 venues. However, attendees can look forward to the participation of over 30 venues that include retail shops, restaurants, galleries and museums.

It’s free to participate in and will take place Friday from 5 to 8 p.m. and occurs the first Friday of every month.

In addition, First Fridays Downtown is presented by the Arts Council of the Valley with promotional partner the Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance.

“With each First Friday, there’s new art being shown from people throughout the area and even folks from outside the community, so we get an influx of creativity and culture,” Andrea Dena, the executive director of HDR, said. “It’s a really good community event.”

According to the Art Council of the Valley’s official website, there will be a wide range of art pieces featured that include “Flycatchers on Stills,” by Cyndi Gussler, “A Lack Of Moderation: The Beauty of People and Their Work,” by JoEtta Deaton, “Beauty, Color, Joy: Life in Darfur, Sudan” by Rebekah “Bex” Zimmerman and more.

In addition, the 2nd Annual National Juried Show will take place in Larkin Arts Wine-Riner Galleries, featuring 25 artists from across the nation. Refreshments will be provided by Old Hill Cider and prizes will be given out at 7:15 p.m.

Arts Council of the Valley is one of the central venues for First Fridays Downtown. The gallery has displayed nearly 65 month-long art exhibitions, with a new exhibition of some of the area’s well-known artists opening each First Friday. This Friday, the Art Council will feature the artwork of JMU alumnus John Bell (’90), “An Turas: Scotland Journey.” Bell is currently an art professor at Blue Ridge Community College and plans to showcase 11 vibrant acrylic paintings and 11 photographs inspired by his trip to Scotland. The paintings and photographs focus on Bell’s reflection of Scottish Neolithic and Iron Age sites that he’s developed a keen interest in due to his Scottish heritage.

Bell believes that in the 21st century “technological world,” it’s easy to lose touch with the smaller things in life and meaningful connections they have with nature. In his artwork, he tries to convey his interpretations on the rhythms and patterns that nature has, as well as its correlation with human life.

“I wanted to try and share the experiences that I’ve had at these sites because they’re very elemental,” Bell said. “For me, they’re very inspiring places to visit.”

The Art Council is enthusiastic about publicizing Bell’s work and plans to celebrate with refreshments and music.

“We are just looking forward to folks having a great time downtown while experiencing art,” Jenny Burden, the executive director of the Art Council of the Valley, said.

Duke Hall will also be participating in First Fridays for the second time this year. An inaugural exhibition titled “Picturing Harrisonburg” has been running since Aug. 28 and will be displayed until Oct. 14.

The piece is a collaboration between JMU’s Institute for Visual Studies and the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society. With the inclusion of over 80 paintings, postcards, maps and photographs, the art exhibit depicts the history and transformation of Harrisonburg over the last two centuries.

“I think in the past, our gallery has been more geared toward our faculty and students, which is our primary focus,” John Ros, director of Duke Hall, said. “But I also realize the value of involving community in our conversations. Being open during First Fridays is part of that accessibility. We’re just open to show support.”

In addition to the entertainment, there will be the grand opening of a new business, Bring Your Own, during this month’s event.

The new business offers sustainable, non-disposable goods such as bamboo products, cloth diapers and stainless-steel food containers, with the incentive to help reduce waste and the use of plastic.

“I am very excited to hold my grand opening event during First Fridays this month,” Allie Emerick, founder of Bring Your Own, said. “I look forward to opening my store to bring awareness to the waste created by us as individuals and a community.”

Participants are welcome to bring a friend or even a family member to collectively enjoy the artistic talent within our community. Those interested in attending can anticipate an opportunity to immerse in friendly, celebratory chatter while delving into a Harrisonburg world of art.

“Where we had thought to travel outward, we will come to the center of our own existence,” Bell said in his artist statement, quoting Joseph Campbell. “And there we had thought to be alone, we will be with all the world.”

CONTACT Jazmine Otey at oteyjl@dukes.jmu.edu. For more on the culture, arts and lifestyle of the JMU and Harrisonburg communities, follow the culture desk on Twitter @Breeze_Culture.

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Get ready for a new star in alt-rock. After four years of not releasing any new content, the alternative rock band Echosmith leaps into the fray with its new EP, “Inside a Dream,” released last Friday.

If the name of the band doesn’t ring a bell, you may have heard its song “Cool Kids,” on the radio or at your local gym. Its mesmerizing guitar riffs and catchy lyrics leave you in a trance, and this album is no exception.

In an interview with Billboard, singer Sydney Sierota made a comment on the theme of the latest EP, “The vibe of our latest album is kind of dream pop. We went to experiment with a bunch of new sounds.”

In its first album, the band focused mainly on the generic sound that’s very common to the alternative rock genre. After losing its guitarist and brother Jaime Sierota last year due to him starting a family with his wife Ana, Echosmith lost a vital component to its group dynamic as well as their sound. With the new EP, the band had to fill that gap by experimenting with various electronic keyboards. By taking that time, it has evolved its sound to make each song enticing and unique.

The songs “Get into my Car” and “Goodbye” are the hallmarks of this band’s evolving sound. It seems to blend both the catchy rhythms of pop with the refreshing beats of alt-rock. It draws from so many areas of music, creating a melting pot of genres. They took their time fine-tuning each track to ensure that the songs not only work together in a cohesive EP, but can also be enjoyable and addictive to jam to as well. Echosmith still sticks to its roots in the song “Dear World,” sticking mainly on acoustic instruments. It’s nice to see that this band hasn’t forgotten where they started from back in 2013.

One main issue with the EP is its lyrical structure. There seems to be a lack of any sophistication in the lyrics. This shows that their focus when making these songs was not to wax philosophical or to wring tears from anyone, but to make songs that are fun on long car rides or at any rave. Its audience is focused primarily on teenagers, ranging from 12-18. Their lyrics are catchy enough to bring a message to this group without having to deliberate on the words at all, which fits perfectly in the “dreamy” theme that they were shooting for in this release.

They also draw inspiration from the ‘80s style of electronic music. Some songs like “Lessons” and “Hungry” really emphasize the retro synthesizers that were made popular during the ‘80s without being overbearing. However, the drum and guitar flow naturally into the synth, making one cohesive and solid track.

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By BLAKE PACE
The Breeze

Heading into their bye week at a perfect 5-0 record and receiving nearly all of the first-place votes in the FCS polls, the reigning FCS champions are picking up right where they left off. After a three-game sweep in non-conference play over FBS school East Carolina University and FCS opponents East Tennessee State University and Norfolk State, the Dukes fought out two CAA conference wins against Maine and Delaware.

With an elite defense, high-octane offense, special teams play and superb coaching staff, the Dukes have the makings of a complete team.

1. Offense: B+

For a team outsourcing its opponents by an average of 30 points per game and outgaining opposing offenses by an average of 286 yards, the JMU offense is a near-perfect unit with great play at the line, behind center and at the skill positions. They lead the CAA in scoring, rushing yards per game, completion percentage and rushing yards per attempt. Senior quarterback Bryan Schor has averaged 206 yards in the air and had 12 touchdowns over JMU’s first five contests, while running backs Trai Sharp, Cardon Johnson, Marcus Marshall, Percy Agyei-Obese and Schor have all run for over 100 yards on the season, combining for 1,336 yards on the ground.

“I think our team unity has been the biggest going into the season,” Sharp said. “We pride ourselves on unity and togetherness and I think each week we prove that and it gets stronger every week.”

While the team has possesses the ability to move the ball effectively on the ground and in the air, JMU has one looming shortcoming which is holding them from receiving a better grade.

“They have the ability to outplay us and confine us to their will,” head coach Mike Houston said. “Focusing on the big picture, we need to focus on the small details.”

JMU has nine turnovers through the first half of this season, fewer than its total in the 2016 season. Additionally, Schor has tossed five interceptions so far after six in the entirety of the previous year. Should the Dukes manage to limit coughing up the football in the second half of the season, this team is a lethal unit.

While there’s always room for improvement and growth throughout the second half of the regular season, the JMU defense is its best unit and will likely be the turning factor into a deep postseason run.

2. Defense: A

By far the most impressive unit for JMU this season, the Dukes’ defense is one of the best in the nation. Since Houston’s arrival in Harrisonburg, the JMU defense has gone from allowing an average of 28.7 points per game in 2015 to just 11.6 this season. While opponents have amassed 58 points against JMU this year, just 20 of those points have been allowed by the defensive unit — the rest coming on special teams and offensive turnovers.

“We are just trying to come out here and be as disciplined as possible,” redshirt senior linebacker Kyle Hawkins said. “Everybody is just focusing on their job. We’re not too busy on looking at the big picture, we’re worried about what’s going on in that moment.”

The Dukes’ defense has allowed the fewest points per game (11.6), total defensive yards allowed per game (231.2), passing yards allowed per game (141.8) and interceptions (9) in the CAA. Seven individuals have added 12.0 sacks to the defense, led by 2.5 sacks from Hawkins and redshirt senior safety Jordan Brown. Their 32.0 tackles for loss have set opposing offenses back a total of 138 yards.

“Defensively, the biggest thing is forcing turnovers,” Houston said. “Another big emphasis throughout the team is cutting down the senseless penalties — you’re going to have some senseless penalties because of the aggression and the attitude that we play with — but the motion penalties and things like that are easily correctable.”

While there’s always room for improvement and growth throughout the second half of the regular season, this team is a lethal unit.

3. Special teams: C+

While JMU’s offense and defense have led to a great amount of success early on, they’ve had to make up for some partial sloppiness in special teams.

“We have so much room for improvement,” Houston said. “Both in our return teams and in our coverage teams because I think we have a chance to be really, really good with those.”

The kickoff unit has allowed an average of 21.2 yards per return, as well as a 100-return touchdown that came in the game against Norfolk State, while the Dukes’ kickoff return team has a slightly lower return average at 20.0 yards per return.

Fortunately for freshman punter Hony O’Kelly, playing with a team that scores on most possessions has led to just 18 punts in five games, 10 of which have landed inside the 20-yard line. The Dukes are averaging 11.5 yards in the punt-return game and scored once when senior wide receiver John Miller took a 43-yard return to the end zone against ETSU.

While the special teams play hasn’t been at the elite level of the offense or the defense, their consistency saves them from a lower grade.

4. Coaching: A+

“One of the main things that stands out is the fact that [Houston] gives us certain quotes or motivational videos every now and again,” redshirt senior safety Raven Greene said. “Just to give us a sense of knowing that being good on the field is great, but being a man and knowing that you have certain responsibilities to fill. Basically using football as a tool to teach about life.”

When Houston and his staff arrived to JMU in the 2016 offseason, there was a culture change brought along with them that prepared their players mentally and physically week in and week out.

For instance, Houston and his staff have instilled the mindset of winning one game at a time and shutting out outside noise has been preached over the last season and a half and has been key to the Dukes’ early success.

“Playing for coach has been great,” Sharp said. “It’s always fun to win and, off the field, he’s taught me a lot of discipline. We don’t have guys doing things they aren’t supposed to be doing, so I think it’s helped us a lot in growing up and becoming men.”

The team’s ability to push aside the polls, media and fans is also something that should be credited to the coaching staff. Standing at the top of the mountain and with every other team in the CAA looking to take you down, the expectations and pressures on the team begin to creep into the minds of the players. Couple that with its current 17-game winning streak and these stressors pile up.

“I think our guys are pretty good at just going through everything with blindness,” Houston said. “People can talk about Game Day or the rankings, their focus right now is Villanova. I try to be transparent with the kids, I try to be honest with them, to where I talk about how we cannot allow those things to be a distraction. We got to keep those things on the outside and keep the focus on our standard of play.”

The mentality Houston and his staff have instilled in the minds of their players has kept them consistently great and will continue to do so each and every week, making the staff well deserving of the top grade of the season thus far. The Dukes will spend this week on their bye before hosting Villanova on Oct. 14 at home.

“They’re a good, athletic team,” Miller said. “We just have to get on them fast and come out there and outwork them. That’s how we beat our opponents. They just can’t handle us physically and we outwork them.”

CONTACT Blake Pace at paceba@dukes.jmu.edu. For more football coverage, follow the sports desk on Twitter @TheBreezeSports.
Editors’ Picks

Editor’s record
Duke vs. Virginia
West Virginia vs. TCU
LSU vs. Florida
Packers vs. Cowboys
Chiefs vs. Texans
Panthers vs. Lions

Duke
UVA
TCU
LSU
Packers
Texans
Panthers

16-6
17-5
16-6
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JMU football attends church services to cultivate strong team bond

By CATIE HARPER
The Breeze

The bond held by the JMU football team isn’t just one seen on the field at Bridgeforth Stadium under the bright lights, surrounded by roaring fans. It’s one that can also be found even after the final seconds tick off the clock and the fans go home.

Every Sunday, members of the team pull themselves out of bed and get ready to head off to church alongside one another. It’s a trip that highlights how united the team is. The weekly visits to church came to JMU’s head coach Mike Houston.

“Every year since I’ve been a head coach — and I’ve been a head coach for many years — I always during preseason camp, especially for newcomers to campus, like to at least expose them to different worship services around the area that I think that kids that age might be attracted to,” Houston said.

None of the players are required to attend the services and no religious beliefs are pushed on the athletes. “Certainly, they go or they don’t go, but the vast majority go,” Houston said.

One of Houston’s main hopes from his players attending church is that the trips will make them better men than they were before they went. “To me, the whole thing revolves around building a team that has strong character, has integrity, that’s doing the right things, and that’s kind of our thing we preach to them,” Houston said. “We are going to do the right things on and off the field and the way we conduct ourselves and the way we carry out our business.”

Houston’s decision to introduce the team to different places of worship has gone over well amongst the team. Redshirt senior offensive lineman A.J. Bolden is one of the players who’s enjoyed his time in church with his teammates. To him, the trips have helped the team become more like a family.

“It’s been great because we really preach family around here,” Bolden said. “Nothing brings us closer than our relationship with one another and the one with our faith.”

Throughout Houston’s time in Harrisonburg, the team has attended multiple churches under his recommendation to make sure they’re introduced to different types of atmospheres of worship. “We went to Crosslink and after that we went to Divine Unity,” redshirt senior defensive lineman Andrew Ankrah said. “They’re two different types of churches. Coach did that to see what type of churches people would like and which one they’ll fit in. Still preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Along with the weekly church visits, Houston has welcomed Marcus Ankrah around the program is the member, something tough in their life. They have a relationship with someone that they trust and … I have faith is going to give them a solid, sound advice on making decisions in their personal life.”

With a large emphasis on religion, Ankrah has found that they’ve learned about religion off the field has transitioned onto the field to help create an unbreakable bond among the team. “People think [football’s] just physical and it’s just mental,” Ankrah said. “Coach Houston has brought a faith and spiritual aspect to this team that I feel like a lot of guys are learning to really grasp onto. If you add [spirituality] in there, you are just going to be that much better just because you have faith in yourself, you have faith in your teammates and you have faith in that you have a protector up there that’s going to protect you when you’re out there on that field.”

Going into this season, opponents knew the JMU team that took the field would be a hard team to face. They knew that the reigning national champions had spent the summer practicing for hours and memorizing the playbook. However, what they didn’t expect — and what makes the team even stronger — is the dedication the team has for becoming a family.

“We are playing for one another, and at the end of the day, when I walk off this field, I know I have brothers for life,” Bolden said.

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Andrew Luck threw for 4,420 yards and 31 touchdowns last season. In 15 games started, he posted a 96.4 quarterback rating, the second-best mark of his career. Despite that, the Colts finished with an 8-8 record.

NFL quarterbacks should demand more

By JAMES FARIS contributing writer

“With the first pick in the 2012 NFL Draft, the Indianapolis Colts select Andrew Luck,” NFL commissioner Roger Goodell said onstage in New York City.

Moments later, a once-in-a-generation talent, compared by analysts to football legend John Elway, made his way across the stage. The Colts took the Stanford quarterback with the expectation that he would eventually join living legend Peyton Manning in the Hall of Fame. So far, Luck has lived up to the considerable hype as an incredible athlete who can read defenses and make any throw on the field with accuracy and velocity while elevating everyone around him.

In his rookie season, Luck led his team, which went 2-14 the previous year, to a postseason run. The next year, to a complete disaster. The Colts peaked in 2014, and there’s no realistic way they’ll get back to the top of the NFL anytime soon. Two years before Luck was drafted, Le’Ron James changed the NFL forever by announcing on national television that he would “take his talents to South Beach.” James, a hometown hero who grew up in Akron, Ohio, and was drafted first overall by the Cleveland Cavaliers, left via free agency after seven seasons of carrying the franchise.

James only had two All-Star teammates in seven seasons: Zydrunas Ilgauskas in 2005 and Mo Williams in 2008. With a weak supporting cast, he still took the Cavaliers to the NBA Finals. Though he was blasted for the decision, James knew why. Sure, NFL teams build around the quarterback — their most important asset — but NBA teams do the same around their star.

If NBA stars like Kevin Durant and Gordon Hayward can leave in free agency, it makes sense that quarterbacks should be able to take an “easier way out” if the team that drafted them fails to surround them with capable playmakers. Just like James made a bold decision to leave Cleveland, Luck has the opportunity and the right to resurrect his career somewhere else. He deserves to play somewhere with a stable organization, a solid defense and an offensive line that’ll keep him upright.

Imagine Luck leading an up-and-coming Jaguars team to the promised land or eventually taking over for Ben Roethlisberger in Pittsburgh or Tom Brady in New England. While Luck did sign an extension in 2018, there’s always an option to demand a trade. Such a move would be shocking and unprecedented, but if winning is Luck’s top priority then it would be the right one.

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Who will win the World Series?

By BLAKE PACE
The Breeze

After blowing a 3–1 lead to the Chicago Cubs in the 2016 World Series, the Cleveland Indians will right their wrongs and hoist the Commissioner’s Trophy this October — their first since 1948.

Following their heartbreaking loss this past year, the Indians reloaded over the offseason by adding power-hitting designated hitter Edwin Encarnacion and upgraded the depth in their outfield when they brought Jay Bruce in from the New York Mets on Aug. 9. Encarnacion hit 38 home runs and 107 RBIs, while Bruce added 26 RBIs and a .331 on-base percentage in his 43 games as an Indian. Both not only provide strong bats for a postseason run, but also bring playoff experience and veteran leadership to the dugout.

Locked and reloaded, the Indians finished the regular season as the the best team in the American League at 102-60 and are the hottest team throughout the MLB. They hold the best record in the majors over the last 30 games, 26-4, and claim the longest winning streak in the history of the AL, as they won 22 straight games from Aug. 24 to Sept. 15. Since the All-Star Break, they’ve lost just 20 of their 81 games and have a +254 run differential — the highest in the MLB.

While their high-octane offense will look to run up the scoreboard this October, it’s the Indians’ success on the mound that has them primed for a World Series victory. Starting pitchers Corey Kluber, Carlos Carrasco and Trevor Bauer each have at least 17 wins on the season and combined for 687 strikeouts. In the bullpen, Andrew Miller ranks fifth in the league in holds (27) despite missing nearly a month due to a knee injury, and closer Cody Allen’s 30 saves rank sixth in the AL.

With their first matchup against the New York Yankees, the limited depth of their starting rotation will lead the Indians over them in four games. From there, facing the Astros will prove to be an electrifying series — one in which I believe the Indians’ playoff experience and bullpen make the difference in a six-game series win.

In the end, I believe the Indians and Cubs will meet again in the 2017 World Series. While the Cubs were able to end their 108-year World Series drought in 2016, it’ll be the Indians ending their 68-year slump and popping the champagne for the Cleveland faithful.

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End to a 69-year curse

Corey Kluber finished the 2017 regular season with a 18-4 record, 2.25 ERA and 265 strikeouts in 203.2 innings pitched. He finished in the top five in the American League in ERA, wins, strikeouts and complete games.
The Los Angeles Dodgers will win the 2017 World Series because of their offense and a great core of pitching. They have a lineup that can dominate opposing pitching, led by rookie sensation Cody Bellinger, who’s hit 39 home runs and 96 RBIs on the season with an average exit velocity of 90.7 mph.

The Dodgers also have a great starting rotation led by three-time Cy Young award winner Clayton Kershaw and the newly acquired Yu Darvish. Even though Darvish hasn’t been the best pitcher for the Dodgers up to this point since the deadline deal, he can still throw some nasty stuff. Also, the fact that Kershaw hasn’t had the best postseason career may scare Dodgers fans, but he could possibly have the best postseason of his career. He’ll face a familiar opponent in the first round of the playoffs by playing either the Arizona Diamondbacks or the Colorado Rockies, two young up-and-coming teams that play in the NL West along with the Dodgers. Kershaw has had a good record against both teams throughout his career. He’s 14-8 with a 2.55 ERA against the Diamondbacks, while 21-7 with a 3.22 ERA against the Rockies in his career. So, it’s safe to say that Kershaw will have a good NLDS at least, even though those two teams are really impressive this year.

The toughest opponent the Dodgers will face in the NL playoffs will be the winner of the Chicago Cubs vs. Washington Nationals series in the NLCS. But this year’s Dodgers team will have its momentum together by that point on both offense and defense to prevail in five or six games against whomever plays them in the NLCS.

Now onto the World Series, the Dodgers could face a number of great AL teams, which include the Cleveland Indians. The Dodgers match up really well with the Indians, as both teams have outstanding offenses and pitching staffs. The Indians may be the hotter team on paper right now when it comes to momentum, but the Dodgers have been the team that everyone’s been talking about throughout the season as the World Series favorites. Also, as a result of the NL winning the home-field advantage in the All-Star game this year, the Dodgers have yet another edge over Cleveland.

Even though the Indians will be in the World Series for the second straight year, they just don’t quite have enough in their lineup to combat another NL team in the Dodgers. The Dodgers will achieve its first World Series in almost 30 years behind a great team and home field advantage.

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MU Ballroom

Homecoming
Kick-Off & Fight Song T-shirt Day

Oct 23-26
9 a.m. - 9 a.m.
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Homecoming 2017
Banner Contest
Voting begins!

Oct 24
5 - 7 p.m.
The Quad

Quad Fest

Oct 25
4:30 - 8 p.m.
E-hall

Purple and Gold Spirit Dinner

Oct 26
10 p.m. - 12 a.m.
E-Hall

Late Night Breakfast

Oct 26
12 a.m.
Bridgeforth Stadium

Football Game

Oct 27
7 p.m.
Wilson Hall

HomecomSing

Oct 26
4:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Lot R1 next to Dhub

D-Hub Tailgate

Oct 25
1 p.m.
Hillside Field

Purple Out!

Oct 26
9 p.m. - 10 a.m.
UREC

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Wilson Hall

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