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Hundreds of documents exposed on WashU OneDrive



ISABELLA DIAZ-MIRA | MANAGING PHOTO EDITOR

Hundreds of internal University documents were inadvertently made accessible to students, faculty, and staff.

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MANAGING NEWS EDITOR
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Until recently, anyone with a WashU email address, including every WashU student, was only a few clicks away from accessing hundreds of sensitive internal University documents.

The documents, which were accessible via a simple search of the University OneDrive, included emergency response protocols for WILD and commencement events, confidential profiles of donors with personal information, contracts with outside vendors, IT incident reports, clinical trial memos, and more.

Student Life notified the University that the documents were available on Thursday, Oct. 29, after which many files were taken down. The Office of Information Technology (WashU IT) released an email on Oct. 30 titled "Privacy Changes in Microsoft Teams, OneDrive, and SharePoint," announcing, "Teams will now be set to Private instead of Public (visible to everyone at WashU)." Publication of this article was initially delayed by five days to allow the University time to fix the issue.

Kedra Tolson, associate vice chancellor for University communications, referred Student Life to Jen Stedelin, interim vice chancellor and chief information officer of WashU IT, who provided a written statement to Student Life confirming that a review of OneDrive procedures and systems was underway.

"The university is conducting a broader internal review to better understand the circumstances and scope of the access issue and determine whether additional security measures are necessary," Stedelin wrote. "We continue to review our systems and practices to strengthen information security, consistent with our highest responsibility to protect the sensitive information entrusted to us."

Exposed files date back to 2009, while others were created in 2026. Some documents have been exposed since at least summer 2026. According to WashU IT's website, all current WashU students, faculty, and staff have access to OneDrive's file storage. Students' OneDrive accounts deactivate 24 hours after their graduation.

Many of the documents were stored in "shared libraries," a OneDrive feature that allows various team members to work on shared documents. Titles of available shared libraries included "Contract Management" and "Major Incidents and Significant Events," created by WashU IT. According to Microsoft's website, when shared libraries are set to public, everyone in the organization has access to them.

Annamaria Szakonyi, cybersecurity expert and assistant professor of information systems at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, said accidental oversharing is a "common challenge" across large systems. However, she noted that she does not have direct knowledge of WashU's systems or the incident in question.

"Tools within Microsoft 365 (like search or Copilot) are designed to make files easily discoverable across an organization," Szakonyi wrote in an email to Student Life. "If a folder containing sensitive operational files is set to internal public visibility, those documents will automatically surface in search results for anyone logged into a university account."

One such shared library titled "2026 ThurtenE and Reunion Weekend" contained a safety and security document with a disclaimer on its first page that read: "Public disclosure of this plan has the potential to significantly compromise public safety."

Additional shared libraries shared by WashU Emergency Management contained the security plans for other major campus events, such as 2024 Commencement and 2026 WILD.

Another shared library contained records of thousands of outside contracts with software, laboratory, medical, and custodial service providers, and the payments made by WashU for their services.

Szakonyi wrote that the exposure of emergency plans could cause serious harm to event attendees, while unauthorized access to other documents could provide an opening for hackers.

"Detailed donor profiles, vendor contracts, and IT incident logs provide rich context for malicious actors to conduct highly targeted social engineering, such as spear-phishing or business email compromise (BEC) attacks," Szakonyi wrote.

Other spreadsheets linked to the WashU School of Medicine included staff's cell numbers and current rotational assignments, including their location within the hospital during certain hours and procedure schedules. There was at least one spreadsheet containing drug orders. An email detailing a clinical trial follow-up was also available.

An available document titled "Sidechat Report" in a folder made by WashU IT recorded student-made Sidechat posts about IT and printing services. Sidechat is an anonymous social media platform exclusive to users with WashU emails. The document rated each post as positive, negative, or neutral in sentiment. The IT folder also contained records of major security breaches of WashU systems, including a 2024 CrowdStrike outage and the 2026 Canvas hack.

Several folders created by University Advancement — WashU's fundraising arm — contained planning documents for campaigns, including private donor information. Many profiles were labeled "confidential" at the top. They included personal cell numbers, home addresses, and birth dates of donors, as well as biographies detailing the donors' careers, families, philanthropic involvements, and previous interactions with University Advancement and senior University leadership.

Some of these documents also reported a "research capacity," or WashU's estimated range of what these individuals could donate based on their financial position. Alongside the donor profiles were travel agendas, including flight reservations and the hotel rooms of administrators and others attending fundraising events across the country.

There were also files created by individual students, faculty, and staff. These included many student group projects and presentations. Several spreadsheets for specific classes, which included students' names, their WashU ID numbers, and grades for assignments, were available. Student Life reviewed at least one completed W-9 tax form, including an employer identification number.

Szakonyi advised those worried about their personal information to wait for communication from University leadership on whether their information was exposed to unauthorized parties. She also advised practicing "good cyber hygiene."

"This could mean rotating passwords, utilizing a password manager, ensuring Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) is enabled on all work and personal accounts, and remaining vigilant against unexpected emails or phishing attempts," Szakonyi wrote.

WashU master's programs see a drop in enrollment, particularly among international students

LENI SALTOS
STAFF WRITER

In fall 2023, international students accounted for 46.3% of WashU's total graduate population. By the 10th week of fall 2026, that number had fallen to 38.2%, according to data from the Office of the University Registrar. This decline in international student enrollment is felt most strongly in master's degree programs.

International undergraduate enrollment is up to 11.2% from 10.4% in fall 2025 and 8% in fall 2022.

This enrollment data shows overall international student enrollment numbers across all schools, but does not distinguish between international and domestic enrollment within school-specific data.

Although enrollment in master's degree programs across nearly every WashU school has declined, PhD and professional doctoral paths have largely retained their enrollment numbers. Since doctoral candidates are largely supported through research grants and institutional stipends rather than student tuition, PhD enrollment tracks closely with research expansion and faculty headcount.

In the McKelvey School of Engineering, total master's degree enrollment dropped to 675 students in fall 2026 from 1,057 in fall 2022. Aaron Bobick, dean of the McKelvey School of Engineering, estimated this downturn represents a 20% to 25% reduction in master's tuition flowing into the school's operating budget.

Bobick noted how these trends were affecting engineering schools nationwide.

"The decline in the number of master's students is in many ways fewer applications, then slightly reduced yields, and then more melt," Bobick said. "Pretty much all engineering schools are seeing the same challenge."

The Olin Business School saw a similar decline, with master's enrollment falling to 1,382 in fall 2026 from 1,988 in fall 2022.

The total enrollment for the School of Law is 1,036 students compared to 1,042 in fall 2025 and 1,223 in fall 2022.

For the College of Arts & Sciences, master's enrollment decreased to 107 students in fall 2026 from 173 in fall 2024. Joseph Jez, vice dean of graduate studies in the College of Arts & Sciences, noted that while completed applications fell and deferrals rose due to visa hurdles, applicant caliber remained high.

"The quality of our international applicants did not drop," Jez said. "In fact, some of our PhD programs admitted their strongest cohorts to date."

The Brown School recorded 257 master's students in fall 2026, down from 460 in fall 2022 but up from 242 in fall 2025. Meanwhile, the new Bursky School of Public Health enrolled 84 master's students in fall 2026.

The Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts enrolled 187 in fall 2026, down from 210 in fall 2022.

The School of Medicine largely defied these trends with a 61% increase in overall enrollment to 1,909 students compared to 1,180 in fall 2025 and 1,315 in fall 2022.

Although enrollment numbers for master's degrees are down across the board, doctoral degrees are experiencing the opposite trend.

The College of Arts & Sciences enrolled 779 doctoral students in fall 2026, up from 702 in fall 2022. The McKelvey School of Engineering mirrored this with a rise to 604 students in fall 2026 compared to 509 in fall 2022. This increasing trend can be seen across the other WashU schools as well.

In light of these recent enrollment changes, Feng Sheng Hu, dean of Arts & Sciences, who came to the U.S. as an international student in 1987, emphasized that the stakes go far beyond university balance sheets.

"The challenges and uncertainties facing international students right now will have broad, negative effects that extend far beyond university enrollment and finances," Hu wrote in an email to Student Life. "If these trends continue, it will hurt the intellectual vitality of our academic community. A diversity of perspectives has always been a cornerstone of higher education and, without it, our research, teaching, and scholarship will suffer."

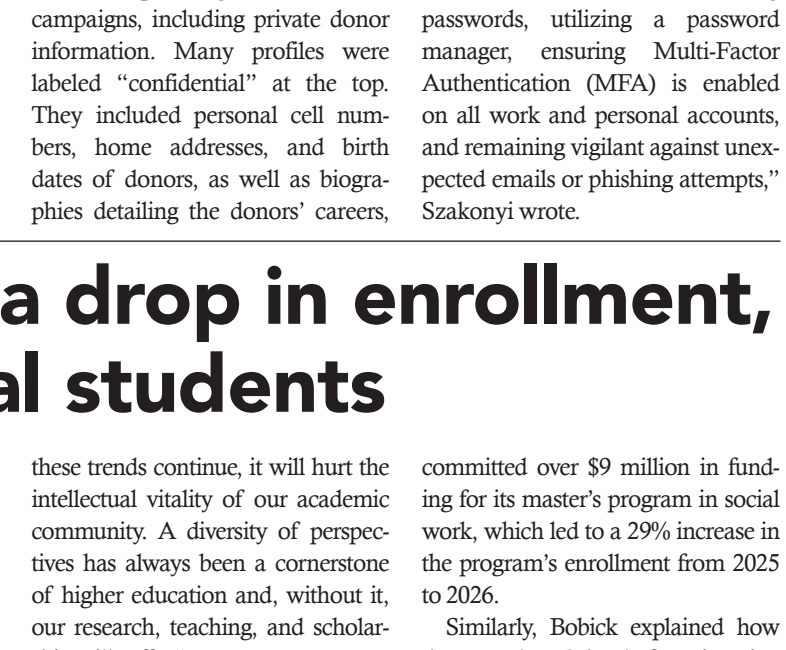
In order to combat declining enrollment, academic departments across WashU are exploring new methods to increase targeted global outreach.

WashU Global has launched several investments in an attempt to attract and support international students. These have included revitalizing the Office for International Students & Scholars and the Office for International Student Engagement.

The Brown School recently committed over $9 million in funding for its master's program in social work, which led to a 29% increase in the program's enrollment from 2025 to 2026.

Similarly, Bobick explained how the McKelvey School of Engineering increased their number of information sessions, waived application fees, sent faculty to universities across the globe, and strengthened their existing joint degree programs in an effort to increase master's enrollment overall.

"The days when we could just sort of hang out a shingle and people would just show up — those days are gone," Bobick said. "Now we have to be more intentional about attracting students."



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SCENE

Cocoa Classic 5K to be held in honor of late student Collin Maher

LILY RULNICK
WILLA MARKS
STAFF WRITERS

The Cocoa Classic 5K, hosted by Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPi) fraternity, will take place on Sunday, Nov. 8, to honor late brother Collin Maher, who passed away in May 2026.

Collin Maher died by suicide on May 15, 2026, just days after finishing his first year at WashU. This year, to honor Collin Maher's impact and the legacy of the race, the WashU chapter of AEPi has organized a Cocoa Classic 5K in St. Louis.

"Anybody who knows about him knows how many people were friends with him," said AEPi Philanthropy Chairman and sophomore Gil Gordon. "So it was important for us to do something bigger to acknowledge what has happened and how we're gonna move forward as a community to try and come together and deal with that loss. It means a lot to the frat to do something like this to honor one of our best friends."

At 16 years old, Collin Maher founded the Cocoa Classic in his hometown of Atlanta. As a Boy Scout about to earn the rank of Eagle Scout, he needed to complete a service project that would benefit his community.

"A lot of kids will do a bench or spread mulch," Collin Maher's dad, Chris Maher, said. "But Collin was always somebody who wanted [everything] to be big and make a big splash, and so he didn't want to do … things that he felt weren't as impactful as he wanted to make them."

Inspiration first struck Collin Maher when volunteering at a local food pantry. He noticed that children would show up wearing shoes that were either beat up or looked like they didn't fit well. And, Chris Maher said, that's when the idea clicked.

"With him being a runner, he was like, 'Well, I'll do a 5K,'" Chris Maher said. "And that's a huge undertaking, especially for someone that age."

Once Collin Maher settled on a 5K, he decided that the proceeds from the race would go toward purchasing shoes for a school whose students mainly came from low-income households.

"During his first meeting with the school, he was like, 'We don't know how many shoes we'll get, but we want to raise whatever we can,'" Chris Maher said. "And then the principal said, 'No, you need to buy shoes for every child in the school. We can't just give some kids shoes.' So that made it a really big undertaking."

Collin Maher successfully gifted shoes to all 629 students at that elementary school. He continued to organize races and partner with the non-profit Shoes That Fit, a national organization that provides children with new, properly fitting shoes, to donate shoes to local students in need for years to come. By 2025, he had provided shoes for 1,600 children across Atlanta.

Although the Cocoa Classic will continue to benefit Shoes That Fit, a cause that was incredibly important to Collin Maher, the proceeds from the upcoming 5K will primarily go toward mental health research funding and awareness.

The money raised will be used to further research in emotional dysregulation, which Collin Maher experienced, as well as train professionals in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT).

"Almost everybody with ADHD has something called emotional dysregulation, and those with emotional dysregulation feel things much greater than somebody without it," Chris Maher said. "DBT is the therapy that helps people with emotional dysregulation. So that's what we're doing with the money is getting the word out and training. We've already started in Atlanta providing money to train counselors in high schools."

Rather than using previously mapped courses, Chris Maher drew up a 5K map that runs throughout WashU's campus.

"It's going to start and end on Mudd Field," said President of AEPi and sophomore Nathaniel Shalam. "It's going to be all over campus and throughout the South 40 using a route set by Collin [Maher's] parents, which is supposedly a route he loved to run when he was doing track training."

All people are encouraged to participate, regardless of running ability. The event's aim is to be a fun event, reminiscent of Collin Maher's original 5K in Atlanta.

"We have a couple hundred runners signed up and we'd love to get more. You don't have to be a runner, you can be a walker," Chris Maher said. "There'll be a bunch of free cookies for runners and Poppi prebiotic soda. We're trying to make it fun. … There'll be plenty of hot chocolate for folks."

Chris Maher illuminated the importance of this race, hoping that it raises awareness for mental health and encourages people to look after one another. He pushed the importance of fostering community within and around WashU, building support between others.

"My goal is that people will walk away thinking about their friend's well-being or somebody who may not look happy. It's important to just reach out and have a conversation," Chris Maher said.

After the race, a memorial service will be held at 4 p.m. in Risa Commons, and all members of the community are invited to come together in honor of Collin Maher.

"The day will conclude with a really meaningful memorial service in Risa Commons, which will give students an opportunity to share their favorite memories with Collin Maher and hear from others about the moments they shared with him." Shalam said.

AEPi and Collin Maher's family hope that the Cocoa Classic can remind people to look out for each other and to show those struggling that they are not alone.

"For every one person, like Collin, there's so many out there that have thought about suicide," Chris Maher said. "We all need to come together. Everybody is going through stress, but knowing that you're not alone, I think, is a really big deal."



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS MAHER
Collin Maher founded the Cocoa Classic in his hometown of Atlanta in his first year of high school.

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Film and Media Studies debuts interactive archive

HANNAH LA PORTE
MANAGING SCENE EDITOR

On a Friday afternoon, faint sounds of clicking and the effervescent beeping of video games can be heard in the otherwise quiet hallways of Seigle Hall's fourth floor. Past a wall of movie posters and around a series of corridors, the sounds lead to the Film and Media Studies (FMS) Interactive Archive, a new space dedicated to the study and play of video games.

Featuring several televisions, computers, consoles, and games spanning multiple eras, the Interactive Archive functions as a gameplay lab for the program's expanding selection of game studies courses. The archive is expected to play a key role in the development of a video game studies minor, which the department hopes to propose over the next year. Currently open to students in FMS courses, the archive is organized into four stations: modern, retro, computer, and research, each offering a different way to explore the history of gaming. Instructors can bring students into the space or borrow equipment for classroom demonstrations. Students can also visit the archive outside class to play games for assignments and consult research materials, including hundreds of books and older magazines. In the spring, the archive will be opened for all students on a sign-up basis.

"Games are a creative and entertainment medium like any other, no greater, no lesser, no better, no worse," said director of Film and Media Studies Colin Burnett. "What we do here is cut between all those distinctions and study them for what they do, their effect. All of us play games in [some] form."

James Fleury, senior lecturer in Film and Media Studies, received a grant through the College of Arts & Sciences Teaching Innovation Award for the 2026-2027 academic year to establish the archive. While the majority of the archive was made possible through the grant, some FMS professors have also contributed items from their personal collections. One donation to the archive is an original Atari system from Ian Bogost, a professor of Film and Media studies at WashU. The archive pairs the vintage console with a newer iteration, allowing students to compare the two systems and experience older games on a traditional tube television next to their modern equivalent on a flat screen.

The initiative follows several years of faculty hiring in video game studies and design alongside growing student interest in courses covering topics such as retro game design, global game industries, and more.

"We've got the faculty here, we've got the student interest," Burnett said. "Let's put this all together and create a formal program of study."

The proposed minor is part of a broader effort to expand Film and Media Studies beyond its current emphasis on film. The department is planning a curriculum redesign that will introduce more courses in digital media studies, including the history of computing and interactive media.

Burnett also pointed to the Archive as a way to address a gap in the resources traditionally available to students. While students can access books and films through the University library, there are fewer opportunities to access games and the hardware needed to experience them.

"I've envisioned this space for a long time [as a place] where students could do gameplay as well as conduct research," Fleury said. "Video game history is fascinating because it's not that old of an art form. It's not that old of an industry."

Although experiments with video games date to the 1940s, the commercial gaming industry did not emerge until the early 1970s. Because many people involved in the industry's early development are still alive, Fleury sees opportunity for students to learn directly from those who have helped shape it.

"We wanted students here at WashU to have very rigorous study, hands-on study of all of our media, whether it's film, television, or gaming," Fleury said.

As video games increasingly intersect with movies, television, and other areas of entertainment, Fleury believes there is growing value in examining them as part of the larger media landscape.

"Video games are becoming such a larger part of American and global culture," Fleury said.

With its combination of playable consoles and historical resources, the Interactive Archive will give students a place to explore video game culture directly. The project positions video games as an evolving medium with histories, industries, and communities worthy of academic study today.

MARCELINE LEE | ILLUSTRATION EDITOR



LUKE PASSWATER

FORUM



LIAM MCMANAMAN

Why you should take more naps

MADDIE MORGAN
FORUM EDITOR

When I think of the Olin Library basement, two things come to mind: fluorescent lighting and one of the best napping spots on campus. Twice a week last semester, I had an awkward 45-minute break in the middle of the afternoon between classes, and I established a routine of taking a nap on those slightly gross basement couches during this period. I emerged refreshed and ready for my 4 p.m. lecture, and research has shown that intentional "power-napping" improves memory, attention, and mood. But I don't want to persuade you to nap because it will help you be more productive. While that post-siesta fresh feeling is an upside, the true art of a nap is in its ability to help you lead a wholly unoptimized yet fulfilling life in college.

Truth be told, my library naps last spring were necessary because I often did not get enough sleep the night before. I physically needed the rest, which may sound unideal, but I wouldn't have preferred it any other way. I stayed up late to finish readings for my classes, woke up early for tennis practice, then napped in the afternoon to make up for it. It was not the flawless sleep schedule of your favorite health influencer, but it worked well for me.

In recent years, our culture has become obsessed with health optimization. Exercise doesn't count unless it's part of one's curated fitness plan, millions of people track their rest through metrics like sleep scores, and it's even normalized to calculate the macronutrients, or "macros," in one's food. We seem to want to fine-tune our bodies, and while there is, of course, nothing wrong with being intentional about one's health and well-being, this pursuit of optimality may prevent us from living to the fullest in the present.

This obsession with optimizing health, notably based on metrics not lived experiences, stems from the belief that everything we do must be "productive" in some way. We try to exercise regularly to lose weight, gain muscle, or increase life span, but what happened to working out just because it makes us feel good? We're losing the ability to enjoy for the sake of enjoyment, and we should challenge why we feel the need to optimize our days for productivity. We must question who we are producing for (who is profiting from products that gamify our health?) and whether that productivity is actually promoting our best, most compassionate selves.

Many people look back on their college years as the best days of their lives. I think this is because if we're lucky, while we're young, we have the privilege to live unoptimized lives. You've probably heard the idea that college isn't just about what happens in the classroom but everything else: Now is the time to try slam poetry even if you're going into finance, stay up late talking with your friends even if you have an 8:30 a.m. class the next day, or start a birding club despite how it won't necessarily be the most "productive" use of your time.

Enter the nap. In my experience at WashU thus far, I have found that it is nearly impossible to get the optimal eight hours of sleep each night while balancing academics, extracurricular opportunities, and a fulfilling social life. I know, however, that the version of me that prioritizes sleep over the other exciting moments of the college experience is not the happiest. Napping covers for this tradeoff.

While we're here, let's embrace the siesta. Our campus has plenty of good nap spots if you look closely. Napping may not be optimal, but to me, it's the right choice.

"We're losing the ability to enjoy for the sake of enjoyment, and we should challenge why we feel the need to optimize our days for productivity."



DION HINES | MANAGING FORUM EDITOR

CAPTION CONTEST

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DALIA GARDOS | CONTRIBUTING ILLUSTRATOR

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"Inflation is sucking me dry!"

- Molly Levitt,
Current WashU Student

Second Place:

I think he is at the wrong Blood Bank.

- Susan Warner,
Mom of WashU Law 2L

Third Place:

8 dollars, 9 dollars, 10 dollars...ah-ah-ah!

- Matthew Schooley,
WashU faculty/staff

Caption this!
Enter this week's contest



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If you're actually against AI-generated art, go see 'Wildwood'

AVA AYAD
STAFF WRITER

From scriptwriting and closed captions to entire trends like the infamous "Fruit Love Island" series on TikTok, it is becoming more and more rare to find social media accounts whose content is created entirely by humans rather than artificial intelligence.

More than any other artistic medium, animation has become the target of online "AI slop," or low-quality generative AI videos that only exist through stealing and mishmashing different parts of human art without any credit given. In a random stream of short-form content sampled by the YouTuber Sambucha, around 25% of the videos that circulate on TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts are fully generated with AI. For an industry that already struggles to gain recognition beyond children's entertainment or the backdrop of an adult cartoon, the persistence of human art largely rests on the financial and critical success of animated films.

Although they have the potential to reach audiences of all ages, releases from independent studios that have less clout heavily depend on social media exposure and elaborate marketing campaigns to generate enough cultural buzz to be successful. Which is why, even though the film took 16 years to produce and had an estimated $100 million budget, "Wildwood" grossed less than $13 million in its domestic opening weekend. Similar to other stop-motion films, this underperformance at the box office has limited the cultural influence of "Wildwood" to viewers who are already outspoken and passionate about the importance of human-made art. Luckily, Laika has been able to stay afloat financially in the years of production between its releases, but only because its CEO, Travis Knight, is the son of a co-founder of the Nike shoe company.

In addition to the years that were put into making the film, it took over 1,000 artists to create "Wildwood." Every on-screen element is crafted by hand and shot frame-by-frame to create the illusion of movement. But beyond their extreme commitment and labor, Laika's projects have almost always experienced poor box office performance due to their aforementioned lack of mainstream attention. Even "Coraline," the studio's highest grossing and most well-known film, is now merely regarded as Laika's "one-hit wonder."

While the film has yet to find financial success, "Wildwood" has received overwhelming critical acclaim, with a current 99% rating on Rotten Tomatoes across over 150 reviews. Having seen the film on opening weekend, I cannot overstate how transformative of a movie-going experience it is on the big screen. Knowing that thousands of hands crafted and perfected every visual detail you can see, from intricate vines of ivy to miniature storefronts throughout Portland, enhances the liveliness of the film's world and story. Ironically, the fantastical elements of "Wildwood" felt the "realest" to me because I was fully immersed in its magical, dangerous, and mystifying setting out of sheer amazement at the artistry on display.

Naturally, upon seeing all the empty seats in the theater, it boggled my brain that a film as breathtaking as "Wildwood" was not something everyone was dying to watch. In the greater context of 2026, when AI is replacing human artists left and right, I refuse to imagine a world in which stop-motion, let alone human-made animation, ceases to exist. I never want to think to myself "they won't make movies like this again" when there will always be innovative, hard-working people who would spend their whole lives creating art for others if they could make a sustainable living for themselves.

But we as audience members and consumers of art have to provide them that opportunity by supporting their work. The more often films like "Wildwood" are taken for granted, the more likely it is that we could lose them for good. If these projects became financially successful, smaller studios like Laika could produce more films with even better stories, characters, and worlds for generations to come. High box office numbers could prove to executives in the entertainment industry that well-crafted, human art is still profitable and still matters. So, if you want your movie ticket to really count, I highly recommend using it to give thanks to the thousands of artists who make movie magic like "Wildwood" happen.



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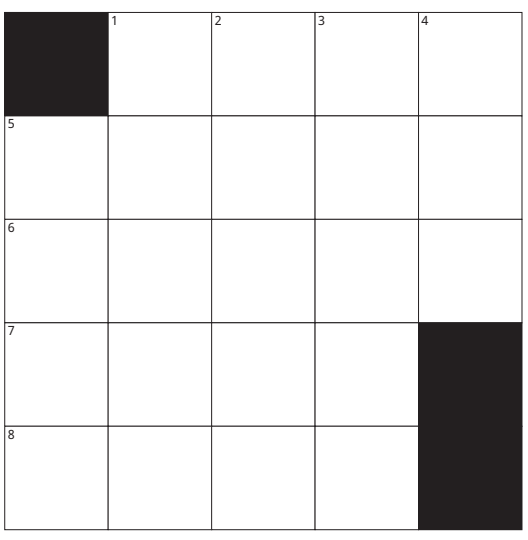
Twenty small ducks on twenty small trucks with twenty bucks doing stand back tucks. **- *Aliana Mediratta, WashU Alum***

Purple Harvest

Vinisha Tripathi

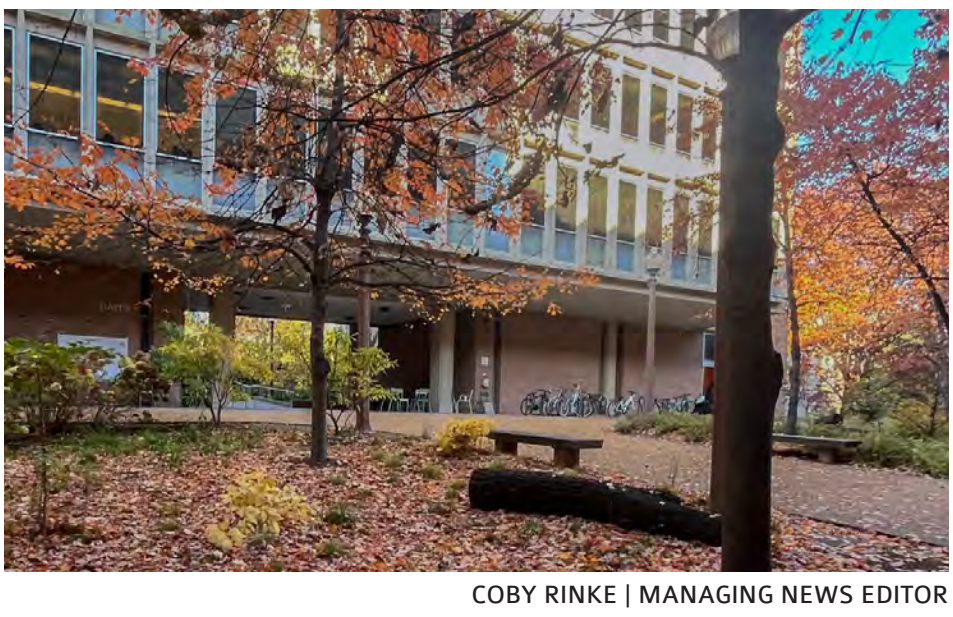
ACROSS
1 Clue's Professor ___
5 Wine ingredient
6 Mature, as a fruit
7 Sign of the future
8 Fuse

DOWN
1 Logan Paul's drink brand
2 Jacket flap
3 Flip over
4 "Of Mice and ___"
5 Get taller



Where in WashU?

Can you recognize where this building is on campus?



COBY RINKE | MANAGING NEWS EDITOR

Last week's answer: McDonnell Hall Arch

Hairdo Inspo

Vinisha Tripathi

ACROSS
1 Give up
5 Unit of light
6 Make challah, say
7 Cut in a dress
8 Foxy

DOWN
1 Bouncy tresses
2 Inbox filler
3 God or goddess
4 "The ___"
5 Scale units: Abbr.

	1 C	2 E	3 D	4 E
5 L	U	M	E	N
6 B	R	A	I	D
7 S	L	I	T	
	8 S	L	Y	

SPORTS

No. 7 women's basketball starts season with all-senior starting lineup

SHREY KANJI
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Women's basketball Head Coach Lisa Stone walked into the Field House on an off day this week and heard basketballs bouncing. Six of her players were already shooting at 7 a.m.

"They're a joy to coach. It's the best part of my day to come to practice," Stone said.

The willingness to put in extra work reflects the team's motto: "Go Beyond." On the court, it means digging deeper in a game's toughest moments. Off the court, it means bringing that same commitment to academics, relationships, and preparing for life after college.

This season, the Bears hope to go beyond their deepest postseason finish in a decade. After reaching the Sweet 16 in the NCAA D-III tournament during the 2025-26 season, WashU returns most of its starting lineup with hopes of pushing further. They enter the season as the No. 7 team in the country.

Senior center Lexy Harris remains the focal point. The 6-foot-3 Second-Team All-American averaged 18.3 points and 9.1 rebounds while shooting 60.1% from the field last season.

Harris returns alongside a proven backcourt led by all-UAA conference senior point guard Sidney Rogers, who averaged 12.5 points and led the team with 3.5 assists last season. Senior guard Alyssa Hughes added 10.8 points per game on 41% shooting from the 3-point line. Senior guard Catherine Goodwin is also expected to start, with senior forward Amelia Rosin or senior guard Sydney Starks filling the final spot depending on the matchup. Either combination gives the Bears an all-senior starting lineup that brings a level of experience and leadership that few other teams can match.

Two graduate transfers help reinforce the rotation. Graduate student guard Annika Pluemer started all 63 games over her final two seasons at Division II Maryville University. Last season, she led her team with 59 steals and helped Maryville reach the D-II NCAA tournament. Graduate student forward Diana Burgher arrives after four seasons at DePauw University, where she helped them win three consecutive North Coast Athletic Conference titles.

Junior forward Emilee Travnicek and junior guard Hope Drake are also both expected to see more minutes.

"I've really liked the improvement of Emilee Travnicek," Stone said. "I also think Hope Drake … has stood out as more than a shooter. Her defense has really improved."

Six first-years add further competition for playing time: first-year guards Marycait Mackie, Arianna Benjamin, and Zoey Mehmert, and first-year forwards Anna Sachire, Tess Krieger, and Maddie Chabot. Stone said some are already pushing for minutes.

These additions and returners give Stone an incredibly deep rotation. The depth offers Stone more flexibility to build on a defense that held opponents to 57.7 points per game and a 35% shooting percentage last season. She is considering implementing a full-court press to further increase defensive pressure and substituting five players at a time to sustain it.

The deeper rotation could also ease the scoring burden on Harris, Rodgers, and Hughes, who, on average, combined for about 40 of WashU's 70 points per game last season.

"I think we're more multidimensional offensively," Stone said. "We've added some new layers to our offense, and it's going to be difficult to guard once we find rhythm and the right combinations."

WashU's deeper rotation will be tested against a demanding schedule. The D3 Stat Lab's preseason model rates the Bears' slate as the ninth-toughest among the 411 published schedules it evaluated, with UAA opponents accounting for much of that difficulty.

The Bears open conference play at home against University of Chicago (UChicago) on Jan. 9. WashU is expected to be the second-best team in the UAA behind No. 2 NYU. NYU reached a D-III record-breaking 91-game winning streak last season (previously held by WashU with 81) before a loss in the Final Four. Additionally, they have won five consecutive UAA championships with national championship victories in 2024 and 2025.

The Bears' closing stretch could prove especially consequential. After four consecutive home games in February, WashU will finish with trips to Brandeis University, NYU, and UChicago. For a veteran team hoping to carry momentum into March, that final road swing will test both its depth and its ability to win away from the Field House.

The Bears enter the season with hopes of a deep playoff run, but Stone is focused on the daily work needed to meet those expectations.

"We focus very much on culture, and stacking days, and being the best we can each day," Stone said. "If we focus on the process and getting better every day, and having a competitive edge about us and a unity about us, it can take us a long way this year."

For the seniors, that work carries added urgency. After helping WashU reach the Sweet 16 last season, they have one final chance to take the program further.

"I think there's a spark this year that none of the previous years have had," Harris said. "I think we are going to surprise some people."

WashU's women's basketball opens its season at 5 p.m. against Central College in the



Senior forward Lexy Harris drives to the basket for a layup.

ANNA CALVO | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

After a Sweet 16 exit last spring, No. 10 men's basketball enters 2026-2027 season with energy

ASHER DARLING
STAFF WRITER

WashU men's basketball has waited eight months to get back on the floor after a crushing 2-point loss in the Sweet 16 that ended its season. On Friday, that wait will finally be over.

The preseason No. 10 Bears tip off against Bethany Lutheran College on Friday, Nov. 6 at the 42nd annual Lopata Classic, hosted by WashU.

Senior guard Ryan Cohen said the 65-63 loss to the University of St. Thomas (Texas) in the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Division III tournament still stings.

"We knew that we were the better team, and we should have won that game," Cohen said. "Losing last year, that one hurt probably worse than any loss I've had, knowing that our seniors were leaving and that we had to wait all the way until now to start it all over."

The Bears, who went 20-8 last year, lost two of their stars from last year's squad. Forward Connor May led the team with 17.3 points per game as a sophomore and transferred to Yale University. WashU also lost guard Yogi Oliff, a senior who led the team in assists and was named the University Athletic Association (UAA) Defensive Player of the Year.

Cohen started in every game last year and averaged 10.8 points while shooting 41.5% from three. He pointed to sophomore guard Josh Kim as someone who will step into a larger role this season with Oliff gone. As a first-year, Kim played in all 28 games and made seven starts, averaging 6.5 points and 2.4 rebounds a game.

"He's helping the young guys, he's holding people accountable when they don't do things great, and I think that's a strength of our team," Cohen said.

Senior guard Lucas Vogel, who played limited minutes last year, has had a strong fall camp and has been shooting the ball well, according to Cohen.

"We have something called the Vogel voice," Cohen said. "That's just because he's always talking and screaming, and he's got so much juice and enthusiasm always, but he is just a ruthless competitor, and at whatever cost, he wants to win."

The Bears also brought in seven newcomers, including two transfers and five first-years. Head Coach Pat Juckem said the new players have brought energy that has paired well with the team's returners. Junior guard Rex Lamb transferred from D-III St. Olaf College, where he averaged 13.9 points on 44.3% shooting from 3-point range as a sophomore. WashU also added graduate transfer guard Coleson Messer from Vanderbilt University, which went 27-9 last year, earning a No. 4 seed in the NCAA tournament.

Cohen said the team is focused on improved rebounding, physical defense, and a faster pace on offense this season. He said the team's identity is also shaped off the floor.

"Outside of basketball, we say the word 'guice' [juice] a lot, and we spell it G-U-I-C-E because our 'guice' is different, and we like to take pride in being the 'guiceiest' team in the country," Cohen said. "Our bench mob is going to be crazier than any other bench mob for 25 games this year and then playoffs."

Cohen and Juckem both stressed the importance of team bonding. Cohen said that the team hangs out off the court a lot and had dinner with the coaches a couple of weeks ago.

"This team is like no team that I've ever been on before," Cohen said. "Everybody's best friends with everybody, and I think that's so cool."

The Lopata Classic will be an early test for the Bears. All four teams in the bracket made last year's NCAA tournament, and a win over Bethany Lutheran could set WashU up with an early ranked matchup against No. 5 Gustavus Adolphus College.

Cohen is most looking forward to facing No. 6 Illinois Wesleyan University, which the Bears will play in Illinois on Dec. 18.

"That's a team that in three years I haven't beaten yet, and that's our rival," Cohen said. "So there's tough feelings towards them, but that one's circled."

The Bears finished third in the UAA last season and will be tested in conference play again. WashU will face UAA opponents No. 4 Emory University, No. 23 New York University, and No. 24 University of Chicago (UChicago) twice each. The team opens UAA play at home on Jan. 9, 2027 against UChicago.

After last season's heartbreaking Sweet 16 loss, the Bears know what they're chasing.

"We think about the end goal a lot," Cohen said. "We don't talk about it a lot, but we know we're thinking about it."



Junior forward Anthony Przybilla returns to the court this coming season.

ELLA GIERE | STUDENT LIFE

Cross country races for victory at UAA championships

BEE AUSTIN
SPORTS EDITOR

While most people spent Halloween running from ghosts, goblins, and ghouls, WashU's cross country teams ran for an entirely different reason: to become the University Athletic Association (UAA) champions. On Saturday, Oct. 31, the No. 8 women's and No. 7 men's cross country teams traveled north to the University of Chicago, where they placed third and fourth, respectively, in the UAA championships.

While neither team left with a conference title, the Bears had plenty to celebrate individually. Junior Lucinda Laughlin finished as runner-up in the women's 6K, while sophomore Max Sudrzynski clinched the men's individual championship in the 8K.

No. 8 women's cross country

The women's cross country team placed third overall with 97 points. No. 1 New York University (NYU) claimed their second consecutive UAA title with 28 points, followed by No. 6 University of Chicago with 50 points. WashU held off No. 11 Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), which finished fourth with 106 points — just 9 points behind WashU.

Laughlin was the first Bear to cross the finish line, placing second overall with a time of 20:41.6 and earning First Team All-UAA honors for the second time.

"I kept thinking I'm not doing this for myself. I'm doing this for the entire team," Laughlin said. "Remembering that races are about joy and something that we get to be grateful for. We all get to go out there on that line and race together, and I think that's really special."

For Laughlin, that perspective helped shift the focus away from the pressure of competition and toward the experience of racing.

"I really just wanted to stay with the people that I was running next to, enjoying every second and taking it all in," Laughlin said. "It wasn't easy, but it was really, really fun"

First-year Lucy Luetkemeyer was the second Bear to cross the finish line, securing 14th place with a time of 21:42.8 and earning the final spot on the All-UAA Second Team. Senior Avery Nason (22:02.4) and junior Sally Carrington (22:02.7) were the Bears' third and fourth scorers, finishing within 0.3 seconds of each other.

"Running with people [during the race] on the team is super helpful," Laughlin said. "You build off each other's energy. You hype each other up, and you just know that you have someone right next to you."

This support translates into a team-wide strategy: Runners work together to gain ground throughout the race.

"It's ... team culture to really run with each other, because you're not competing against each other, but you're actually competing with each other," Laughlin said. "The goal is to keep moving up together and to keep passing people as a unit."

Junior Maddy Lee clinched the fifth spot in WashU's scoring five, finishing 30th with a time of 22:10.2.

The team's third-place finish solidifies WashU's position among the country's top programs; however, a 69-point gap still separates the Bears' and the NYU Violets' performances.

"[In the next few weeks], we will keep building our fitness, having great workouts, hanging out together, having movie nights and dinners and breakfasts and lunches, and really forming a great bond between all of us," Laughlin said. "Having a group of people that really love each other is a huge factor in winning or doing really well at a national championship meet."

No. 7 men's cross country

The men's team finished fourth out of eight teams with 76 points, falling behind two lower-ranked teams: No. 12 CMU and No. 18 University of Chicago, who finished second with 61 points and third with 69 points, respectively.

"It really came down to just the right day," Sudrzynski said. "If we had just one more guy in our top five hit that top 15 position, we would have won the meet."

The course itself also presented challenges, as most of the underclassmen Bears had never run on UChicago's home turf.

"The most surprising thing was a really sharp U-turn in the middle of the course," Sudrzynski said. "A lot of guys were getting tripped up there, with a lot of pushing and shoving. It was super packed, especially at the beginning of the race."

Despite the unfamiliar terrain, Sudrzynski delivered a standout performance, earning the title of UAA champion. After finishing 10th in 25:08 when WashU attended the conference meet last season, Sudrzynski climbed to the top of the podium this year, crossing the finish line in 24:17.7.

"Last year was definitely new territory for me, especially coming from running the 5K in high school. It was a big jump in terms of races, so it was just kind of about getting adjusted to that longer [8K] distance," Sudrzynski said. "This year, I came a lot more prepared. … It was really just the process, trusting it and being patient."

The next three Bears to cross the finish line all placed in the top 20. First-year Toby Wong was the second scorer, placing 12th with a time of 24:44.9 and earning Second Team All-UAA recognition. Junior Ben Lorenz placed 15th, while sophomore Charlie Houck was 20th. Junior Sean Green rounded out WashU's scoring with a 28th-place finish. With less than a minute separating first from 28th, the tightly packed results underlined the competitiveness of the UAA field, where every second mattered.

"We're definitely ready to be a high-placing national team, and we're ready to just go from this week onto the next," Sudrzynski said. "We're prepared for whatever comes at us. We're definitely going to be a different team in three weeks."

The men's and women's teams will return home for the WashU Open on Thursday, Nov. 5, at 7 p.m. before turning their attention to the NCAA Midwest Regional Championships on Nov. 14 and the NCAA Division III Championships on Nov. 21.

No. 7 football notches historic 8-0 record with win against Denison

ROMAN PETERSON
BEN OLLENDORFF
SENIOR STAFF WRITER
SPORTS EDITOR

Over its 139-year history, WashU football has seen generations of players take the field, winning 16 conference championships and appearing in three Division III NCAA tournaments, but before Saturday afternoon, the Bears had never seen an 8-0 record. With a decisive 37-14 win over Denison University, the No. 8 WashU football team etched its name in the history books, as it secured the best start and longest single-season win streak in program history.

The Bears' success has also come during a significant transition for the program. After eight seasons in the College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin, WashU joined the North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAC) ahead of the 2026 season. Despite the unfamiliar territory of facing new opponents, the Bears have dominated in their new conference and won each of their first seven NCAC matchups. Now, the team is on pace to find themselves in the D-III NCAA tournament for the first time since 2016.

When preparing for their final season, the seniors wanted to leave a legacy, but few could've predicted how well it has gone.

"I and a lot of the other seniors believe that we have a really good and talented team, so we're trying to do something that hasn't been done before," senior quarterback Levi Moore said. "It's been pretty successful so far, but we're still looking to continue that success [later] this season."

On Halloween, students and families packed Francis Field for the game during WashU's Parent & Family Weekend. The Bears started the game hot offensively and defensively, scoring on each of their first two drives off of Denison turnovers. Only one minute into the game, sophomore safety Brad Shearer blocked a punt deep in Denison territory. Making use of the short field, Moore capped off the drive with a three-yard rushing touchdown.

On Denison's next drive, the Big Red made their way well into the Bears' territory before junior safety Zander Ealy forced a critical fumble, preventing Denison from scoring and giving the ball back to the WashU offense at their own 19-yard line. Following a 63-yard reception by sophomore wide receiver Avery Lazard, Moore once again carried the ball across the goal line for his second rushing touchdown of the day. By the end of the first quarter, the Bears held a 14-0 lead.

Denison got on the board with six seconds left in the first half to make it a 14-7 game. But on the Bears' first drive of the third quarter, they took the momentum back in an electrifying fashion, as Moore completed a 47-yard touchdown pass to senior wide receiver Makael Carter to widen their lead to 21-7.

"It's amazing to have someone as talented as [Carter]," Moore said. "He's the most athletic player on the team, and he's also extremely smart on the field. The way he tries to get himself open makes my job a lot easier because all I have to do is just get him the ball."

The Bears scored two more touchdowns in the third quarter, including another rushing touchdown from Moore and a 25-yard rushing touchdown from sophomore running back Karsten Cornell.

At the start of the fourth quarter, WashU was up 34-14. Junior kicker Matias Adrogue put on the finishing touches as he nailed a 24-yard field goal, and the Bears' defense held on to claim a 37-14 victory.

Moore shined, delivering 303 total yards and four touchdowns without any turnovers. This increased his season total to 27 combined rushing and passing touchdowns with 1,722 total yards. Carter eclipsed 500 receiving yards this season after adding a team-high 123 yards against Denison.

Despite the Bears' historic season, there is still more work to be done. WashU has two more games on their regular season schedule before they even start to think about the postseason NCAA tournament.

"We're definitely taking it one game at a time," Moore said. "Our coaches really emphasize going 1-0 every week, so we haven't focused too much on what will happen after the season. We're mainly focusing on our next opponent, preparing for them, and pouring ourselves into that week and that game."

The Bears will look to keep their foot on the gas and continue their undefeated season on Saturday, Nov. 7, at 1 p.m., when they take on Ohio Wesleyan University team on the road.



ALYSSA WANG | CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER









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