THE OBSERVER
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Revving Up for the Future: Broward College Car Meet Showcases Automotive Talent

Paola Falquez
Staff Writer

On a sun-soaked afternoon at Broward College's South Campus, the sounds of roaring engines and excited chatter filled the air as students and car enthusiasts gathered for the annual fall semester car meet. Sponsored by the Automotive Service Management program in collaboration with Student Life, the event offered a unique glimpse into the passion and ability of BC's budding automotive professionals.

This year's car meet, while still growing in popularity, played a crucial role in promoting the college's Automotive Service Management program. With fewer students enrolled than expected, the program's faculty and organizers saw the meet as an opportunity to highlight the skills taught in their courses and draw more attention to what they see as a highly valuable career path.

The car meet is their way of showing the college community what the students are capable of. It is hands-on learning, and every car that participated stands for hours of work, dedication, and knowledge.

The two-semester program, which runs in the summer and fall, equips students with the technical skills and industry knowledge they need to thrive in the fast-evolving automotive field. Though it has historically struggled with enrollment numbers, there has been a noticeable increase in student interest since last year, with the event itself becoming an effective recruitment tool.

A Student-Driven Show

All the cars displayed at the event were student-owned, with many participants coming from the automotive program itself. From sleek, modern imports to restored vintage classics, each vehicle on display reflected the challenging work of its owner. Students spoke enthusiastically about their projects, sharing the challenges and triumphs of keeping and upgrading their cars.



Some cars at the Car Meet
Paola Falquez/The Observer

"This event is one of the highlights of my semester," said Luis, a student in the program. "I have been working on this car since I enrolled in the program, and this meet gave me a chance to show people what I have learned. I hope more students join us next semester."

For many students, the meet offered a platform to connect with others who share their love of cars, fostering a sense of community within the program and beyond. Samuel Marmelejos, another student, praised the event's atmosphere. "It is not just about the cars—it is about meeting people who are passionate about the same things you are. We get to bond over a shared interest, which makes the program feel less like school and more like family."

Promoting a Program on the Rise

Despite its low visibility on campus, the Automotive Service Management program has been gaining momentum. Faculty members hope that events like this car meet will continue to raise awareness and attract more students, particularly as the demand for skilled automotive technicians continues to rise.

The professors share their optimis m about the future. They have seen growth this year and expect it to continue. The auto industry is evolving, and there are so many opportunities for students with the right training. Their goal is to make sure the students are ready.

The car meet has become a staple of the fall semester, with plans to expand in the coming years to include more vehicles, larger crowds, and even partnerships with local automotive businesses.

Matthew McDowell
Graphic Designer

Looking Ahead

As the engines quieted and the crowds began to disperse, it was clear that this year's car meet had left an impression. Students, faculty, and spectators alike left the event with a deeper appreciation for the skill and dedication that goes into the automotive craft—and for the program that fosters such talent.

With the growing interest in the Automotive Service Management program, it is likely that Broward College will see even more students behind the wheel next semester, ready to rev up for their future careers.

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The Art of Sharing: A Hispanic Heritage Month Event

Valeria De Miguel Melo
Staff Writer

Someone's ethnicity is so much more that a set of traits a certain group of people share. It is a collective history that unifies individuals but also makes their uniqueness run even deeper. It is a sense of identity and experiences that may very well help determine the focus of someone's life. Learning about your own culture and other people's culture can give you a profound insight into who they are and the way they think, which is what made Professor Eileen Santiago and her daughter Jailyn Santiago want to highlight the Hispanic beauty by sharing food, love, and a fabulous time in an interview with social media manager and music marketing strategist Becky García, also known as Becky Boricua.

Becky is of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent, and she loves being part of both worlds; being able to take part in more than one culture and one community means everything to her. She is not only a manager for influencers, and music marketing strategist but also a bilingual content creator, influencer in the Latino music industry, publicist, and personal assistant for artists. As a content creator she has worked with brands like Mazda, KIA, Chevy, Clinique, and Dove to help them target the Latino market; moreover, she has had social media campaigns for Hispanicize, Latino Public Broadcasting, and Latin Artists Wisin and Yandel. Her website has covered prestigious events like Latin GRAMMYs, Premio Lo Nuestro, Premios Billboard a la Musica Latina, and the Latin American Music Awards. She also goes above and beyond for the artists she works for, which is why she has struck deals with companies like Netflix, NFL, Denny's, Fenty Beauty, Spotify, Amazon Prime, Pepsi, Neutrogena, Discover Puerto, McDonald's, among others. Currently she resides in Miami and works as a personal assistant to Marc Anthony, a Multi-Grammy Award Winning artist.

During the interview, Becky revealed the secret to her success: she is simply very passionate about her job. She has always connected with Latinos really easily, and she loved to volunteer to help Mexican families with her dad when she was little. Her love for her culture led her to quit her corporate job of ten years to become a driving force in the Latino Music Industry. "In order for you to be proud [about your culture], you have to celebrate where you come from," she said. Even though she grew up surrounded mostly by Mexican culture because she resided in Los Angeles, Becky's house was full of Puerto Rican culture, and the way she speaks in Spanish reflects both cultures: for instance, she uses the Puerto Rican word for fridge (nevera), but the Mexican word for cake (pastel). Her descent became her work and her passion, which has allowed for her to live a life she loves and thoroughly enjoys. After being asked about her work life balance she stated, "I don't have balance, I just do it all." Her whole career works because she loves her work so much it doesn't really feel like work. She shared how the tours can be exhausting, and she might have meetings on weekends, but she doesn't really mind because she gets to do what she adores every day.

A huge aspect that Becky said gets you far in the professional world is being responsible not only for your accomplishments, but also for your mistakes. "If you do something wrong, take responsibility," she shared. Becky also advised to set priorities to slowly start climbing towards your goals, step by step, task by task, breath by breath. Her marketing company, in fact, started as a fan club for Yandel, and later she got to work alongside him. Play into your passions, discover what you love, and grow from there, because if you're determined enough, nothing limits you and your growth. You could be the president of a fan club one day, and the liaison between fans and your favorite artist the next. It's up to each person to learn about their culture to help form their identity and their point of view; furthermore, it not only helps them know and understand themselves better, but it also helps to connect with people easily.

Professor Santiago, the host for this event, shared that her favorite parts of conducting events like these is proving how beautiful Hispanic culture is and showing how capable Latinos are of accomplishing anything they desire. The Key Club from Franklin Academy was also present at the event. Their aim is to help and bring sources to their community, and by helping to share Hispanic culture they hope to deepen society's understanding of Latino culture. Every person involved in the event is determined to bring support and love to Hispanic students in Broward College and let them know that the opportunities for them are endless.

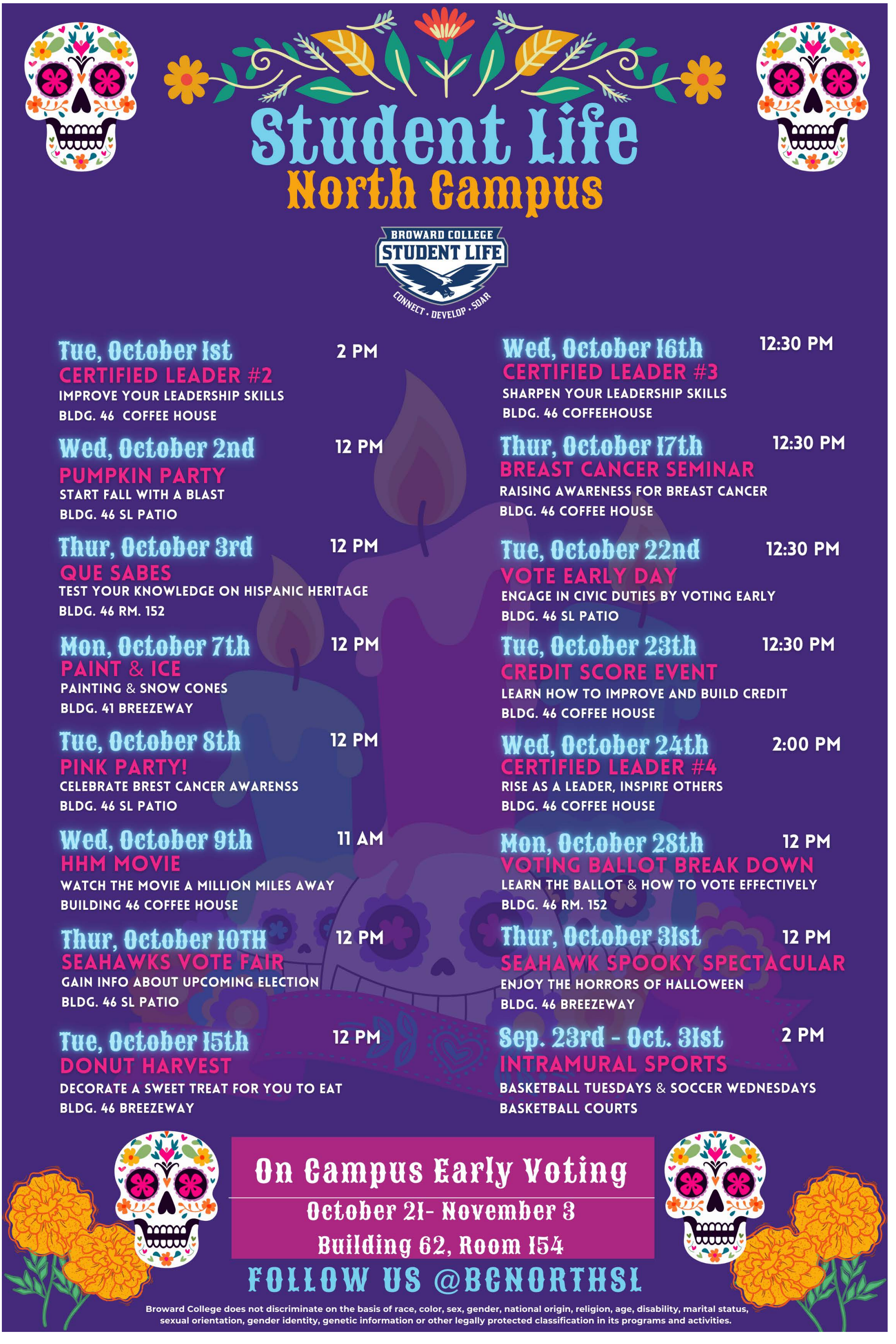
Your culture and background don't have to determine who you are or what you become, but they are a part of you and of your younger self who grew up surrounded by a specific community and certain traditions. It doesn't limit where you go, but it's the story of where you come from. The only way to understand and wear your culture like skin is to be open to it, learn about it, let it wash over you and look for the beauty in it. Because in the end, to determine where you want to go, you must know where you come from.

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Key club and Becky García (Tatiana Smith, Sofia Vilchez, Becky García, Genesis Remedios, Sara Leal) Photo by Valeria De Miguel Melo/The Observer

What's happening around campus



A physical tournament: basketball intramural recap

Jhantae Jones
Staff Writer

On Oct. 1, the gym was not ready for what could happen. The first intramural basketball game of the year marked the beginning of the season at Broward College Central Campus. The gym was packed to the brim and many students had brought their shoes or snacks, ready to compete or spectate.

Setting aside the casual day-to-day play, intramurals offer a more competitive environment for any sport at the school. Fortunately for the students, the school was well prepared, providing a more professional setup with referees and scoreboards. The excitement among the students was notable—this was something they did not want to miss. The intramural season for the Fall 2024 semester runs from Sept. 23 to Oct. 31. However, the Central Campus has only hosted one intramural basketball event so far, with hopes for more every Tuesday.

The event began in the early afternoon. To participate, students were required to sign their names on a separate sheet specifically for the tournament, different from the usual basketball gym sign-in sheet. While signing up, students either arranged themselves into teams or randomly chose a team by filling in an empty slot. Once the tournament was about to begin, attendance was taken to ensure everyone was present and ready to play. In total, four teams registered, with each team having a minimum of four players and a maximum of five, including one substitute.

The first game began with the team perceived as the underdog starting strong, quickly taking a big lead. They cooled down a bit, allowing the opposing team to make a comeback and narrow the gap. However, the underdogs managed to regain their momentum and secured the victory. The second matchup featured another underdog team versus a team of giants, and I was personally part of the underdog team. This game was very physical and hard-fought, with many fouls and free throws throughout. The physicality stemmed from the fact that there were prizes on the line, combined with the teams' competitive nature. Unfortunately, the underdogs lost, though not without some controversy—there was an issue with the scoreboard due to a referee's mistake, which frustrated the team. With both semi-final games concluded, it was time for the final match, and, unsurprisingly, the team of giants came out on top. Their prize was Amazon wish lists, along with some earned respect on the court.



Intramural basketball. Photo by Jhantae Jones/The Observer

With that, intramurals wrapped up a very physical and keenly contested tournament. It had its heated moments but also plenty of fun. As one competitor, Wilken Elusma, said, "The tournament felt like a UFC cage match." Take that how you will, but it was an exciting event, and we cannot wait for the next one to take place.

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Clash of the cleats: South Campus Intramurals

Swami Hinojosa
Editor-in-Chief

On Oct. 3, members of the Seahawks Soccer Club participated in the intramural games at Broward College's South Campus.

Outdoor soccer has become an opportunity not only to play sports but to build a sense of community.

Last season, they managed to gather between 20 and 30 people every Thursday, all from different majors, backgrounds, and campuses. The diversity on the field is impressive, with everyone united by their passion for soccer.

Can you imagine so many people coming together just to enjoy this beautiful sport? It demonstrates how sports can serve as a powerful catalyst for student connection and well-being.

Andrés Linares, a student and member of the club, shared his thoughts.

"It's good because it helps you disconnect from your problems. Playing outdoor soccer is like therapy, and it also helps you connect with people and have a good time with your friends. It has many benefits, not only physical but also for mental health."

His words highlight how sports are essential not only for physical fitness but also for emotional well-being. For him, soccer is not just about the game; it's about enjoying time with friends and feeling the positive impact of the community.

Broward College has made a significant effort to promote this by offering not only soccer but also other sports like volleyball, pickleball, and futsal.

The addition of intramural activities organized by Student Life has brought back the opportunity for many students to continue playing the sports they love. These activities provide a space for students to relieve stress and improve their overall well-being.

It's important to note that you don't have to be a member of any club to play—any student with free time can join.

Most of the games are casual, and the teams are usually formed just before the matches start.



Andres Linares and Rodrigo Miranda play intramural soccer. Photo by Maria Yost Castillo/The Observer

The Seahawks Soccer Club serves as a hub to organize games, plan activities, and maintain communication between soccer enthusiasts. Beyond campus, there are even opportunities to play outside of school and participate in additional activities.

Other groups, such as the Sports Club from South Campus, also organize tournaments and events throughout the semester, reinforcing the importance of physical activity on campus and promoting healthier lifestyles for students.

Creating more spaces dedicated to physical activity is essential for helping students manage stress and stay active. This, in turn, positively impacts academic performance.

Many participants not only give their best on the field but are also committed to maintaining strong academic performance, showing how sports and academics can go hand in hand for student success.

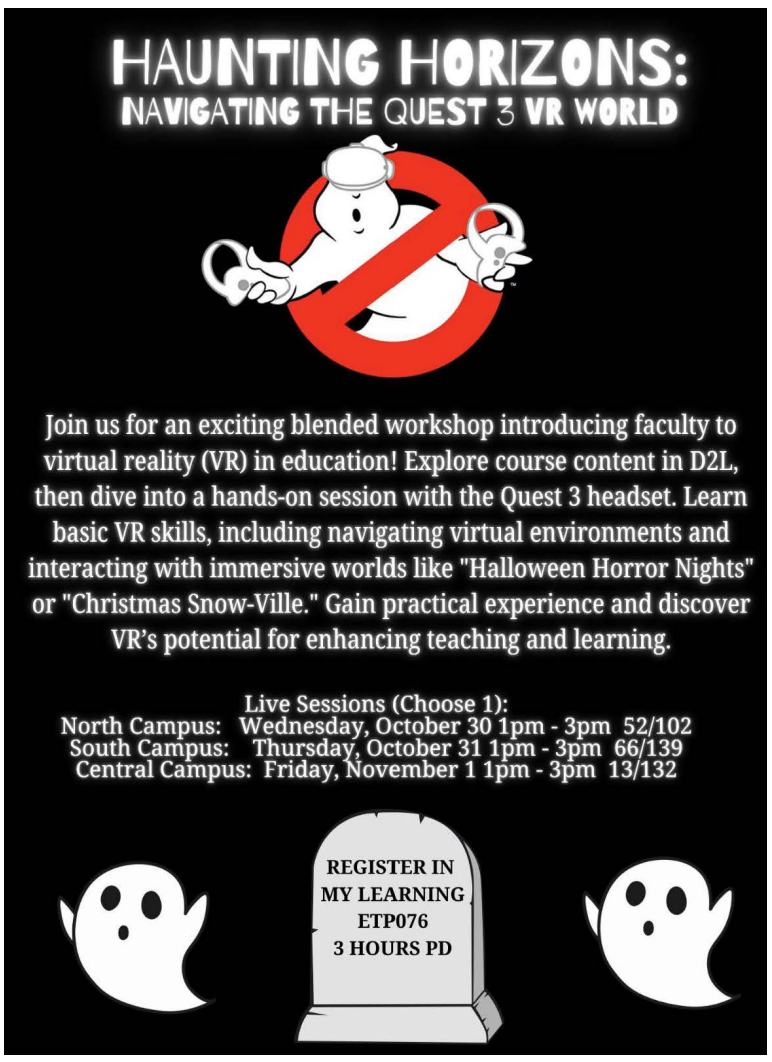
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Virtual Reality takes the stage in education

Swami Hinojosa
Editor-in-Chief

In a world where technology is advancing faster than we can comprehend, staying updated on the latest innovations is crucial. The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into society has transformed not only the business and healthcare sectors but also education. One of the most groundbreaking developments is introducing virtual reality (VR) into learning environments. Devices like Oculus and the Apple Vision Pro are opening up new possibilities for teaching and engagement across different disciplines.

Professor Russel Betts, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for Science & Wellness Education, has been at the forefront of this technological shift. He shared how VR is now being used in his organic chemistry classes to help students interact with compound molecules in ways that were previously impossible. Students had access to physical models of compounds, but now, with the evolution of educational tools like VR, they can



engage with these concepts more interactively. This not only enhances learning but also caters to various learning styles, making education more inclusive and accessible.

A collaborative effort led by Professor Betts and Michelle Levine, Associate Vice President of the Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning, has resulted in a groundbreaking workshop designed for Broward College faculty and staff. "Incorporating Virtual Reality into our courses will allow students to immerse themselves in real-world experiences. From interacting with 3D models to exploring other countries or environments, to collaborating with classmates worldwide, VR brings to life experiences that, in the past, we could only read about or imagine," said Levine. This workshop will introduce participants to the world of VR, equipping them with the skills to integrate it into their classrooms. Through hands-on sessions with the Quest 3 headset, faculty will explore how this technology can revolutionize the way they teach.

The workshop is open to all faculty members, regardless of their prior experience with VR or technology. A Desire2Learn (D2L) course will be available to guide participants in mastering these new tools. During the hands-on sessions, faculty will use the Quest 3 headset to learn about the latest gadgets and how to incorporate VR into their teaching methods. It will address the diverse needs of participants by offering various activities that accommodate different learning styles. Whether participants are visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learners, the VR experience is flexible and adaptable. Faculty members will also receive support on how to adjust VR-based activities to meet the unique needs of their students.

Participants will have access to follow-up resources and ongoing support after the workshop. The goal is to ensure that faculty members feel confident in using VR to enhance their courses. In terms of safety, all necessary measures will be in place to ensure a safe and comfortable experience with the VR headsets.

As VR continues to evolve, its potential to transform education is becoming more apparent. Whether in science, the arts, or humanities, VR has the power to engage students in ways that traditional methods cannot. With workshops like this, Broward College is leading the charge in preparing educators for the future of learning.

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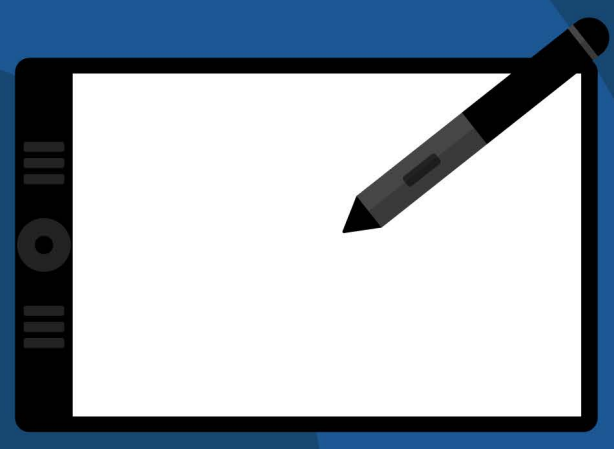
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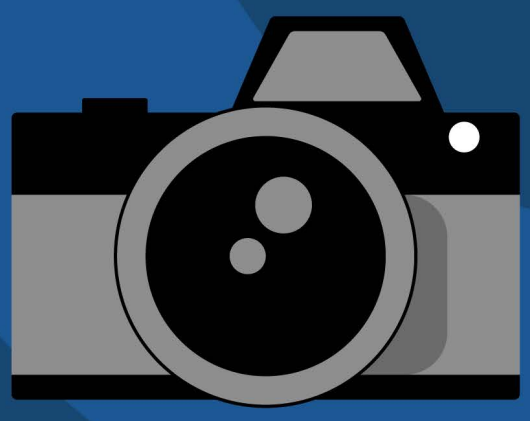
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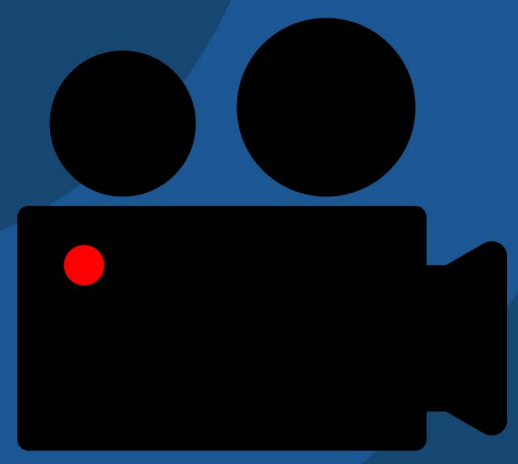
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Unforgettable Events to Experience This Halloween!

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Happy Halloween Seahawks. As Halloween approaches, here are four recommendations for fun events for students to visit with friends or family during October.



https://xtremeactionpark.com/experience-nightmare-village/

2

Xtreme Action Park is a popular entertainment venue found in Fort Lauderdale. During the Halloween season, the park typically hosts haunted attractions, such as The Haunting of Dusk Field Springs and possibly Nightmare Village. These events often include elaborate haunted houses and themed experiences to scare and entertain guests. Additional information: Location: 5300 Powerline Rd, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309. Website: https://xtremeactionpark.com/experience-nightmare-village/ - for more details on pricing, hours, and specific attractions.



3

Fright Nights at the South Florida Fairgrounds (West Palm Beach) This is one of the biggest Halloween events in South Florida, featuring multiple haunted houses, scare zones, and carnival rides. The haunted houses are each themed differently, and the event offers a mix of jump scares and elabo rate horror settings. Additional information: Location: South Florida Fairgrounds, West Palm Beach. Website: https://myfrightnights.com/ for more details on pricing, hours, and specific attractions.





https://www.thepalmbeaches.com/event/fright-nights-at-the-south-florida-fairgrounds

1

Halloween Horror Nights (Universal Studios): Held at Universal Studios (Hollywood, Orlando, and other locations), this event transforms the theme park into a series of horror mazes inspired by popular movies and shows. Additional information: Website: https://www.universalorlando.com/hhn/en/us - for more details on pricing, hours, and specific attractions.



https://www.nbc.com/nbc-insider/halloween-horror-nights-2024-a-quiet-place-haunted-house



4

Xtreme Action Park –The Haunting of Dusk Field Springs (Fort Lauderdale) Xtreme Action Park hosts seasonal haunted house events, including “The Haunting of Dusk Field Springs,” which provides a suspenseful, story-driven haunted experience in a large area. Additional information: Location: 5300 Powerline Rd,Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309. Website: https://xtremeactionpark.com / - for more details on pricing, hours, and specific attractions.





http://www.hauntscene.com/haunts-weve-visited/

NBA Media Day News & Notes

Jordan Stephenson
South Bureau Chief

NBA Media Day officially started for all NBA teams on Sept. 30. NBA Media Day is essentially self-explanatory, but it entails NBA players and coaches taking part in team photos and promotional videos, combined with them speaking with the different media outlets available, as well as front office executives. They also wait for their sit-down press conferences. The only exceptions for an early media day were the Celtics and Nuggets because they are scheduled to travel to Abu Dhabi, to play in their preseason games against each other. The things that transpired a few days before NBA Media Day immediately altered the balance of power for championship contending teams.

Two ESPN NBA media personalities in Adrian Wojnarowski (WOJ) and Zach Lowe were no longer at the forefront this year because sadly WOJ retired from ESPN to be the GM of his alma mater, also Lowe was shockingly fired by ESPN. Both would've had many interesting things to say about this trade, on live tv and on their respective podcasts. If WOJ didn't retire from ESPN he most definitely would've reported this trade before anyone, but Shams Charania from The Athletic first reported the 3-team blockbuster trade between the Knicks, Timbe-rwolves, and Hornets.

This shock-ing trade for the star players involved Karl-Anthony Towns (KAT) being traded to essentially his hometown, the Knicks, and Julius Randle being traded to the Timberwolves and Donte DiVincenzo, Keita Bates-Diop were sent to the Wolves. Other assets involved were a 2025 top 13 protected 1st round pick to the Wolves, James Nnaji to the Knicks, 2025, 2026, and a 2031 2nd round picks, DaQuan Jeffries, Charlie Brown Jr., Duane Washington, and $7.2 million cash to the Hornets. After this blockbuster trade, which coincidentally happened on the same day as the Damian Lillard and Jrue Holiday trade last year, the Knicks and Bucks have definitely solidified themselves as top five teams and championship contenders in the NBA.

At the Knicks media day, there was heartfelt buzz felt around the potential Jalen Brunson and KAT duo, even though he couldn't attend it yet. This is the third time that both stars have played with another respective star or superstar. Brunson said at media day, "Who's Karl? I have no idea who that is." Then Josh Hart said, "We got KAT? Wow." Brunson was asked about the comparison of his former teammate Kristaps Porzingis to KAT, and he said, "Uh it's obviously a different dynamic, it gives us a different weapon." He also said, "The [point guards] reads are definitely different, you still have to see how the defense is reacting to different situations, but yes there's a difference, and we'll cross that bridge when we get there. Brunson reacted to the teammates he lost in the trade, and said, "That [aspect of the deal] was definitely tough, Julius welcomed me with open arms; that news was crazy." He also said, "I'm thankful for them, their friendship and everything they brought to the team. …And Donte, he was a groomsman in my wedding, so that should tell you everything you need to know about our relationship, we'll see them again soon." Lastly Hart said, "KAT is an amazing player, someone who will be really good in terms of spacing, knocking down shots, blocking shots; we're extremely confident in what we have, both officially and unofficially."

Randle couldn't be present at Timberwolves media day because of his physical and other intricate parts of being traded. Anthony Edwards reacted to the KAT trade by saying, "I think everybody knows [Towns] my brother, so that definitely hurts, but you know it's a business, so I just have to roll with it." Edwards also said about an even bigger role, "Just working, I feel like that's the only way man; everybody talks about it, I mean the only way is to just work and go out on the court and just believe it." He also said, "I think a lot of guys got a chance to be really great at this game, but I think they just don't believe it; I think some guys put the work in, but don't believe it, some guys believe it and don't put the work in. So, I believe it and I put the work in, so if it don't happen it don't, if it do it, probably will." Rudy Gobert reacted to the KAT trade and said, "Time reveals the winner of this trade, but the changes are sure to alter the Timberwolves on the court." He also said, "It's going to be a process even for us as a team, adjusting to not having [Towns]; it's going to make us play a different brand of basketball."

Matthew McDowell
Graphic Designer

First overall pick in his second year, Victor Wembanyama, said on Spurs media day, "It's hard to win games in the Olympics, but it's very easy to lose games; it was maybe the most intense sports experience in my life." Wemby also said, "Gaining strength (25 pounds) is the primary thing that allows me to expand my game, increasing my ability to play through contact, and improving my overall athleticism." Lonzo Ball at Bulls media day said, "I'm feeling good, happy to be here, blessed to be here; for sure first and foremost, happy to see you all again. I know it has been a minute, but I'm looking forward to camp; ready to get the year started, that's the goal [to be ready for opening night]." Ja Morant at Grizzlies media day said, "Right now I'm happy, and that's my main focus; I feel like happy Ja is a scary Ja for a lot of people, so long as I stay happy and healthy, it'll be a great season." Ja also said, "I want to remember the feeling I felt each time, no matter what situation it was; I feel like it helped me a lot, helped me grow into a better Ja. Right now, you know I'm probably the happiest I feel like I've been in a while.

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Father and son duo at media day (LeBron James and Bronny James Jr.) E SPN.com

Breast Cancer: Myths, Realities, and What You Can Do

Winda Saintil
Staff Writer

I'm sure by now many of you have seen pink ribbons, pink buses, and so on. October is breast cancer awareness month, and I would like to clarify some common misconceptions about the disease, as well as give insight into what causes it. According to the National Breast Cancer Foundation, some common myths include:

1. Breast injuries cause cancer.
2. Breast cancer affects only middle-aged or older women.
3. Men cannot get breast cancer.
4. Breast pain or discomfort is a sign of breast cancer.
5. A lump in your breast indicates breast cancer.

Sometimes a cancer diagnosis will follow a breast injury because the injury will draw attention to a lump that was already present. Some injuries can lead to breast cancer, but this is not common. Health providers are made aware of tumors because additional imagining has to be performed when an injury takes place to determine the full scope of the injury.

Breast cancer does affect middle-aged and older women on a large scale. However, this disease does not discriminate; it can affect anyone at any point in their life. The risk of developing this condition does increase with one's age. Breast cancer in men usually appears as a hard lump underneath the nipple. Men have a higher mortality rate because they have not received proper education on the illness, and this leads to them seeking



https://chefrito.com/october-is-breast-cancer-awareness-month-heights-pediatric-dentistry-vv-86v9JGT7

treatment at a much later stage which makes treatment difficult.

Breast pain does not indicate cancer. It can be a result of other factors such as hormonal changes, wearing bras that are the incorrect size or are uncomfortable such as underwire bras, and so on. Still be mindful of any changes in your chest area. These changes can include swelling, nipple changes or nipple pain, changes in the skin or discharge, and breast pain in one area or specific areas that does not go away. Lumps are not always cancer, but they should not be ignored especially if you keep noticing them.

When it comes to cancer, there are many things that cause it. As stated by the CDC, Breast Cancer can be caused by getting older, genetic mutations, starting menstruation before age 12 and starting menopause after 55, family history of breast or ovarian cancer, and chest radiation.

On the other hand, it is more important to focus on factors that you can control such as limiting your drinking habits, having your first child before 30 if you can, staying physically active, and losing weight. It is very important to look out for signs and symptoms as well as schedule regular mammograms and doctor's appointments. Work with your provider to figure out a plan and regimens that will work better for you. If you do not have regular access to health services, there are a number of organizations that provide screenings and related services. They can be located by doing a google search or contacting agencies in your local community.

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Halloween History: Roots and Origins

Valeria De Miguel Melo
Staff Writer

On every October 31st, children can be seen sporting costumes and asking for candy across the United States and many other countries around the globe. Candy, laughs, and excitement are shared throughout communities as groups of families and friends admire each other's costumes and the Halloween decorations around their neighborhoods. But not me. I always found Halloween alluring and mysterious, but I was born and raised in Mexico, where Halloween isn't very popular. Trick–or–treating in Mexico City was pointless because only about 5 people gave out candy in my neighborhood. Nevertheless, this only made me more curious about the holiday. Why is trick–or–treating a thing? Where did the costumes come from? Why is Halloween so beloved? Thus, the only thing left to do was to investigate. After some research, I realized the holiday didn't even look like it does nowadays when it came to be. It was not created for an evening of fun with loved ones, coated with tons of sugar, and topped off with ghost stories. It began with the supernatural, and the fear of being among ghosts and spirits.

My first query was about how Halloween began. Turns out it started as a ritual to ward off spirits and was rooted in fear and a desire to keep crops healthy and safe. Around 2,000 years ago, the ancient tribe called the Celts (pronounced "Kelts") lived in an area that consists of the modern United Kingdom. Their calendar marked November 1st as New Year, which also meant that the day represented the end of the summer and the beginning of winter. It was their belief that on the night of October 31, just before their new year began, the world of the living and the dead merged temporarily, boundaries crossing, lines blurring. This belief led them to celebrate Samhain (Pronounced "Sow-wen") that very night. Ghosts were believed to go around damaging crops –which the Celts relied on deeply– and participate in mischief. It was customary for the Celts to wear animal skins to disguise themselves from the wicked spirits and to ward them off; this is where Halloween costumes come from.

During its transition to the celebration it is today, Halloween was completely altered in 43 A.D. after the Celtic lands were taken by the Roman empire. For around 500 years, the Celts were ruled by the Romans, and Samhain was merged with a festival from Roman culture: Feralia– a day to commemorate the deceased. The Romans wanted to eliminate the witchcraft surrounding the Celtic holiday, and turn it into a more Christian holiday, so the day was declared All Souls' Day around 1000 A.D. All Souls' Day was also named All-Hallowmas (rooted in old English Alholowmesse which meant All Soul's Day) and this slowly became All-Hallow's Eve, and finally, Halloween. This new version of the holiday was celebrated with huge bonfires, parades, and costumes of saints, devils, and angels. Moreover, trick–or–treating began with the poor in England during the 1500s; the poor offered prayers for the deceased in exchange for soul cakes. Even though the festivity didn't remain Christian, it was actually prohibited in the English Colonies due to the English Protestant faith during England's reign in the Americas. However, around the 1850s. Irish immigrants fleeing the potato famine took refuge in the United States, bringing with them the All-Hallow's Eve tradition.

Turns out Halloween in America brought with it lots of mischief, witchcraft, and pranks played on neighbors, which led to newspapers and community leaders to encourage parents to get rid of the "frightening" and "grotesque" aspects of Halloween and turn it into a spooky night to connect and have fun; thus, Halloween parties and the modern festivities came to be. Said parties focused on games, food and costumes, becoming ever more elaborate as time passed.



Photo courtesy of History.com

It is obvious that Halloween has completely transformed from a day of witchcraft to a nostalgic and meaningful holiday for people. There's a beauty in the way it has morphed from a center of beliefs to a day that brings people together to have a good time. Having lived in the United States for two years now has definitely shown me that it's a date to look forward to, and walking around my neighborhood with my family to pick the house with our favorite decorations has become a family tradition. I am also of the opinion that knowing more about the holiday makes you feel more partial towards it. And I must say I'm deeply thankful for all the twists and turns in Halloween's history that have made it become what it is today. Its roots will forever be preserved by the telling of ghost tales and the imagining of supernatural creatures, but all that's left to do is to see where this holiday goes, and count ourselves as part of its history.

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The Great Autumn Debate: Pumpkin vs Sweet Potato

Bria Vaughn
Staff Writer

It's that time of year again, the smell of cinnamon and nutmeg fill the air, leaves are changing colors, allergies are making a strong comeback, and if you are in Florida, hurricane season is almost over. The coffee shops are flooded with scents of a distinct spiced fruit while soul food restaurants are preparing to candy a root vegetable: Ahhh, the age-old debate: pumpkin versus sweet potato. Both pumpkin and sweet potato have extensive histories in the United States that go beyond marshmallows, spooky season, and lattes. As much as I hate to pit two autumn staples against each other, it's time to settle the score.

Not only does pumpkin rival sweet potato, according to David Trinklein of the University of Missouri, pumpkins rival maize (corn) as "one of the oldest known crops in the western hemisphere" having been cultivated since about 3500 B.C. Evidence suggests pumpkins are native to the Americas and were an essential staple in the Native American diet long before Pilgrims colonized the land. So how did pumpkin transform from a Native American staple to pumpkin spice: America's unofficial autumn flavor?

First, let's break down what pumpkin spice is. Pumpkin spice is a spice blend consisting of cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, allspice, and ginger. That's right, pumpkin spice does not usually contain any actual pumpkin! The beautiful orange hue in our favorite pumpkin spice dishes is a food coloring called, "annato." This information breeds another question, how did this fragrant blend of spices get its name? Well, this spice mixture was used to flavor pumpkin pie, and eventually -thanks to Starbucks launching its pumpkin spice latte- we ditched the pumpkin and kept the spice. However, pumpkin spiced pie remains an autumn staple in many cultures throughout the United States.

Sweet potato is the American antithesis of pumpkin. This root vegetable is a staple in the Southern United States, particularly within the culinary tradition of soul food. Sweet potato is prepared in various autumn dishes, such as candied yams and sweet potato pie. The origins of candied yams are traced back to West Africa where yams were cooked in sugary syrups. According to Adaoram Oduam in their ampersandla article, they recall their first time encountering candied yams as a Black American Thanksgiving dinner and being surprised that the "orange blobs drenched in butter were not in fact yams." Yes, that is correct, candied yams is not made with yams at all! Candied yams are made out of sweet potato. So, how in the world is there a dish called "candied yams" that does not even have yams?

Okay, back to the drawing board... Again... A yam is a root vegetable originating in West Africa. It is a root vegetable that is mild in flavor with brown, rough skin with white flesh. As enslaved Africans in America began to assimilate, they brought the tradition of yams in sugary syrup. As enslaved people assimilated with the crops of the Americas, they were forced to substitute the African yam with a native tubular. This substitution caused the conflation of what the American South knows as the yam, and what the rest of the world regards as a sweet potato. It is also worth noting, in West Africa, variations in the word "nyam," such as "anyainam" or "nyami" all translate to mean "to eat." Safe to say West Africans in Africa and enslaved Africans preserved their culture by "nyam" -ing yams.

As with most American history, the history of pumpkin spice and sweet potato in the United States is complicated. The misnomers of pumpkin spice and candied yams have manifested into a complex culture mirroring the melting pot of their native lands. Which one is better is up to the consumer, but hopefully understanding the historical and cultural contexts of America's autumn favorites will create a newfound gratitude. (#TeamSweetPotatoes)

Pumpkin Spice Hummus

Ingredients:

- 1 can (15 oz) chickpeas (garbanzo beans), drained and rinsed
- 1/2 cup fresh pumpkin puree (homemade or canned)
- 1/4 cup tahini
- 2 tbsp maple syrup (or honey)
- 2 tbsp olive oil



https://postcardsfromhawaii.co/home/pumpkin-spice-hummus-recipe

- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp pumpkin spice blend (store-bought or homemade)
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp black pepper
- Water (as needed for texture)

For Homemade Pumpkin Puree:

- 1 small pie pumpkin (about 2-3 pounds)
- Olive oil for roasting

For Homemade Pumpkin Spice Blend (optional):

- 1 tbsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp ground cloves
- 1/4 tsp ground allspice

Make the Pumpkin Puree:
Instructions:

1.Preheat the oven: Set your oven to 375°F (190°C).

2. Prepare the pumpkin: Cut the pumpkin in half, remove the seeds, and brush the flesh with olive oil.

3. Roast: Place the pumpkin halves cut side down on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Roast for 35-45 minutes, until tender. Let it cool, then scoop out the flesh and blend until smooth.

Make the Hummus:

1. Prepare the chickpeas: Drain and rinse the chickpeas thoroughly.

2. Blend the ingredients: In a food processor, combine chickpeas, pumpkin puree, tahini, maple syrup, olive oil, lemon juice, pumpkin spice blend, salt, and black pepper. Blend until smooth and creamy.

3. Adjust the texture: Add water, one tablespoon at a time, and blend until you reach your desired consistency.

4. Taste and adjust seasoning: If you want a stronger pumpkin spice flavor, add a bit more of the spice blend. For extra sweetness, add more maple syrup.

5. Serve: Transfer to a serving bowl and drizzle with olive oil or sprinkle with extra pumpkin spice for garnish if desired.

6. Enjoy: Serve with pita chips, apple slices, graham crackers, or your favorite dippers.

Classic Candied Yam Recipe

Candied Yams with Marshmallows (Soul Food Style)

Ingredients:

- 4-5 large sweet potatoes (about 3 pounds), peeled and sliced into 1/2-inch rounds
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar (light or dark)
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg



https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/26482/candied-yams/

- 1/4 tsp ground ginger (optional)
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 2 cups mini marshmallows

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven: Set your oven to 350°F (175°C).

2. Prepare the sweet potatoes: Peel and slice the sweet potatoes into 1/2-inch thick rounds and set them aside.

3. Make the candied syrup: In a large skillet or saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Stir in the granulated sugar, brown sugar, water, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger (if using), vanilla extract, and salt. Stir until the sugars dissolve and the mixture begins to bubble, creating a syrup. This should take about 5 minutes.

4. Coat the sweet potatoes: Place the sliced sweet potatoes in a large baking dish and pour the syrup evenly over the top, making sure all the slices are coated.

5. Bake: Cover the dish with aluminum foil and bake for 45-50 minutes, or until the sweet potatoes are fork-tender. Stir the sweet potatoes halfway through to ensure even cooking and coating.

6. Add the marshmallows: Once the sweet potatoes are tender, remove the foil. Sprinkle the mini marshmallows over the top of the sweet potatoes in an even layer.

7. Broil the marshmallows: Place the dish back in the oven and broil for 1-2 minutes, or until the marshmallows are golden and toasted. Keep a close eye on them, as they can burn quickly.

8. Serve and enjoy: Let the candied yams cool slightly before serving. The sweet potatoes will be tender and buttery with a perfectly sweet, caramelized sauce and a toasted marshmallow topping.

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Best 2010s rap supergroup bracket results and cultural analysis

Bria Vaughn
Staff Writer

On a late rainy night, while doing EVR1001 homework, I was scrolling through Spotify (procrastinating) searching for *The Perfect Playlist*. I ended up just going to my liked songs playlist, pressed shuffle and vowed to let the Spotify Shuffle gods work their magic. After about 30 minutes of the most glorious, genre-bending gallimaufry of songs, "Roger That" by Young Money came on, and then "Analog 2" by Odd Future immediately followed, well they faded into each other (seven-second crossfade, if you know, you know.) That led me to ponder… "Who is better? YMCMB (Young Money) or OFWGKTA (Odd Future)?"

In true anthropological fashion, I was curious about other people's thoughts. So, in true Gen Z fashion, I made a poll on Instagram! It was a simple poll, with no questions, just "YMCMB" for option one and "OFWGKTA" for option two. I hypothesized Young Money would win, I mean they have Drake and Nicki Minaj! Two of the biggest stars of the 2010s with two of the most intense stars of modern times! Compare that to Odd Future, the "weird guys" who debuted eating cockroaches in music videos. Well, I was blown away when YMCMB lost by a landslide! The results were 74% in favor of OFWGKTA and 26% in favor of YMCMB. These results led me down a rabbit hole wondering who would win in a "2010s Best Rap Supergroup" poll.

I finished my homework, closed my laptop, opened my notes app then started jotting down a list of the best rap collectives of the 2010s. This poll was not only going to be a contest of musical greatness and impact, but a space for hip-hop fans to reminisce, feel belonging, and have fun. It is also worth noting, that a "rap supergroup" has become synonymous with "members on a record label," often conflating the two.

Rap supergroups of the 2010s are prime examples of how music can serve as a space for the articulation of cultural values, community identity, and resistance to social norms. These groups have created more than just a few good songs to sing and dance to they have created cultural institutions representing the intersection of race, class, and regional identity. They embody collective memories, shared experiences, and often challenge prevailing ideas of race, masculinity, success, and rebellion in a country where rap music has been kidnapped, colonized, perverted, and then had a caricature made of its essence to be sold and shipped overseas and used sacrilegiously. Then again, true rap music, in its purest form, is art. And art is constantly evolving.

Let's look at Young Money (YMCMB), the Young Money Cash Money Billionaires. Created in 2005 and led by Lil Wayne, the group served as a platform to mold and showcase artists whose individual successes would lead them to worldwide superstardom- Drake, Nicki Minaj, and Tyga. Young Money represents commercial dominance, with a song from the collective that peaked at number 2 on the Billboard charts and winning "Best Group" at the 2014 BET Awards. Their individual successes speak volumes: over 14 number one albums, over 20 number one songs, and winning over 500 awards, including 10 Grammys. However, their decline in the latter half of the decade (see Drake getting booed off stage at Odd Future's Camp Flog Gnaw in 2019 [yes, I was there, no I did not boo]) and their ever-increasing criminal allegations most likely contributed to their early exit from the poll.

One of my mutuals, Offthe.woods, highlighted this when they said, "Honestly, I think [Young Money losing is] recency bias since so little of Young Money is still around. But like Wayne in his prime, has anyone had such a perfect mixtape run?"

On the other hand, Odd Future (OFWGKTA), created by Tyler, the Creator in 2007 emerged from Los Angeles and epitomized the DIY ethos of the 2010s. Tyler, the Creator, Earl Sweatshirt, Frank Ocean, and Syd (among others) represented an art collective, rather than a rap collective. They blurred the lines between rap, skate culture, and shock media. Although the collective disbanded in 2015, members have gone on to win a variety of awards including 5 Grammys and an Emmy nomination. Their non-conformist approach and countercultural aesthetics attracted a different kind of fanbase- one that celebrated individuality and oddity. Not only was this art collective gifted in creativity, but they also had outwardly queer, gay, and lesbian members, embracing identities that are otherwise condemned within the rap and hip-hop community. They proved themselves as an art collective by branching out into television and fashion. Notably with their Adult Swim feature, Loiter Squad and former member Lionel Boyce (L-Boy) playing a major role in the 20x Emmy-winning drama, The Bear, and leader Tyler, the Creator with his three clothing brands: Odd Future, GOLF WANG, and luxury brand: Golf le Fleur, as well as designing the Louis Vuitton Spring 2024 Men's Capsule Collection by Tyler, the Creator. Even with their impressive accolades, some would say Odd Future is still considered "underground" today.

Despite the disparity in commercial success, Odd Future's influence is undeniable. They weren't just making outlandish music, silly shirts, and slapstick TV shows- they were building a subculture. As humble_anthropologist remarked, "Gotta think about the artist that came out of OF. YMCMB has Wayne, Drake, and Nicki Minaj, but the rest were a flop."

With the initial and unexpected success of the YMCMB vs. Odd Future poll, I knew I had to expand it. I compiled a bracket of 16 (turned 21) of the most influential rap groups of the 2010s. The matchups were intense, and so were the opinions. Several of my followers expressed difficulty in choosing between their favorite collectives. One mutual, thatflwater, exclaimed, "I couldn't choose [crying emojis] some of these are too hard," especially when it came to matchups like Pro Era and Black Hippy.

Despite some efforts to add surprise third options such as Quality Control, CMG, 1738 Remy Boyz, and Members Only in the quarterfinals to create more balanced matchups, it was futile—many of the winning groups dominated with landslide victories. For example, GOOD Music, Kanye West's genre-defying label, blew past Rich Gang and CMG at 57% without breaking a sweat. The same was true for Black Hippy, A$AP Mob, and Odd Future, all winning their respective matchups with surprising ease.

This poll ended up being more than just a fun way to pass the time; it reflected how deeply these groups have embedded themselves into the cultural consciousness of the 2010s. GOOD Music, for instance, headquartered in Chicago and led by Kanye West, was more than just a label—it was a creative movement that spanned rap, fashion, and visual art. Kanye, along with artists like Pusha T, Kid Cudi, and Big Sean, expanded rap as a genre with experimental production, groundbreaking melodies, and lyrics that are so quotable that we still use them today.

Kendrick Lamar's Black Hippy (TDE), based in Los Angeles, kept the West Coast in the game until the semifinals. While Kendrick's star power is unmatched (I mean, he is headlining the 2024 Super Bowl), the group's quartet, with Kendrick Lamar, Schoolboy Q, Jay Rock, and Ab-Soul, gave voice to the struggles and triumphs of life in Compton and were not afraid to lyrically tackle racially charged issues.

One contender that stood out to me was Lil B's Task Force, the only "group" represented by a single individual. Lil B "The BasedGod" known for his positivity, eccentric persona, and social media presence has built a cult-like following. His inclusion in the poll speaks volumes about how fandoms in hip-hop can sometimes transcend traditional group dynamics, showing the importance of the listener in relational dynamics concerning music.

It is time to answer the question: Who is the best rap supergroup of the 2010s? The final two contenders were Tyler, the Creator's OFWGTKA and Kanye West's G.O.O.D. Music. For my Gen Z counterparts, it all boiled down to the rappers that raised us (G.O.O.D. Music) and the rappers who are us (OFWGKTA). The people's champ is *drumroll please* G.O.O.D. Music. For over 12 hours of the poll, there was a close tug of war. My vote was for Odd Future. I grew up with them, we are closer in age, and my connection to their music is personal. Although OFWGKTA put up a good fight and made way further than I anticipated, the winner 54% to 46% was G.O.O.D. Music! The certified legends, the rappers who raised us, who influenced our other favorite rappers were the champions!

When reflecting on the results and the commentary from my followers, I'm left with even more questions: How much does nostalgia influence our music tastes? Do we tend to favor artists we grew up with over newer voices? And how do these supergroups reflect larger cultural dynamics, from race and class to regional identity and resistance?

Maybe it's time for another poll.

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Club Rush at Central Campus

















Photos by Jailyn Santiago
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