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CONNECTING THE DOTS OF GRADUATION RATES OF BLACK STUDENTS AT YSU

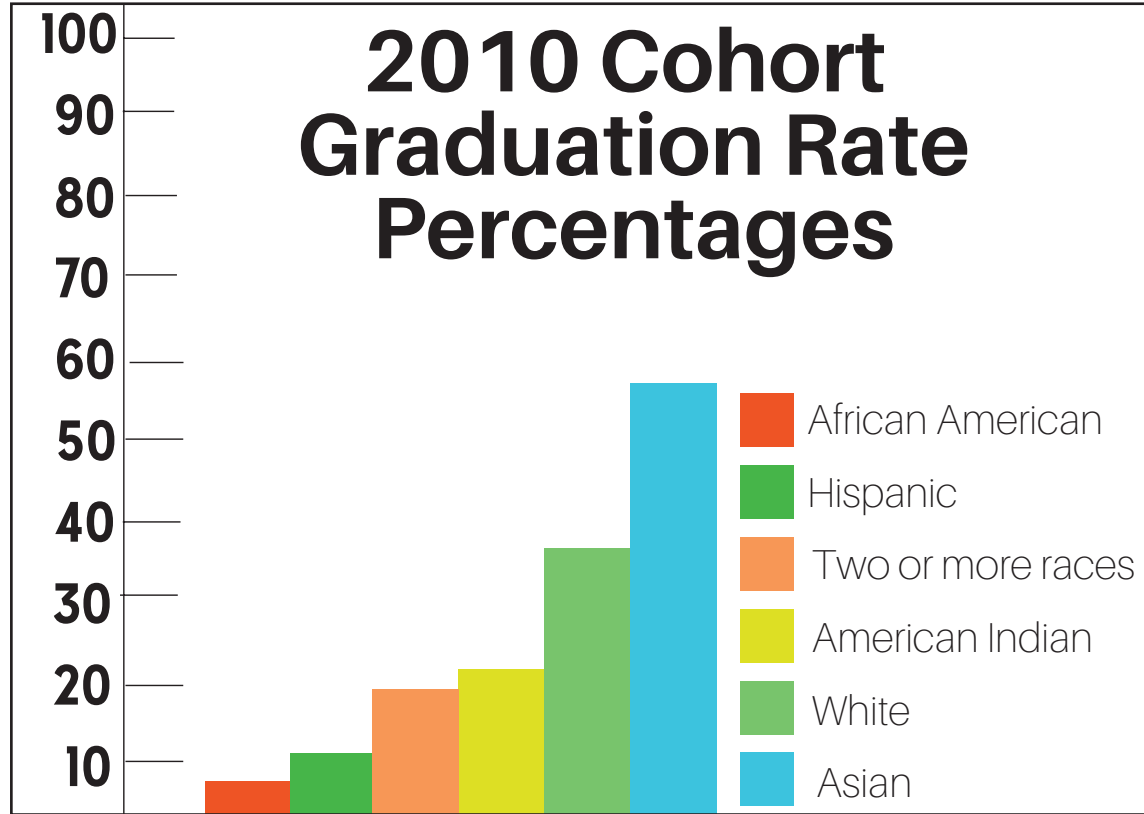


Photo by LAURA MCDONOUGH/THE JAMBAR

MORGAN PETRONELLI

African-Americans deal with an immense amount of issues in today's society, but two issues aren't easily apparent to the naked eye: graduation and retention rate.

It's no secret that Youngstown State University struggles to retain, as well as graduate black students, but the impact of the situation can't be put into perspective without diving into the numbers.

Currently, YSU has 11,267 undergraduate students, 13 percent of whom are African-American. Meanwhile, 75.5 percent of the undergraduate population is white.

The first-year retention rate for first-time undergraduate students comes in at 69 percent.

The total four-year graduation rate for YSU students within four years is 10.2 percent, while the five-year rate is 26.3 percent and the six-year rate is 33.5 percent.

Black students at YSU have the lowest graduation rate when compared to other

race's graduation rates at the university such as white, Asian, American Indian, Hispanic and Pacific Islander.

Last semester, YSU graduated the second-largest number of students since '82-'83 with a total of 2,387 students. But the latest data shows that 2010 six-year cohort graduation rate for black students is at 9 percent and the four-year rate was at 2.1 percent.

Stacking the Odds

As of 2016, Youngstown had an estimated population of 64,312, with 47 percent being white and 45.2 percent being black. Youngstown has one of the largest black populations in Mahoning county.

In retrospect, if the city is nearly 50 percent black, then why does the number of minority students not coincide with this demographic?

Martin Abraham, provost and vice president of academic affairs at YSU, said that multiple factors such as lack of preparation, resources and implicit bias toward African-Americans translate to the low graduation rates of black students.

Gary Swegan, associate vice president

of enrollment planning and management at YSU, echoed Abraham's statement.

"The bottom line is that there's a lot of things stacked up against students in Youngstown and a lot of students aren't going to go to college," said Swegan.

The major problem is that local Youngstown area high schools are not producing college-ready students.

An economic factor plays an integral role in inhibiting college-readiness of local students. According to the American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, Youngstown ranks in as one of the country's poorest cities with a 38.3 percent poverty rate and a median household income of \$24,133

From the most recent Ohio Department of Education report cards in 2015-2016, the Youngstown City School District had a 75.5 percent graduation rate within four years. East High School, one of the Youngstown city schools, racked in a 69 percent four-year graduation rate.

The dropout number is also especially high with 87 students dropping out of Youngstown City Schools from 2014-

2015. Other key factors such as high disciplinary actions, poor ACT scores and low GPAs also play a part.

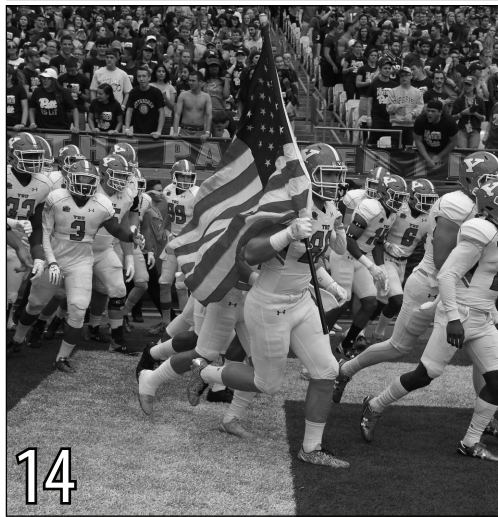
According to Swegan, since the switch from open to selective admission at YSU, the average GPA of black students jumped from 2.55 to 16.6 and the average ACT score rose from 16.6 to 18.68.

"We're getting better students in the front door, but that isn't showing itself yet," Swegan said.

Swegan went on to explain that this was due to the graduate rates of African-American students typically falling under the six-year graduation rate.

Although YSU has brought in fewer African-American students from last year to this year (from 311 to 286 students), there has been a slight increase over the past few years since the university switched to selective admission, which Swegan said has resulted in more diverse students.

FEATURES



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

NEWS

- 3 | CITY OF YOU
- 4 | TUITION PROGRAM/LGBTQ+
- 5 | HEROIC COACH BATTLE WITH CANCER

A&E ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

- 6 | HALLOWEEN PARTY
- 7 | CAMPFIRE STORIES
- 8 | MUSIC IN STONEFRUIT
- 9 | YSU HACKERS

OPINION

- 12 | EDITORIAL/JAKES PICKS
- 13 | LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SPORTS

- 14 | YSU FOOTBALL
- 15 | PRESSBOX PERSPECTIVE/YSU GOLF
- 16 | YSU BASKETBALL

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YSU FACULTY MEMBER RECEIVES RECOGNITION FOR CITYWIDE CAMPAIGN

DAVID FORD

Youngstown State University graphic and interactive design professor R.J. Thompson received an award for his work on the City of You campaign.

The Ohio Economic Development Association selected the City of You as its winner for medium-sized communities. For Thompson, the recognition and award is critical to supporting and growing efforts for the City of You platform to succeed in the short term and long term.

For several years, Thompson said Youngstown lacked a branding or marketing communications platform. He said the city, as well as YSU, hired his graphic design program Youngstown Design Works to produce a publication that collected data from

a two-year \$250,000 federal grant.

He drew inspiration for storytelling while his wife was being tested during her pregnancy two years ago, Thompson said.

“I was feeling particularly sentimental, in the sense that I was now going to be a new father and that my daughter’s life was totally supported by my wife,” he said. “I drew parallels between that and how the people of Youngstown give the city its life and its will to progress forward.”

Thompson said he no longer refers to City of You as a campaign, but more of a platform since there is no end planned for the work.

“The City of You rebranding and communications platform is built to represent the progress currently occurring in Youngstown,” Thompson said. “It also represents the progress

that will continue into the future by best representing the stories of the people who live, work, play and learn in Youngstown and how they’ve contributed to the city’s renaissance in their own special way.”

A few years back, when the platform was introduced, Thompson didn’t believe the response and the support from the city would be as great as it has been.

“My initial expectations were that maybe they would formally adopt the artwork that I have created for them,” Thompson said. “Ever since that point, though, all of the opportunities provided to me have been incredible, surprising and always taken with total enthusiasm and responsibility.”

Michael McGiffin, the downtown events and citywide special projects director, said the plat-

form encourages the residents of Youngstown to be the best version of themselves.

“The campaign acts as a little bit of a cheerleader for the people who reside in Youngstown,” McGiffin said. “It’s an uplifting campaign that allows the people to let their voices be heard and their stories to be told.”

Jim Freeze, the executive director for Youngstown Area Goodwill Industries, said the City of You has undoubtedly influenced change for the community.

“I love Youngstown. It’s definitely an exciting time for the city since a ton of interesting things are happening now that weren’t happening years ago,” Freeze said. “We [Goodwill] have been operating in the city for 125 years, so we want to be a part of the city creating a positive impact.”

Starting this week, Freeze said Goodwill is selling City of You shirts to spread the message around town.

According to Thompson, the platform has the physical ability to plan and promote special events throughout the city, but it is mentality that leads to great things happening in Youngstown.

He said the work has been a blessing and the people of Youngstown make it all the more worthwhile.

“I consider this work an honor to do,” Thompson said. “I’ve made many friendships throughout this work, and I feel a level of connection with Youngstown and its citizens that inspires me to push the platform forward and ensure its continued growth and success.”



Photo courtesy of RJ THOMPSON

YSU WORKS TOWARD TUITION GUARANTEE PROGRAM TO INCREASE REVENUE

ELIZABETH LEHMAN

Youngstown State University is currently discussing implementation of a tuition guarantee program at the university.

Neal McNally, vice president for finance and business operations, said YSU last raised undergraduate tuition in fall of 2014 by 2.38 percent, which was permitted by state law at that time.

"Since then, YSU has frozen undergraduate tuition as required by current state law," McNally said.

In 2013, Ohio Revised Code 3345.48 went into effect, which said a university may establish an undergraduate tuition guarantee program.

The code's language establishes circumstances and procedures for a university to increase tuition.

According to the policy, "If, beginning with the academic year that starts four years after Sept. 29, 2013, the board of trustees determines that the general and instructional fees charged under the tuition guarantee have fallen significantly lower than those of other state universities, the board of trustees may submit a request to increase the amount charged to a cohort by a specified percentage to the chancellor, who shall approve or disapprove such a request."

McNally said YSU is looking to implement such a program.

"For an incoming cohort of students, you can increase their tuition by six percent as long as that tuition remains frozen for four years or 12 consecutive semesters. So YSU is considering this sort of tuition guarantee program," McNally said.

Dylan Anders is the Student Government Association's vice president for finance. He said the increase would be six percent the first year. After that, any increases made would follow the inflation rate, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"So, it would only be six percent in the first year and then after, every new cohort would just be increased by the inflation rate rather than the six percent every year," Anders said.

According to the BLS, in September of 2017, the yearly inflation rate was at 2.2 percent.

McNally said Ohio's prevention from raising tuition limited the university's ability to raise revenue to support investments in campus and faculty enhancements. He said the tuition guarantee would help address that problem.

"We're sort of limited in our ability to raise revenue because of the tuition cap," McNally said. "At the same time, state funding has been very flat, so the only foreseeable way we could increase revenue

through a price increase is if we implement [the program]."

Anders said the tuition guarantee would benefit the university.

"This ... allows the university to continue moving forward, and then the increase in tuition ... provides more programming and more budget opportunities for enhancements to campus," Anders said.

Anders said he hopes increasing tuition would allow the university to remove some fees from students' bills, such as college, career service and course material fees.

"Since we're not able to increase tuition, we have to cover our costs, and so the fees that are on the bill now allow us to do that," Anders said. "And the hope is that through tuition guarantee, the increase in tuition will allow us to kind of absorb some of those fees so that the students don't see them as separate bill line items, but rather would see them as price of attendance."

YSU has been looking at Ohio University and Miami University, which have implemented tuition guarantees and the feedback has been good, McNally said.

"Some of the feedback we have gotten, particularly [from] Ohio University, was that when they collapsed some of those miscellaneous fees into just a general tuition amount, students and families really liked it because it was just a simpler tuition bill to read and not to mention that the bill doesn't change for four years," McNally said.

The steering committee is currently working on recommendations for the guarantee, he said. Next, the proposed plan will go before the chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education for feedback.

"Once we get some feedback from Columbus, we would take it to our board of trustees as early as December, and once our board approves it, we would send our final plan to the chancellor to have him formally approve it," McNally said.

McNally said even though the plan is to not implement the guarantee until fall 2018, the objective is to get everything in place sooner to ensure everything goes smoothly.

Anders said as a finance student, he feels the guarantee idea is great.

"I think maybe a student who's not understanding of how the state university runs might see it as just more money but really what more money is doing is giving our students and the university more opportunity to expand, to provide programming," Anders said. "More money just allows us to do more for our students and so I think it's a great way."

LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY SPEAK OUT

RACHEL GOBEP

The 17th annual celebration of LGBTQ+ History Month began Oct. 1. In recognition of the month, LGBTQ+ members at Youngstown State University shared their thoughts and experiences in the community.

Megan List, an assistant professor of teacher education, is openly transgender and said she believes that LGBTQ+ issues need to be a focus throughout every person's education and people need to learn about the individuals who have influenced culture.

"I don't just exist during the month of October," List said. "I am a person every day of the year."

At this point in time, LGBTQ+ History Month is important, said Brian Wells, an academic advisor and lead coordinator for YSU's Safe Zone training program.

"I would love to get to a point in our culture where it's not necessary, but we're not there yet," Wells said.

Wells said there are a lot of prominent figures in history who have been members of the LGBTQ+ community.

"Until those examples and those prominent members of our society as a whole over the course of history are just incorporated into being regular examples in our history books, then something like this is very important," Wells said.

Marissa Snyder, a political science student at YSU, said she believes LGBTQ+ History Month is important to provide visibility for the LGBTQ+ community.

"The first step towards humanizing someone is providing representation of them throughout society, and that includes a month to embrace and learn LGBTQ+ history and culture," she said.

List was hired as the interim director for the Women and Gender Resource Initiative on Sept. 1, making her the first transgender director at YSU.

The women's center does not have a set completion date and is in the early stages.

List said she has a hard time looking at herself as a person of influence at YSU, even if she is.

She said her visibility gives her the opportunity to help and support others in the community.

"I'm not trying to make the world better for me, I'm trying to make the world better for my family, my students and for other trans individuals," she said.

She taught an LGBTQ+ issues in history and popular culture class at YSU for the first time in the spring 2017 semester and will be teaching it again in the spring 2018 semester.

"For a very long time, non-heteronormative viewpoints have been ignored in the curriculum.

We have this straight washing of history, where we pretend like queer individuals all of a sudden just popped up," she said.

Throughout the class, List said she explored the historical and present day LGBTQ+ issues in society and portrayal in popular culture.

List said her class examined movies such as "Bee Movie" to analyze gender relationships and LGBTQ+ culture.

For example, Jerry Seinfeld's character is a worker bee, but worker bees are female, she said.

"We have this thing where reality dictates that this character has to be a woman, but because our culture is a masculine-dominated culture, Jerry Seinfeld gets to play the main character," List said.

Snyder said she believes LGBTQ+ history should be taught within public school history curriculum.

According to GLAAD, which is an organization committed to issues in the LGBT+ community, LGBTQ+ History Month was created in 1994 by Missouri High School history teacher Rodney Wilson.

GLAAD stated that Wilson believed a month should be dedicated to the teaching and celebration of LGBTQ+ history.

The month includes National Coming Out Day on Oct. 11 and the anniversary of the first March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights on Oct. 14, 1979.

The Human Rights Campaign stated that National Coming Out Day serves as a reminder that one of the most basic tools for the LGBTQ+ community is the power to come out.

HEROIC YSU BOWLING COACH'S BATTLE WITH CANCER



Photo by **MELISSA TUROSİK/THE JAMBAR**

MELISSA TUROSİK

Youngstown State University women's bowling coach Chelsea Gilliam came to YSU in 2015 to create the first team at the university. Although recognized for facing teams at the bowling alley, Gilliam is also facing an ongoing battle with breast cancer.

The chances of women getting breast cancer at age 20 is one in 1,681 compared to women at age 30 with a one in 232 chance, according to the American Cancer Society.

Gilliam said she discovered she had cancer in 2013 at 23 years old and it came as a shock when the ultrasound detected something.

She said they wanted to do a biopsy. She submitted one later that week and found out a week later she had breast cancer.

Her initial reaction to the news was a mixture of things, Gilliam said. She was shocked and upset and said nobody ever wants to hear that, let alone hearing it so young.

"After that I was like, 'We caught it early, we're going to take care of it [and] beat it,' and I just did what I needed to do," Gilliam said.

Gilliam beat breast cancer in November 2013 and was re-diagnosed in May 2016. She was experiencing hip pain and had surgery done on her femur in June.

"I found out the cancer had spread to my femur bone, so now it's currently stage four, which they have to give it a number to sense it. It's moved from its original location," Gilliam said. "I'm taking hor-

mone therapy to try and stop it from growing and spreading more."

Mackenzie Olesky, YSU bowling player, said Gilliam is a fighter who is not going to stop.

"She promised to keep fighting for us and the team and we're going to continue to support and fight right alongside her until we beat this together," Olesky said.

Gilliam said being a coach has helped her to stay strong and get through her battle.

"The whole entire time I've been a coach and not only do I have the support of my family but I also have the support of my athletic departments and my teams," Gilliam said. "Being a strong female role model for them to look up to is important to me and if I'm down, they're all going to get down."

Rachel Darrow, YSU student on the bowling team, said Gilliam is a very down to earth coach and one of the strongest people she knows.

"No matter what she is going through or how she feels that day, she always comes to practice or a tournament with a smile on her face and is ready to face the day," Darrow said.

Gilliam said spreading breast cancer awareness is very important. She advised young women who notice something different or wrong to go to the doctor and get it checked out. She said it's better to hear the news early than to wait and find out when nothing can be done.

"I hate being in the situation but I feel that I can use it to help spread the word. I always tell people if a young girl reads my story and it ends up saving her life, then I feel like I did my job," Gilliam said.

CHECK IT OR TICKET

**JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR
COURTNEY HIBLER**

Students who receive too many parking citations at Youngstown State University are in danger of having their diplomas or grades withheld.

According to the YSU Parking Violations guidelines, three types of violations can be committed, including minor, major and legal.

If a minor violation is committed, such as parking along a curb, the first offense results in a \$25 fine, followed by \$30 for the second offense and \$35 for the third.

Displaying an altered permit is considered a major violation with a fee of \$100. Legal violations depend on the offense committed. For example, parking in a fire lane is a \$150 fine while parking in a disability access area is a \$250 fine.

Danny O'Connell, director of support services and parking services, said all of the parking lots and garages on campus have a sign displaying what type of permit is required. M lots are mixed lots meaning anyone can park there with a student, faculty or special permit pass. F lots are for faculty only and will open to mixed parking after 4:30 p.m.

O'Connell said it is important to park in the correct lots in order to avoid these fines.

On YSU's campus, parking meters line some of the roads, such as Wood Street. Themelina Xenikis, communications student at YSU, said she received a parking meter fine.

"I got the ticket for being a few minutes over my meter time,"

Xenikis said.

It is possible to appeal a parking ticket within the correct time frame, O'Connell said.

"The person who is in violation has five business days to file an appeal," O'Connell said.

The appeal form can be completed online, at the parking office, Kilcawley Center or the YSU police station.

Bobby Croom, mechanical engineering student at YSU, said he was in violation and received a \$100 fine.

"I parked in a drive lane," Croom said. "This ticket was my first offense, but I was able to get it appealed," Croom said.

Xenikis had different thoughts on the process of trying to appeal the ticket.

"I paid the fine because it was easier to do rather than try to fight something that might not work out in my favor," Xenikis said.

Sometimes the fine can be reduced, according to O'Connell.

"If it's their first ticket of the semester we might reduce it, but those are mitigating circumstances," O'Connell said.

O'Connell said the most common parking violation is the failure to display the required YSU parking permit in the vehicle's front window. Once the student gets a citation for the violation, it will go on their bill.

According to the YSU Parking Violations guidelines, when a fine is applied to the student's account, grades and diplomas may be withheld until the fine is paid.

"Follow the rules and you won't get a ticket," O'Connell said.



Photos courtesy of JEFF TYUS

THE 8TH HALLOWEEN PARTY TO RAISE FUNDING FOR AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

NAMI NAGAOKA

The Youngstown State University Department of Communications will host the 8th fundraising Halloween party at the Youngstown Inner Circle on Oct. 26 at 7 p.m.

Jeffrey Tyus, a communications associate professor at YSU, started this event eight years ago. The money collected for the event has been sent to the American Cancer Society every year.

According to the American Cancer Society, 1,688,780 new cancer cases and 600,920 cancer

deaths are reported per year. To put this into perspective, an estimated three cases and one death occur per minute as of 2017.

Tyus said that he is always passionate about being involved with the community and charity work.

“I thought [fundraising a Halloween event] would be a good and fun activity,” Tyus said.

He said having enjoyable activities would encourage students to participate in their community and charity work.

Last year, a few hundred people attended, with President Jim

Tressel joining as a judge for the costume contest. Tyus is expecting a similar turnout this year.

This charity activity has been very successful, gathering between a minimum of \$400 and a maximum of \$1,100, Tyus said.

Tyus said the communication department buys pizzas and punch from Inner Circle, selling to attendees for a slice and a drink for \$5.

Holly Massucco, a server at Inner Circle on campus, said the one side of the store is packed during the party.

“People who win the contest

sometimes donate the money right back to the cancer foundation,” she said. “It’s a lot of fun.”

Heather Collins, an employee at Inner Circle, said all the employees wear costumes at the event. She said it’s challenging to talk with people due to noise, but still finds it enjoyable.

Sam Granick will be bartending at the event. Granick said she will soak gummy worms and Skittles in vodka to serve as Halloween specialty drinks.

There will be a costume contest, karaoke, a ticket raffle and music provided by the band

Dirty Rhythms and Rookery Radio. Karaoke runs from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., the contest and judging begins at 9 p.m. and the band will play after the contest.

Costumes will be judged with some criteria, and the winner will get a prize during the event, Tyus said.

He said this event is open to the public and students are encouraged to participate in the costume contest as well as provide donations to the cause.

“It’s always been really just a fun time for friends to get together,” Tyus said.

CAMPFIRE STORIES

NATHAN HRITZ

During this time of year, campfires seem to be more enticing than they have ever been. Maybe it is the last kiss of summer warming the days, or the brittleness of the coming winter claiming the night. Whatever it is, an autumn campfire is second to none.

I recently took a weekend trip to Elk County, Pennsylvania to have a go at witnessing bull elk enter into that ever-illustrious battle over mating rights, otherwise known as the rut. My family and I camped out in Parker Dam

State Park, having campfires on a nightly basis. We were a little early to witness the rut, but the conversation around the fire sparked my desire to write this week's column.

Campfire stories are as much of an American tradition as apple pie or even good old baseball. From the cowboys out west, to the hunters of the north, to the backyard patio dwellers, nobody would argue against the statement that any time spent around a fire is time well spent.

As a multifaceted individual, I find campfires carry a lot of significance to me. Whether I'm sitting out on a brisk November

evening, telling stories of how hunting used to be in my home state of Pennsylvania (known as the million hunter state by some of the old timers), to telling ghost stories with close friends, a campfire is always home base whenever I'm trekking through the wilderness.

My favorite campfire stories are those that have been passed down through Native American tradition, my all-time favorite being that of the wendigo, the cannibalistic creature that is said to roam throughout the northern forests of the Atlantic Coast and even throughout the Great Lakes region of the United States and

Canada.

One of my favorite memories while sitting around a fire, several years ago, was when a dear friend of mine invited me to go along with him, his father and a ragtag crew of outdoorsmen to a small hunting cabin in the mountains of Pennsylvania to hunt black bears. We had finished hunting for the day and with our bellies full of some of the best red meat I've ever tasted, we sat around a fire telling stories.

At one point, one of the men heard an owl calling out to the other lonesome owls strewn throughout the forest. He then

proceeded to impersonate another owl, calling back with a phrase that resembles the call of an owl: "Who cooks for you?" We fell silent as he managed to coax the owl into what would have been a visible distance had it been light out. It was one of the coolest, most hauntingly beautiful things I have ever witnessed.

Fall is the perfect time of year to gather around a fire with close friends or loved ones. Make some memories that will last a lifetime. The temperature is darn near perfect for it this time of year.



Photo by ALYSSA PFLUG/THE JAMBAR

Make sure to check out next week's Jambar to see the story on The Vintage Fashion Show that occurred last night in Kilcawley Center

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Photos by MARAH J. MORRISON/THE JAMBAR

MARAH J. MORRISON

Customers of Stone Fruit Coffee Company seem to be drawn to the music being played within its walls. Located on Lincoln Avenue at Youngstown State University, the employees at Stone Fruit work to keep atmosphere-appropriate music playing for themselves and their guests.

Devin Betsa, manager at Stone Fruit, enjoys the atmosphere and the environment the coffee bar has to offer. Betsa said the music plays a huge part in how the customers feel when entering the shop.

He said a lot of the customers at Stone Fruit have tended to ask him and or one of the other employees what song is playing

and nine times out of 10, they really enjoy it.

"There's a lot of people who I'll hear talking and they'll say things like, 'Oh my God, I can't believe they're playing this song,'" Betsa said. "It can benefit them if they're having a bad day and they walk in and their favorite song is playing."

Betsa said the employees use a station on Pandora that has been very carefully built just from thumbing up and thumbing down songs. Betsa said the music is important to the coffee shop and the music has a lot to do with the whole entire feel and experience of it.

Emma Linnen, a barista at Stone Fruit and an anthropology major at YSU, has worked there the past year. She said the type of music that plays in the shop de-

pends on who is working.

Linnen said it's a very personalized thing the employees do, with even YouTube playlists being used at times.

"We have classic hits for everybody's playlist and there's a Tupac Tuesday playlist," Linnen said. "We get most creative with this store in the Youngstown location because the crowd is much different."

She said she loves the reactions people have to songs that are played in the coffee bar, some being curious and tend to sing along with it.

"It's more than just background music," Linnen said. "It's stuff you can get involved with and stuff that you can relate to."

Christian Powers, a barista at Stone Fruit, has worked at other coffee shops

that have set music that isn't allowed to be changed or customized. Powers enjoys the freedom he and his fellow employees can have when it comes to the music at Stone Fruit.

"We're allowed to throw ideas out to our bosses and we can have our own playlists," Powers said. "We have a little bit more of versatility here instead of the Boardman or Columbiana store."

Powers said a lot of customers like to sit at the bar and jam, especially when throwback songs are being played. Powers said the music plays a huge part in his enjoyment of working at Stone Fruit as well as the enjoyment of the customers they serve.

NEW VENUE AND NEW LEADERSHIP FOR PENGUIN HACKERS

ANDREW BASTION

NOAH JOHNSON

Youngstown State University's Penguin Hackers group has entered a transitional period now that founder Joe Duncko has graduated.

Duncko began the organization in 2014 to host YSU's first hackathon, HackYSU, in the spring of the following year. Since then, he has lead the organization and expanded it from the hallways of Meshel Hall to Stambaugh Stadium's DeBartolo Stadium Club.

The reigns of the organization now rest in the hands of Duncko successors, the officers of the Penguin Hackers. Brian Kost, the co-treasurer of the organization, said Duncko succeeded in teaching new members how to pick up when he left.

"Joe did a wonderful job trying to teach everyone that was working with him as members, officers and people," Kost said. "It wasn't a stereotypical, leadership left and now everyone is left floundering," Kost said.

The event will be hosted in the Chestnut Room in Kilcawley Center in March. Participants who want to form teams and create new projects over the 72-hour period will now have access to one of YSU's premiere facilities.

Judah Maendel, the chair of the Penguin Hackers, said the application process includes speaking with others rather than having them join by filling out papers.

"We can't just fill out the forms that they usually have people fill out because our event is overnight," Maendel said. "We have to talk to people instead."

HackYSU has been looked at as an exceptional undertaking. Taking place over three days, from Friday afternoon

Photo Courtesy of ANDREW BASTION to Sunday morning, the event includes free food for the participants, mentors to help with the available hardware and software as well as reimbursement for travel expenses.

"It's basically a year-long event prepping for a three-day event," Kost said. "We do fundraising directly with entities, companies and groups to assist putting on our keystone events."

Nicholas Iovino, the Penguin Hackers treasurer, said acquiring sponsors is important to the group and one of the major factors in organizing HackYSU.

"Each of us generally only take on a few sponsors to get in touch with each year so that we can provide them with the attention that they deserve," Iovino said.

Although preparation for March's HackYSU has already begun, the Penguin Hackers are also busy preparing for the Local Hack Day on Dec. 3 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. This event began last year to raise awareness for the larger hackathon event and provide more opportunities for students to learn from lecturers.

"Last year we had Shaquille Stoutamire, who gave a talk on game design using Phaser and JavaScript," Maendel said. "We're going to have him back because people loved learning how to make simple games."

With changes to venue and leadership for the group, Iovino said new recruits and veteran organizers have ambitious goals for the organization's future.

"We've been seeing around a 50 percent growth in attendance each year," Iovino said. "I know everyone involved would be excited to reach 200 participants this year, a goal that's definitely within reach."



JOHN STRAN

If the Halloween season has sparked interest in eerie sights and the desire to listen to live music, there may be a place that can fulfill these demands.

Located on Wick Avenue, the Wickyards is a non-profit music venue locating in the previous McVean Funeral Home building, which closed two years ago.

Chief Operations Officer Erik Engartner said the Wickyards has been hosting shows for about a year and a half. He used to host shows at a venue in Boardman known as the Backyards, which, shut down in 2014.

When Erik Engartner's father bought the former funeral home, he said he wanted to find a way to give the building a new purpose so it wouldn't get turned into a parking lot. Since founding the venue, Erik Engartner said he's been able to find bands to play on a monthly basis and pique the interest of many who enter.

The building still holds onto pieces of its past with a sign still bearing the funeral

home's name and equipment that was used for embalming the deceased still holds a wooden outline for casket storage, and a few caskets remain.

The venue allows an audience to see these acts as well as an opportunity to explore the building.

For acts, it's an opportunity to test their music in front of a crowd while avoiding another bar show.

Joe Churpek, singer and guitarist of the band Fifer Pig, played his first show at the Wickyards on Friday and experienced something new playing at the venue.

"This is one of the coolest places I've ever played," Churpek said. "I've played in a few abandoned churches but never a funeral home."

Erik Engartner said that he thinks most people who come admire the uniqueness of it all and to venture around the vicinity.

"Most people who come in initially want to explore," Engartner said. "I miss a lot of bands who play here because I'm usually too busy giving somebody a tour of

the place."

Catherine Engartner, Erik Engartner's mother, said the venue allows for acts to test their material in front of a crowd and get a feel for what it's like to be on stage.

"For some of these bands, it's their first time playing anywhere," Catherine Engartner said. "This is a great way for bands to bring friends and see how people respond to their music."

The most recent show on Friday the 13th featured five acts of different ages and amounts of stage experience. The crowd grew as the night progressed with people floating in-between the music and lure of the building.

Erik Engartner is unsure as to how long this stint at the Wickyards will last, but said he'll stay there as long as he can.

"If all works out, I'll stay as long as possible," Engartner said. "I want to keep it going by creating more exposure of what the building is and what it has to offer."

The next show at the Wickyards will be Dec. 8. Details about who will be playing will be updated on its Facebook page.

Photo by TANNER MONDOK/THE JAMBAR

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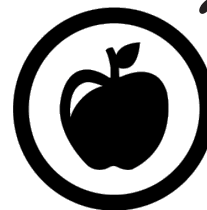
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CONNECTING THE DOTS
FRONT

Faculty Struggles

Students of color aren't the only ones struggling on campus. Faculty of color are also feeling the pressure when it comes to juggling issues inside and outside of the classroom.

Tiffany Anderson, assistant professor of English at YSU, expressed that YSU lacks a reasonable ratio between African-American students and faculty.

"No one's talking about the strain that black faculty have in making sure that we keep as many black students here at possible," Anderson said.

She continued on to say that with the black student population on campus being 13 percent and the black faculty at four percent, the faculty is being pushed to their extent.

Besides dealing with the classes, service

work and research, oftentimes the black faculty members are seen as a resource by students of color when it comes to both emotional and social issues that the students are dealing with, while some faculty members don't deal with students outside of the classroom at all.

"Our NSSE data shows that YSU is not a particularly supportive environment for underrepresented minorities, which will also drive students away prior to graduation," Abraham said.

Finding a Solution

There are multiple solutions that could supplement the rise of African-American students and graduation rates at YSU.

One such solution repeatedly promoted by Anderson is the hiring of more African-American faculty.

"Students of color need to be in contact with faculty and staff of color because these students have a lot of things happen-

ing that affect how they exist as a student on campus. Oftentimes those students do not feel comfortable or supported in dealing with those things," Anderson said.

She said when black students do have contact with those faculty and staff of color, those faculty members help support and mentor them through the university process.

There's one major problem: there just aren't enough faculty and staff of color at YSU.

Anderson also suggested a simple change of mindset she learned from Jesse Thompson, assistant dean at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, who talked to community members at the YSU Culture of Community RISE cultural competency workshop on Oct. 7.

The mindset suggested setting the bar high and helping students make sure they get over it.

"It's this concept of 'we're gonna expect

high things from you and we're going to hold ourselves accountable to holding you accountable to get there," Anderson said.

Abraham said that YSU's ultimate goal is to "decrease the gap in graduation rates between African-Americans and the university overall," and achieve parity between African-American student and other student graduation rates.

Some of the steps that Abraham said YSU is taking is to create the office of college access and transitions, investing more in advising and other supplemental services, hiring new faculty for fall 2018 with the request of discussion of diversity and inclusion as part of the applications and faculty professional development over the course of the semester.

"It's going to take several years of very hard work, and it won't dramatically impact the six-year graduation rate until six years from now. By 2025, we should be able to achieve parity," Abraham said.

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THE JAMBAR EDITORIAL: **TUITION INCREASE HOPEFULLY MEANS CAMPUS FIXES**

With a tuition increase of about six percent for the incoming freshmen of Youngstown State University in fall 2018, which is expected to increase with the cost of inflation, we can only hope the money will help fix some issues on campus.

Over the summer the campus saw a few renovations such as The Hub, Maag Library and the first floor of Meshel Hall.

While everyone should be grateful there were some sorely needed updates done, students didn't ask for a face-lift to The Hub or library. Students asked for a few other things.

The sanitary product dispensers in many bathrooms are broken or empty, and the university responded by putting feminine products in vending machines. While there are signs in the bathroom stating this, they say it is "for your convenience." It's hardly convenient when you must leave the bathroom to locate a vending machine, especially if in an unfamiliar building.

There are bathrooms on campus where the handicap buttons don't work, stall doors are broken, sinks without hot water and general neglect. The nicest bathrooms on campus are in the Wil-

liamson College of Business Administration and the first floor of Meshel Hall.

For a business as large as a university, buying items like toilet paper in bulk is the cheapest way to get it. But is it too much to ask for toilet paper that isn't see-through?

Wi-Fi dead spots are plentiful around campus, where the Wi-Fi either isn't there or it could be a hit or miss. Bliss Hall is pretty iffy, and that can be concerning for students who spend a majority of their day in the building.

Parking lot attendants should pay better attention to the lots

by putting out the lot full sign to prevent people from entering an already full lot. It should also be better known where there is more available parking when the usual lots are at or approaching capacity.

There should be more food options on campus. While there are rumors about what might be added to the new dorms on Lincoln Avenue, many people are hoping for a different selection than what we already have. We have Italian at MVR, we already have three places for burgers, tacos, burritos, two places for subs, two Starbucks, one Dunkin'

Donuts, pizza, more pasta and more. An Asian food place would be a perfect addition to the community.

Although the initial thought of tuition increases makes people upset, remember the money goes toward renovations, supplies, bills and paying the amazing staff and faculty that keep the university running.

Both are in or nearing the end of contract negotiations and all deserve fair compensation for all the hard work they do. After all, without the staff and faculty we wouldn't be here.

JAKE'S PICKS: **HAVE YOU HEARD ANY GOOD SOUNDTRACKS LATELY?**

JAKE MYERS

So, I saw "Blade Runner 2049" on opening day in XD (extreme digital) at Valley View Theaters and I was blown away by the epic sound. It was the perfect film to enjoy in XD and I loved everything about 2049, although not just the music.

In my opinion, to quote Mary Poppins, "It was practically perfect in every way." I have always had an appreciation for film music. I believe it all started with "The Lion King" when I was probably two years old. I watched it over and over and my parents bought me the soundtrack. I would have to say that it is my favorite Disney movie of all time.

While some may take film music for granted, I'm pretty sure the average movie goer would recognize the following:

Da-dum!

Da-dum!

Da-dum, da-dum, da-dum!

You don't even have to hear the notes to figure out that the above represents

the theme from "Jaws," which was scored by John Williams. Film music can either make or break a movie.

Some iconic film music that comes to my mind as well: "Jurassic Park" (1993), by John Williams, "Back to the Future" (1985), by Alan Silvestri, "Star Wars" (1977), by John Williams, "The Lion King" (1994), by Hans Zimmer, "The Ghost and Mr. Chicken" (1966), by Vic Mizzy, "Dances With Wolves" (1990), by John Barry, "The Last of the Mohicans" (1992), by Randy Edelman and Trevor Jones, "Twister" (1996), by Mark Mancina and "Silverado" (1990), by Bruce Broughton.

I feel like the aforementioned films can be recognized by their music alone. Play the soundtrack and you can visualize the movie. What you may or may not know is that the above representation of the theme from "Jaws" is known as a leitmotif. Those ten notes represent the shark and are heard to signify the shark's presence throughout the film.

One of the most iconic leitmotifs is from "Star Wars." Darth Vader's theme starts with nine notes. Can you hear it in your

head now? It goes nine notes, nine notes and then 24 notes to round it off.

"The Imperial March" was written and composed by John Williams. If this fascinates you as it does me, then you should consider signing up for Film Music MUHL2617 with Assistant Professor Daniel Keown. Tell him Jake sent you. I really enjoyed this class. I would have to say it is one of my favorites. You do not have to be a music major as I am not, but it helps to be a film geek.

Of the major films released this year, I feel that "Wonder Woman" by Rupert Gregson-Williams, "War for the Planet of the Apes" by Michael Giacchino, and "Kingsman: The Golden Circle" by Henry Jackman and Matthew Margeson are the most likely to resonate with viewers and perhaps reach iconic status.

"Blade Runner 2049," for me, is an atmospheric soundtrack. It is all synthesized. It sets the mood and propels the film forward, which may help explain why it didn't seem like a 2 hour and 45 minute film. In XD, your chest and recliner vibrate with the pounding pulse of the

music.

That being said, I was cognizant of leitmotifs in "2049," but I was so enthralled by the visuals and the storyline that I would have to see it again to fully analyze the music. I will mention one leitmotif – listen for the "Tears and the Rain" theme in "2049," which was significant in the original film.

Incidentally, the original "Blade Runner" (1982), was scored by Vangelis. "Blade Runner 2049" was supposed to be scored by three composers: Jóhann Jóhannsson, Hans Zimmer, and Benjamin Wallfisch. Jóhannsson dropped out of the film because of creative differences. Director Denis Villeneuve wanted something closer to the original score.

Geek alert: If you own an Amazon Echo or Dot, you can ask Alexa to play any soundtrack and/or composer. Geek it out!

Drop me a line: I would love to hear from you so email jcmeyers02@student.yasu.edu. if you wish to opine or use the comments section online.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: YSU'S ATTACK ON EDUCATION

In May 2015, the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies launched a new student award called the Bevan-Dillingham Scholarship, named in honor of two administrative assistants for the department: Joan Bevan and Mary Dillingham. At the time, Mary Dillingham was the administrative assistant for the department. The department's chair, faculty and students all viewed Mary as the backbone of the department. And after years in her position, Mary had both the skills and institutional memory that made her invaluable to not only her department, but other administrative assistants throughout the university.

Two months after the award was finalized, Youngstown State University's administration announced they were transferring Mary Dillingham to a different sector of the university. It was not only a blow to the department and its students, but a signal to other staff throughout the college. YSU's administration saw no value in strong work ethics and a history of

exemplary service. After spending a year learning and working in a whole new area of work, Mary Dillingham submitted her formal notice that she was retiring. Unfortunately, this example is not an exception, but a trend at Youngstown State University.

While companies like Target have increased their wages for their employees, YSU has opted for seeking ways to bring down the wages and chosen to get their labor as cheaply as possible.

YSU has repeatedly offered ACE – the Association of Classified Employees – abysmal contracts. For over six years, employees have not had their wages increased. In 2014, the administration imposed a contract on ACE employees. This year, there are rumblings that this trend will continue for another three years. Not only would this financial treatment fail to keep up with inflation, but YSU is raising the cost of ACE's health care contributions. If ACE employees do not get a substantial raise this year, they will receive

less money per paycheck under the new contract than they did last year.

For those unfamiliar with ACE, the union represents a myriad of classified employees at YSU. The members are librarian technicians, who tirelessly search out interlibrary loan and Ohio Link connections to locate books and articles for students, researchers and lecturers. Some of its members are the information technology personnel who run the internet, computers and phones on campus – and enable students, staff and faculty to communicate and for classrooms to operate. Some members are the maintenance workers who keep computer labs, classrooms, offices and departments running. And then there are the clerical staff like Mary Dillingham, who serve as departmental ambassadors to the students and the world at large.

It is understandable for a company or college to want to reduce labor costs. The problem is that YSU has underpaid their employees for quite some time. The

rumbling about the new contract smacks of disrespect. Such a business decision will yield little to no positive results for the people who rely on ACE employees for their support. The Board of Trustees should consider if they want YSU to continue paying the lowest amount that they can get away with. Furthermore, they might want to examine the relationship between poor employee relations and customer satisfaction.

YSU should cultivate pride – not only in its name, but in the people who embody the name. If we want YSU to become the beacon of the Mahoning Valley and to help the region raise the standard of living, then we have to cultivate an inviting work environment. This requires treating all employees better and compensating them appropriately for their hard work.

MICHAEL JERRYSON

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

In the United States alone, 15 million Americans have food allergies. Many people suffer severe allergic reactions to the allergen – the worst reaction being anaphylaxis. This type of reaction occurs within seconds to allergen exposure and symptoms include: skin rash, nausea, vomiting, difficulty breathing, and/or shock. If not treated immediately, the end result is death. Anaphylaxis is prevented and treated in allergic reactions with a self-injected dose of epinephrine – better known as an EpiPen auto injector.

About a year ago, the public and lawmakers were outraged after Mylan, the company who manufactures and

sells EpiPens, increased the price for a box of two EpiPens to \$609. This life-saving device only contains \$1 worth of epinephrine. Despite the anger of the community, the protests and nationwide complaints, Mylan currently has not lowered the price of EpiPens. Mylan argues people with certain health insurances are able to get a box of EpiPens for \$100. The company also released a \$300 generic version of EpiPen. These prices for an EpiPen are absolutely ridiculous and infuriating.

As a future nurse, I can't help but shake my head at Mylan for setting these outrageously high prices for EpiPens. Patients are always top priority, receiving equal

and fair treatment regardless of race, gender, age, or socioeconomic status. Patients who are poor and without health insurance are suffering and their punishment is death. It's unfair and unethical to charge a person \$300 for an EpiPen when it contains \$1 worth of epinephrine. Anyone with a severe allergy should be able to purchase an EpiPen at little to zero cost. No one should have to choose between life and death! Alternatives and laws need to be established!

**SELINA NUZZI
YSU STUDENT NURSE**



Photo by RON STEVENS/YSU SPORTS INFORMATION

The Youngstown State University football team runs out of the tunnel during week one.

YSU LOOKS TO END TWO-GAME SKID IN UNIDOME

CHRIS MCBRIDE

Following a loss in overtime last week, the Youngstown State University Football team (3-3, 1-2 in Missouri Valley Football Conference) will have its feet to the fire as it travels to Cedar Falls, Iowa to take on the University of Northern Iowa (3-3, 2-1 in MVFC).

After help from YSU tailback Tevin McCaster run that helped stretch the game to overtime a 36-yard kick from NDSU kicker Cam Pederson handed YSU yet another heart pounding loss in an close 27-24 contest. Their second loss in OT with the first coming with their last being in Pittsburgh.

As YSU Head Coach Bo Pelini's saying goes, "success lies in the details" as he reiterated in talking about another close defeat.

"We have to keep getting better at those little things, we haven't reached our potential yet but we have a ways to go and we have to keep pushing to get there," Pelini said.

On the loss, the Penguins ended their 11-game home win streak and are on a two-game slide coming into its game against UNI.

YSU has faced a tough series of teams since entering conference play having faced the second, fourth and sixth ranked teams in its last three games. YSU has come within six points of a near shutout of the top five MVFC teams. The loss only saw the Penguins drop one spot in this week's FCS Coaches Poll rankings.

"We lost three games by three points within either the last play or over time so we know those are games we can win we just have to come out and do it," YSU safe-

ty Bill Nicoe Hurst said.

Moving forward, Hurst said not allowing teams to have big plays will factor into helping them win big games down the stretch.

A major factor in controlling big plays will be YSU Guard Gavin Wiggins who assured that the team's spirit weren't down coming into this week's play.

"We know we're definitely going to have to win out to make the playoffs, we can't lose anymore," Wiggins said. "We're the only team in the top-10 that are 3-3 and that speaks volumes to how tough our schedule is but we know going forward we can't lose again."

UNI has the all-time advantage in the series against YSU having notched a 21-8 record against YSU.

"Last year, they were probably the best d-line we played. I thought so personally

so I know preparation is gonna be key this week," Wiggins said.

In its last outing against UNI, the Penguins won a defensively sound game against them in a 14-10 victory at Stambaugh Stadium. UNI is coming off an impressive 38-18 road win against South Dakota State University (4-2, 1-2 in MVFC) in which it held SDSU to 52 rushing yards while also managing to force SDSU into three turnovers.

"They're physical. They're kind of an up-the-field team. They play aggressive. They're aggressive up front and I think they're a good football team," Pelini said. "They're a well coached team and I think they'll be a good challenge for us."

Saturday, Oct. 21, YSU will face UNI in the UNIDome at 2 p.m.

PRESS BOX PERSPECTIVE: THE NEW NBA SEASON IS READY TO TIP OFF

SETH RIVELLO

Tuesday night was the tip off to the new NBA season. It started with the Boston Celtics traveling to Cleveland to take on the Cavaliers and later that night the improved Houston Rockets took on the defending champion Golden State Warriors.

The NBA changed when LeBron James and Chris Bosh teamed up with Dwyane Wade to join the Miami Heat back in 2011. This wasn't the first "Big 3" ever formed, but it was the first one that really changed the NBA. That Heat team went to four straight NBA Finals while winning back to back championships. The team eventually broke up but its influence spread.

The NBA now consists of a handful of dominant teams, a couple good ones and then garbage. The "Big 3" has now spread to "Big 4's." The Golden State Warriors kept its big four intact for this season. Steph Curry, Klay Thompson, Draymond Green and Kevin Durant look to have another big season and possibly take down LeBron and the Cavs again in the Finals. You can blame LeBron for starting the superteam era; he's done it with two different teams: Cleveland and Miami. If he doesn't start the superteam "Big 3's" he'd probably have a couple more rings to put on.

The Oklahoma City Thunder were busy this offseason adding a couple weapons to go alongside the NBA's Most Valuable Player, Russell Westbrook. Carmelo Anthony was recently acquired from the New York Knicks and All-Star forward Paul George was acquired from the Indiana Pacers. Last season, Westbrook was left with a bunch of role players when Durant decided to team up with the Warriors. Westbrook went on to average a triple double and lead his team into the

postseason virtually alone. This season Oklahoma is out for blood and looking to make a deep run into the playoffs.

The Houston Rockets were doing fine with MVP candidate James Harden leading the team, but they decided to add another piece. All-star guard Chris Paul was acquired from the Los Angeles Clippers in June. This gives Houston one of the scariest backcourts in the entire NBA and a huge shot for Paul to finally get a ring.

The Celtics and Cavaliers were busy this offseason also. The teams swapped all-star guards, Boston got Kyrie Irving and Cleveland received Isaiah Thomas and other assets. An unfortunate hip injury that occurred last season will cause Thomas to miss some time for Cleveland. Luckily, the Cavs acquired former MVP guard Derrick Rose. Rose looks to revive his career in Cleveland with help from Kevin Love, LeBron, and D-Wade. Tuesday night was Irving's homecoming as the Celtics traveled to Cleveland. Irving has been bad-mouthing Cleveland for a couple months and the crowd reaction was as expected. The crowd mostly booed Irving when he was introduced. Nothing would be worse than when LeBron returned to Cleveland wearing a Miami jersey.

A team coming out of the Western Conference that isn't getting enough talk is the Minnesota Timberwolves. The Timberwolves just inked forward Andrew Wiggins to a five-year extension while in the offseason trading for the Chicago Bulls stud guard Jimmy Butler. Minnesota has a great backcourt with Jeff Teague and Butler and one of the best big men in the game with Karl-Anthony Towns. Towns is only 21 years old but has started every game in his short two year career; it's only a matter of time before he is locked in as the best big man in the NBA.



FINISHING STRONG: YSU MEN'S GOLF COMES IN SECOND

Justin Hallapy tees off during a tournament during the 2016 season. He is Men's Golf's only senior.

MARC WEEMS

After some disappointing finishes during the fall season, the Youngstown State University men's golf team took a lot of momentum toward the spring season.

The closest YSU had gotten to was a seventh place finish out of nine teams at the Cleveland State Invitational, which isn't quite good enough for this team.

Having just one senior can hurt a team and it sure didn't help the Penguins this fall. Luckily for YSU, it came in second place out of six teams at the Titans Motown Collegiate.

"We played well enough to win that tournament and I know that the guys know that for sure," YSU head coach Tony Joy said. "It just comes down to another team playing better and RMU [Robert Morris University] just played better. We played much better than we have all fall."

Joy said that its struggles were due to the fact it only has one senior but that doesn't mean the team can lay down.

"I'm pleased the way our team played down the last few tournaments. I thought we played much sharper and much better than before. The future is definitely much brighter than it was the last few years for us," Joy said.

Now, the YSU men's golf team has a long time off before another tournament. YSU finished up on Oct. 17 and won't play again until March 9, 2018.

YSU had a two-stroke lead going into the final round of play in its last tournament. Giving up the lead isn't something Coach Joy worries too much about with this young team.

"I think we definitely could have won but that's not always how the ball falls," Joy said. "Rebuilding is tough, but now we have all these winter months to figure things out together. During the year, I don't really have time to show kids what they need to do better on. There just isn't time with class and

travelling."

Part of YSU's bad play also was due to sloppy conditions this fall.

"We played a lot in wet, rainy conditions" is never something a golf coach wants to have to talk about, but Joy said you have to fight through bad conditions sometimes.

"We got to look at teams in our own conference like Oakland and Cleveland State. They are the clear-cut favorites, but we know we have the talent to beat them. It won't be easy but we are aware of the team we could be," Joy said.

This YSU team features four true freshmen and one redshirt freshman. With Justin Hallapy as this team's lone senior, Coach Joy relies a lot on his play leadership.

"Justin is important because we play on course that he has seen before. He can show younger guys what to look for, what to look out for and even just how to prepare. That's important for me to help guys off the course," Joy said.

Joy also said that it helps that the team has a lot of really hungry young guys who are willing to put in the work.

"It will be interesting how these freshmen handle the long break they are given," Joy said. "It's something they have never experienced and it will just be an interesting time for them. It can be hard to not see real grass for six months in between tournaments."

Joy also said that having a facility like the WATTS keeps the kids mostly in line because they always have a place to train and figure their games out.

"A lot of these guys haven't had such a place like the WATTS and I think that will be important to their development," Joy said. "These guys are winners regardless of this fall's results. I'm excited for the next season and the winter."

YSU will start up again on March 9, 2018 at the Jackrabbit Invitational hosted by South Dakota State University in Boulder City, Nev.

Photo courtesy of YSU SPORTS INFORMATION



Jeremiah Ferguson gets pregame shots up during a game last year at home. Ferguson will be a big part of Youngstown State University's men's basketball.

Photo courtesy of YSU SPORTS INFORMATION

NEW SEASON, NEW STAFF: YSU BASKETBALL GEARS UP

**JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR
CAITLYN WILKES**

The Youngstown State University men's basketball team is preparing to start its 2017-2018 season under a new coaching staff.

Jerrod Calhoun was named head coach in late March after spending the past five seasons as head coach at Fairmont State University in West Virginia. Calhoun is a Cleveland native who spent two years playing at Cleveland State University, which, like YSU, is part of the Horizon League. He's a 2004 graduate of the University of Cincinnati, where he began his coaching career.

In the following three years at Walsh University in North Canton, Calhoun helped lead the Cavaliers to a national championship in 2005 as an assistant coach. Their overall record between 2005 and 2008 was 82-21. He then moved on to West Virginia University, where he spent five seasons as assistant coach. The Mountaineers made five tournament appearances, making it to the Fi-

nal Four in 2010 and the Sweet 16 in 2008.

Calhoun was named 2017 Mountain East Conference Coach of the Year after leading the Fairmont State Fighting Falcons program to their first ever national runner-up finish and more than 30 wins on the season. He's now preparing to start his first season as the Penguins' head coach.

"I think Youngstown State is a program we can turn into a winner," Calhoun said. "The fanbase at YSU is very passionate about basketball."

Official practices for the team began at the end of September, and the countdown to the beginning of the season is on with just a few weeks to go.

"It's a very big month for us. We have 11 players on our roster who have never played a Division I basketball game before. We have a brand new team, brand new coaches, brand new style, so I think getting comfortable and getting to know one another is important," Calhoun said.

Getting comfortable required time, and Assistant Coach Jason Slay said time was key during the off-season.

"We spent a lot of time together during the summer on and off the court. I think it made our chemistry a lot better because we not only got to know each other on the court, but we got to know each other off the court from a personal standpoint," Slay said.

The team has goals for the next two weeks of practice to help them perform at their best.

"We have about 10 fundamentals we still have to cover, so the next few weeks are critical for that, and also just staying together, staying healthy and working hard," Slay said.

The new year has been an adjustment not only for the coaches, but the players as well. Jeremiah Ferguson, a sophomore point guard, is in his second season at YSU and had to adjust to the new playing style and staff.

"It came as a shock at first, but once we got used to the coaches and what they wanted, things came easy," Ferguson said. "I think our team this year is a lot better and a lot closer."

The YSU men's basketball team will face Thiel College at home on Oct. 24, then Kent State University in Akron on Nov. 11.