

**INSIDE**

**NEWS**  
New event celebrates graduating students  
page 3

**OPINION**  
Young candidates need the opportunity to shine  
page 4

**SPORTS**  
Baseball splits pair of one-game matchups  
page 5

**LIFESTYLE**  
Raising prices, biodiversity win at photo competition  
page 7

**NEWS BRIEF**



Jayden Hayn/The News  
Jack Epperson attempted to attack a group of students on sorority row on Sept. 10, 2022.

**County court defers Epperson hearing, waits for federal response**

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The status hearing for Murray native and former Murray State student Jack Epperson, 19, was postponed to June 19, pending a response from the U.S. Attorney's Office. Epperson was set to appear in Calloway County Circuit Court on Monday, April 17. The hearing was postponed because the circuit court is unsure of whether the U.S. Attorney's Office will be prosecuting the case, said Calloway and Marshall County Commonwealth Attorney Dennis Foust. Because Epperson used an explosive device for his attempted attack, Foust said this case may be prosecuted at the federal level by the U.S. Attorney's Office. Epperson was charged with two counts of first-degree attempted assault, second-degree wanton endangerment and possession of a destructive or booby trap device after he attempted to attack a group of students on Sorority Row on Sept. 10, 2022. First-degree attempted assault and possession of a destructive device are both felony charges. The former charge carries up to a 10-year prison sentence, and the latter is punishable by a 5 to 10-year sentence. Epperson attempted the attack with what appeared to witnesses to be a Molotov cocktail. The device was ineffective and only injured Epperson. None of the targeted students were injured. The deferred hearing was determined during Epperson's original status hearing time. Along with awaiting a federal response, Foust said lab results are also being processed in relation to the attack. However, Foust was not able to specify what was being tested. If Epperson's case does not go to federal court, then it will be prosecuted by the Commonwealth Attorney's Office. Foust said he has yet to be notified of which route the case will be taken, but there should be an answer by Epperson's next status hearing set for 8:30 a.m. on June 19, according to the Kentucky Court of Justice court docket.



Chair of the educational studies, leadership and counseling department Samir Patel will oversee the Partner and Connect Grant. Rebeca Mertins Chiodini/The News

**Education grant funds counselor, mental health professional training**

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The College of Education and Human Services, in partnership with the Western Kentucky Education Co-op, will train mental health professionals for Kentucky school districts with a \$3 million grant WKEC received. The Partner and Connect Grant will help recruit and train individuals to become counselors and mental health professionals in school districts with a "high need" for counselors. Senate Bill 1, passed in 2019, says school districts must have one counselor for every 250 students. Some districts in the state have only one counselor for the school, which is considered "high need."

Dianne Owen, Consortium for Innovations in Education director, said this grant will be used to recruit students to obtain their master's degree in school counseling for K-12 schools.

**“The grant will do what it needs to do in order to remove barriers to get students in these areas placement for their clinicals.”**  
—Samir Patel,  
chair of the educational studies, leadership and counseling department

The grant provides tuition assistance, between 50 to 100%, to qualifying candidates. The goal is to help low-income students, students of marginalized groups or students who

live in one of the 14 "high need" school districts listed in the grant. Candidates who are accepted will either obtain their master's or pursue their school psychologist credentials. They will receive tuition assistance, free training, mileage and childcare cost reimbursement and a potential incentive when completing practicums. Samir Patel, chair of the educational studies, leadership and counseling department, said the grant will also address the state's teaching shortage and promote diversity in the profession, while targeting students from one of the 14 communities in the grant.

see **MENTAL HEALTH GRANT**, page 3

**Woods Park construction set to finish Phase I**

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Woods Park will be a new green space for Murray State, providing students a place to unwind during the semester. Construction for Woods Park began in February, but planning began near Waterfield Library after the demolition of Woods Hall in 2019, said Director of Facilities Management Jason Youngblood.

**“As I spend a majority of my time cooped up in the library or the academic buildings just waiting for my next class, having an alternative to go sit outside at this park would be a great refreshment.”**  
—Kylie Jo Rouse,  
sophomore psychology major

Woods Park will have landscaping and sidewalks and places to gather, socialize or enjoy lunch, he said. Sophomore psychology major Kylie Jo Rouse said she is excited to have a place to be outside on the academic side of campus. "As I spend a majority of my time cooped up in the library or the academic buildings just waiting for my next class, having an alternative to go sit outside at this park would be a great refreshment," Rouse said.



Woods Park is set to pay homage to Woods Hall, which was torn down in 2019. Rebeca Mertins Chiodini/The News

Rouse said the park will improve her personal well-being. "I love to be in nature, and there are not many places on campus that currently provide a scenic outdoor space," she said. Youngblood said the project is being done in phases, which currently include a design phase and Phase I construction. Phase I is currently in progress. This phase includes building the underground infrastructure for site lighting and stormwater drainage, adding sidewalks and constructing the Woods Park monument from materials saved from Woods Hall. Phase I will cost approximately \$450,000. Rouse said she thinks students will enjoy the park.

"[I think] it will become a favorite place on campus to visit and be in nature while getting things done or just relaxing," Rouse said. Rouse said she had not heard of the construction before *The News* contacted her. "Once I looked into the plans for this project, I got kinda excited, and I believe it could be a really fun place to go on sunny days to tan, read a book and get into nature and relieve some of the stress college brings up in students," Rouse said. Youngblood said more sidewalks and site features will be added in future phases as funding can be identified. Weather permitting, Phase I construction work is currently on schedule to be completed by the end of May.

# Mein Bowl set to replace Steak 'n Shake

Ava Chuppe

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Beginning in fall 2023, a new restaurant called Mein Bowl will replace Steak 'n Shake in the T-Room, eliciting mixed responses from students. University Dining Services announced the change at a Student Government Association meeting on April 5.

Mein Bowl “offers healthy and fresh made-to-order Asian cuisine with menus built on flavorful spices, fresh vegetables, rice, noodles and proteins,” according to a University press release. Like Winslow Dining Hall, Tres Habaneros and Subconnection, the new restaurant sources menu items from Sodexo.

Racer Dining General Manager Jim Halcombe said the change comes after multiple surveys, product samplings, feedback from the Culinary Council and conversations with students.

“We received an overwhelming response from students, faculty and staff asking for an Asian cuisine option,” Halcombe said. “Mein Bowl will offer greater menu variety, as well as give more options to our vegan, vegetarian and pescatarian diners.”

Steak 'n Shake, which has been in the T-Room since fall 2019, will close on May 11.

Despite the closing, the press release said students looking for burgers and french fries do not have to look far.

“Chick-fil-A, also located inside the Curris Center, offers fries and milkshakes, and Winslow Dining Hall regularly has burgers and fries at Bistro Grill,” the release said.



Mein Bowl hosts a temporary take over in the T-Room on Wednesday, April 19 in advance of its opening fall 2023

Brock Culp/The News

Junior Spanish major Megan Smith said Sodexo should stay in Winslow rather than the retail dining locations.

“You shouldn’t have the same company sourcing out most of your food because that’s a lack of variety,” Smith said. “Although Asian food does sound nice to have...if you look at the menu prices, Mein Bowl’s menu prices hang around \$7 to \$9 compared to Steak 'n Shake’s typical \$5 to \$7.”

Junior creative writing major Marian Bailey said she is unsure how to feel about the change.

“I’m not against having a new restaurant, and Mein Bowl sounds like it could be great,” Bailey said. “It reminds me of

what Pony Express offered, and in my opinion, Pony Express didn’t have the best quality. Having a dedicated restaurant will likely produce better food, and I think I’d really enjoy it.”

Bailey said her discontent about Mein Bowl is personal.

“I simply really enjoy Steak 'n Shake,” Bailey said. “Winslow has burgers just about every day, but they are usually mediocre, and Steak 'n Shake is better and easily accessible from the academic side of campus.”

Other students, like sophomore electromechanical engineering technology major Evan Harvilla, echoed Bailey’s objection to replacing Steak 'n Shake.

“I like the idea of having pan-Asian food, but they should’ve replaced Tres, not the best restaurant in the building, Steak 'n Shake,” Harvilla said.

While Bailey would prefer if none of the dining locations were replaced, she said she understands if not enough space or resources exist.

“I also, personally, have never been to Subconnection if they are looking for a restaurant to replace,” Bailey said. “I don’t know how liked it is on campus, but it’s never made an impression on me.”

Students can give feedback to Dining Services by visiting [racerdining.sodexomurray.com/contact/feedback](http://racerdining.sodexomurray.com/contact/feedback).

# Chapter focuses on student-athlete mental health

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In between being a full-time athlete and student, the mental health of student-athletes can be put on the backburner, but the Murray State chapter of Morgan’s Message ensures students have a space to have conversations regarding mental health and their emotional well-being.

Morgan’s Message is a national nonprofit organization focused on destigmatizing discussions about mental health and promoting diversity, equity and inclusion among student-athletes.

“I have had such great experiences at the meetings I have attended. Student-athletes can support each other in a unique way that others can’t.”

—Katie Bickers, Student-Athlete Development intern



Photo courtesy of Dave Winder/Racer Athletics  
Senior soccer goalkeeper, Jenna Villacres founded the Murray State chapter of Morgan’s Message in fall 2022.

Senior soccer goalkeeper Jenna Villacres is the founder and the ambassador of the Murray State chapter of Morgan’s Message. Similar to the mission of the organization, Villacres wanted to create a space for student-athletes to be open about their mental health.

“In athletics especially, I feel like there’s a big stigma around talking about mental health because it is talked about in a way that you can’t be a great athlete and struggle with your mental health,” Villacres said. “Having this platform for student-athletes that’s created by student-athletes is a way to create a safe space for us to talk about any struggles and hopefully to reduce the stigma.”

Villacres said she was motivated to create the chapter during the fall 2022 semester because she herself was struggling with ways to handle her stress. She also saw that same stress in her peers.

Villacres wanted to establish ways to handle mental health that existed beyond the field.

“For a lot of us, our outlet is athletics, and that’s how we relieve stress, and it’s where we find our enjoyment,” Villacres said. “When that’s taken away from you by an injury it’s like your life is put on pause pretty much. You have no outlet.”

Villacres was injured for a majority of her freshman year and said she wished that a group like Morgan’s Message had existed earlier.

Katie Bickers is a 2022 soccer alumna who now works with Racer Athletics as a Student-Athlete development intern. During her time as a student-athlete Bickers said she endured three season-ending injuries.

“The whirling journey these injuries sent my mental health on is one that could not easily be summed up,” Bickers said. “I’m not even convinced words would ever have the capacity to convey this ever-changing storm accurately.”

Having faced these injuries and recovered, Bickers found Morgan’s Message can be helpful for student-athletes.

“I have had such great experiences at the meetings I have attended. Student-athletes can support each other in a unique way that others can’t,” Bickers said.

Assistant Athletic Director Rachel Cuttitta finds Morgan’s Message to be a valuable addition to the student-athlete experience.

“Our student-athletes have used their voices to advocate for bringing this organization to Murray State,” Cuttitta said. “Morgan’s Message meetings will give our student athletes a space to share, listen and support each other through powerful and relatable mental health topics. The addition of this organization adds another layer to the support we are able to provide, as well as opens up more leadership opportunities for our student athletes.”

see MORGAN’S MESSAGE, page 3

NEWS BRIEF

# New event celebrates graduating students

**MacKenzie Rogers**

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To help kick off commencement weekend, a new graduation event has been created to offer graduating students and their families the opportunity to take photos and celebrate their time at Murray State.

The Racer Graduation Kickoff will be from 3 to 5 p.m. on May 12 before graduation ceremonies the following day. Assistant Registrar and Record Manager Wendy Longworth said they saw a need for an additional event to celebrate this milestone.

“Commencement day is busy,” Longworth said. “With two ceremonies and over 9,000 people expected over the course of the day, getting that perfect photograph and finding all your friends and families can be a challenge.”

Graduating students will have the opportunity to take photos on the CFSB Center’s stage with Racer One, the president’s podium and an assortment of University-oriented props.

“We have some great photo staging opportunities available and hated the thought that our graduates weren’t able to easily take advantage of those opportunities,” Longworth said. “Our goal is to add new opportunities for our graduates and their families to celebrate their successes.”

Executive Director of Marketing and Communications Shawn Touney said he hopes this event will create a deeper connection to the University for graduating students.

“This event provides a tremendous opportunity for our Office of Alumni Relations to personally congratulate our class of spring ‘23, to establish and deepen their relationships with our newest alumni as they join more than 80,000 alumni throughout the world,” Touney said.

The event will be open to both spring and summer graduates and their friends and family.

It will take place in the CFSB Center upper and lower concourse. The entrance will be at Upper Concourse B.

Anyone interested in attending can RSVP at [murraystate.edu/commencement/kickoff.aspx](http://murraystate.edu/commencement/kickoff.aspx).



File Photo

The Racer Graduation Kickoff is set for 3 to 5 p.m. on May 12 in the CFSB Center.



Graphic courtesy of @morgansmessage\_msu on Instagram  
The chapter hosts monthly meetings, focusing on different topics. Meeting dates can be found on Instagram.

### MORGAN'S MESSAGE, from page 2

Beyond talking about sports injuries, the chapter talked about burnout and eating disorders, while also leaving an open space for members to talk about their own personal struggles.

Morgan's Message is open to all student athletes. For more information, follow the chapter's Instagram @morgansmessage\_msu.

“As a student athlete, it is completely normal to feel stressed,” Villacres said. “There are things that other people can help you with that can lighten your load, and so

it's OK to lean on them. It's not a burden. It's completely normal.”

“Having this platform for student-athletes that's created by student-athletes is a way to create a safe space for us to talk about any struggles and hopefully to reduce the stigma.”

—Jenna Villacres,  
Founder of the Murray State chapter of Morgan's Message

If you or a loved one is struggling with suicidal thoughts or a mental health crisis, call the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988.

### MENTAL HEALTH GRANT, from page 2

“The grant will do what it needs to do in order to remove barriers to get students in these areas placement for their clinicals but hopefully [also] getting students from the community to come to Murray State and obtain their graduate degree with us so that they [can] go back home,” Patel said. “And they're able to be their school counselor or school psychologist of that district.”

Candidates admitted to this program must agree to work in one of 14 districts for three years.

These districts are Fulton Independent, Fulton County, Hickman County, Carlisle County, Ballard County, Paducah Independent, Mayfield Independent, Livingston County, Lyon County, Crittenden County, Christian County, Caldwell County, Dawson Springs Independent and Union County.

As the recipient of this grant, WKEC will work with a federal coordinator to ensure the grant's usage follows the Kentucky Department of Education's guidelines and the group meets the outcomes provided by the grant.

The grant requires an Institute of Higher Learning Partner, which will be the College of Education and Human Services. The college will provide services to the candidates and is the credentialing agent for the master's programs.

The college will also work with the WKEC to provide incentives in the program while overseeing the practicums and internships.

School districts will identify potential candidates for their counseling programs, and the

department will begin outreach to encourage students to apply.

Owen said there will be an application process to determine needs and eligibility that fit the Kentucky Department of Education's intent of the grant.

Once admitted, students will be enrolled in a series of hybrid classes geared towards educating them on issues students may face and how to handle them.

Students must meet accreditation standards and requirements in order to receive their full certification.

Candidates are encouraged to contact Patel at [spatel@murraystate.edu](mailto:spatel@murraystate.edu) to apply or learn more about the program.

Patel said it's extremely important all applicants have passed all credentials before entering the field.

“We won't allow folks to cross that threshold who we don't feel that we could put our stamp of approval on, so the trend that they get in our program is rigorous,” Patel said. “It meets the standards that not only that we have set but our accrediting accreditors have said.”

Patel said he is excited about the possibility of the grant diversifying the profession.

“Diversifying our student body, diversifying our profession and then in the long run, thinking about how kids who may not see themselves in occupations because they don't have anybody that looks like them in those occupations a lot,” Patel said. “If we have more diversity in all of our professions, then that's better for us as a community and better for us as a society.”

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# Our view:

## Young candidates need the opportunity to shine

The world of politics is getting older and older. Over the past 10 years, a president who is almost two times the average age of a U.S. citizen has run the country.

President Joe Biden, the oldest president in U.S. history, informally announced his plans to run for the 2024 Democratic presidential nomination in an interview with NBC News, on Friday, April 14th. Biden already made history in 2020 as the oldest presidential candidate ever elected at age 78, beating the previous record of 70 set by former President Donald Trump.

The issue of Biden running in 2024 is a bipartisan issue. Republicans have questioned Biden's mental capacity as a result of his age, and younger Democrats believe Biden does not represent current issues. According to a poll taken by Associated Press and the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), 3/4 of young people surveyed believe people in their generation would do a better job than those currently in office. They want to see a younger, more progressive candidate who cares about the concerns of future generations, like mental health and the climate crisis.

We at *The News* believe Biden should gracefully step away and let a more progressive candidate run against a potential Trump or Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis Republican nominee.

Biden has shown he does not care about the climate crisis. He approved the Willow Project, an Alaskan drilling project expected to release over 270 million metric tons of CO2 gas into the atmosphere. According to *The Washington Post*, in his first two years as president, Biden approved more drilling permits than Trump did in his first two years. The climate crisis is dangerous, and younger voters are understandably concerned about its



Wesley Hammer/*The News*

impacts.

Many of our legislators working right now will not be around to experience the extreme impacts of climate change. We will.

Two Democratic candidates have announced their primary challenge to Biden. Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the nephew of former President John F. Kennedy, announced his run on April 5. He is an environmental law specialist but garnered criticism for his anti COVID-19 vaccine stance and spread of misinformation about the vaccine. However, it is unlikely he will win the bid as most of his family members plan to support Biden in the primary.

The more interesting of the two candidates is the author and activist Marianne Williamson. Williamson's platforms include a \$15 minimum wage, cutting carbon emissions and offering free tuition to community college, making her a particularly appealing candidate to younger voters. She is running

a progressive campaign with a large base on TikTok and is polling well with the younger demographics. Echelon Insights ran a poll in which Williamson collected 10% of Democratic primary votes.

The main issue these two candidates have in common is neither one is younger than 65. While Williamson may be the most progressive candidate out of the three, she still falls into the same age category as Biden and Trump. As progressive as these candidates may seem, this does not change the fact their age does not reflect that of the average U.S. citizen.

As Gen Z begins to fall within the age requirements to run for the U.S. House of Representatives, the number of younger representatives will hopefully increase. The 2022 midterm elections saw the first Gen Z member elected to the House: Rep. Maxwell Frost, D-FL. Maxwell is on the older cusp of Gen Z, but the 2024 House elections should

see an increase in youthful, fresh faces grasping at the chance to make a difference for their state.

Young politicians have begun making an impact on local politics. Two of the legislators expelled from the Tennessee state House are under 30 and now have one of the biggest political platforms in the U.S.

Plenty of younger candidates could challenge Biden in the 2024 primary. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-NY, a favorite of many young progressives, will be turning 35 and eligible for the Democratic primary.

At the end of the day, we at *The News* acknowledge the significant strides Biden has made for LGBTQ+ rights and U.S. infrastructure, but it is time for him to give up the presidential reins before the 2024 presidential election.

Our government should look like and be in touch with the people they represent. Right now it only looks like they represent the baby boomers.



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# Baseball splits pair of one-game matchups

## Mercer continues tear with five hits in two games

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Murray State baseball split a pair of one-game series, defeating Alabama A&M and losing to UT Martin on Tuesday, April 18, and Wednesday, April 19. Sophomore outfielder Dustin Mercer and junior infielder Drew Vogel headed into the week hot, grabbing 10 hits and six hits respectively over a three-game weekend series against Illinois State. The two continued to hit well at the plate on Tuesday as Mercer had three hits and a home run, and Vogel got a hit and an RBI.

### vs. Alabama A&M

The bottom of the first inning started with a flyout by the lead-off hitter, but Mercer put the Racers on the board with a solo home run to center field.

After sophomore Carson Garner drew a walk in his first at-bat and stole second base, Vogel hit a ground-rule double that brought Garner home, extending the Racers' lead to 2 by the end of the first inning.

Despite a double play to start the bottom of the second inning, the Racers managed to get two runners on base before Mercer drove in sophomore outfielder Seth Gardner on a single to right field, adding another run.

Graduate outfielder Brennan McCullough stepped into the box and hit a single of his own, bringing in junior outfielder Cade Sammons for the Racers' fourth run of the game.

Garner stepped up to the plate and drove a ball deep to left-center field that landed beyond the fence to give the Racers their second home run of the game. That extended the Racers' lead to seven runs and five in the inning.

The Racers tried to get more runs in the inning after having two more

runners on base, but a ground out ended thesecondinningwiththeRacersup7-0.

Junior catcher Taylor Howell led off the third inning, getting hit by a pitch and stealing second base. Thanks to a double from Gardner, this led to a run for the Racers.

Sammons then drew a walk, and Gardner advanced to third on a wild pitch, which led to another run and RBI for Mercer, as he hit a single to bring Gardner home. With the bases loaded and two outs, the Racers hit a groundout, leading the Bulldogs 9-0 heading into the fourth inning.

Lack of action from the fourth, fifth and sixth innings brought the game into the seventh inning, where the Racers looked to end early.

The bases were loaded, and there were two outs as sophomore infielder Riley Hawthorne stepped up to the plate in the bottom of the seventh. With one swing of his bat, he brought the runner from third to home to give the Racers a 10-0 win in seven innings.

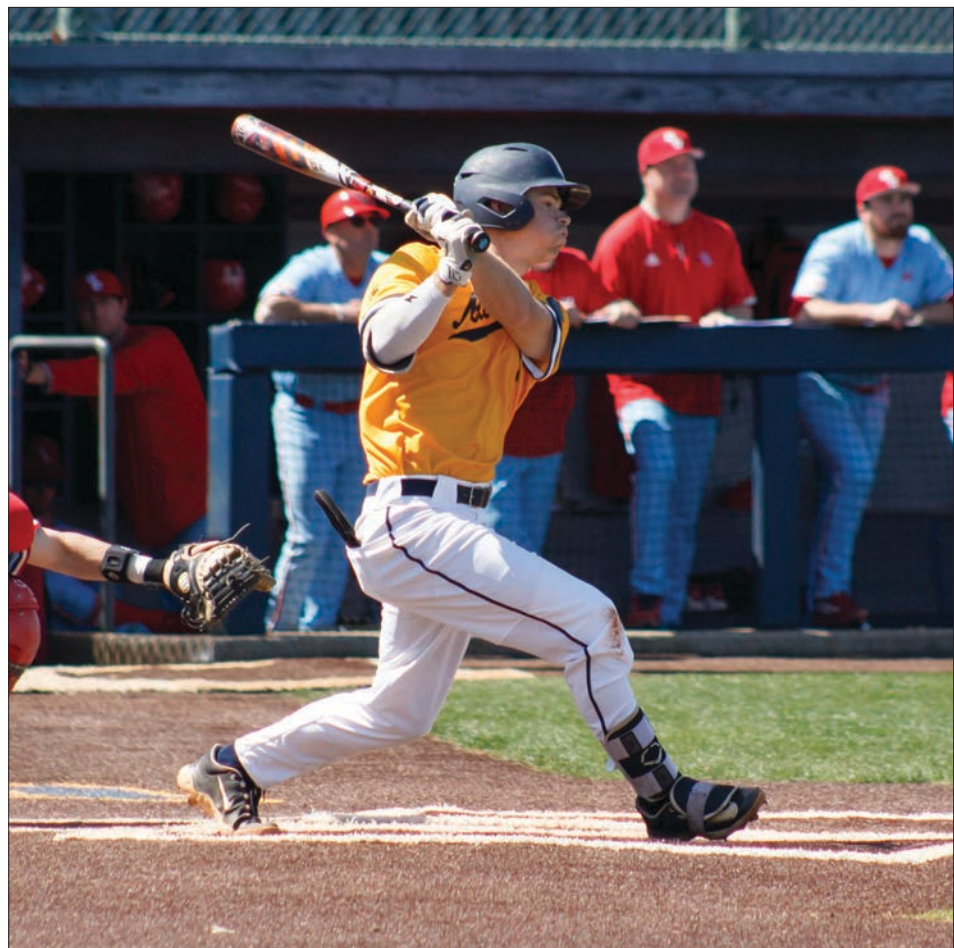
The Racers had 10 runs on 11 hits and no errors in the game. Mercer led the way with three hits and three RBIs. Garner, Hawthorne and Gardner each had two hits, and McCullough and Vogel each had one hit. Murray State pitchers gave up just two hits and four walks.

### vs. UT Martin

As the Racers traveled to Martin, Tennessee to take on the Skyhawks, Mercer got right back to work with a single in the top of the first inning. Junior infielder Logan Bland scored on a throwing error on the play, giving the Racers an early lead.

McCullough followed up with a single that brought Mercer around to score and put the Racers up 2-0 in the first inning.

The Skyhawks answered in the bottom of the third with a solo home



Rebeca Mertins Chiodini/The News

Sophomore infielder Riley Hawthorne gets a hit to bring the winning run home against Alabama A&M.

run from junior catcher Slade Taylor. That was followed by a double from junior utility player Andrew Fernandez that brought home junior outfielder Caleb Hobson to tie the game at two runs apiece.

Senior utility player Jack Culumovic gave UT Martin the lead in the bottom of the fourth inning with a solo home run.

The lead was extended in the bottom of the fifth when junior outfielder Zac Rice scored on a failed pickoff attempt by the Racers. Fernandez then doubled to bring Hobson home, and junior outfielder Will Smith singled to bring Fernandez home. As the inning came to an end, the Skyhawks led the Racers 6-2.

The Racers got a run back in the top of the seventh with Gardner scoring on a throwing error, but the Skyhawks answered in the bottom half of the inning with a sacrifice flyout that brought Smith across the plate to score.

In the eighth inning, the Racers continued their attempt at a

comeback as Hawthorne doubled to center field to score a pair of runs. Gardner followed that up with a double that brought Hawthorne around for a run. The Racers were down by one run heading into the ninth inning.

Even though there was some momentum heading into the inning, the Racers failed to get someone on base, falling to the Skyhawks 7-6.

Murray State totaled 14 hits and four errors in the matchup, while UT Martin had 10 hits and three errors. Mercer had two hits in the game, bumping his season batting average up to .350, the highest on the Racers.

Murray State sits at 20-18 on the season after the two games. The Racers are at a 7-5 record in the MVC after a series sweep against Illinois State—good enough for fourth in the Valley. They have five more three-game conference series and three more one-game series.

The Racers host their next opponent, the Evansville Purple Aces, in a three-game weekend series, with game one starting at 5 p.m. on Friday, April 21.

### THE NEWS' ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

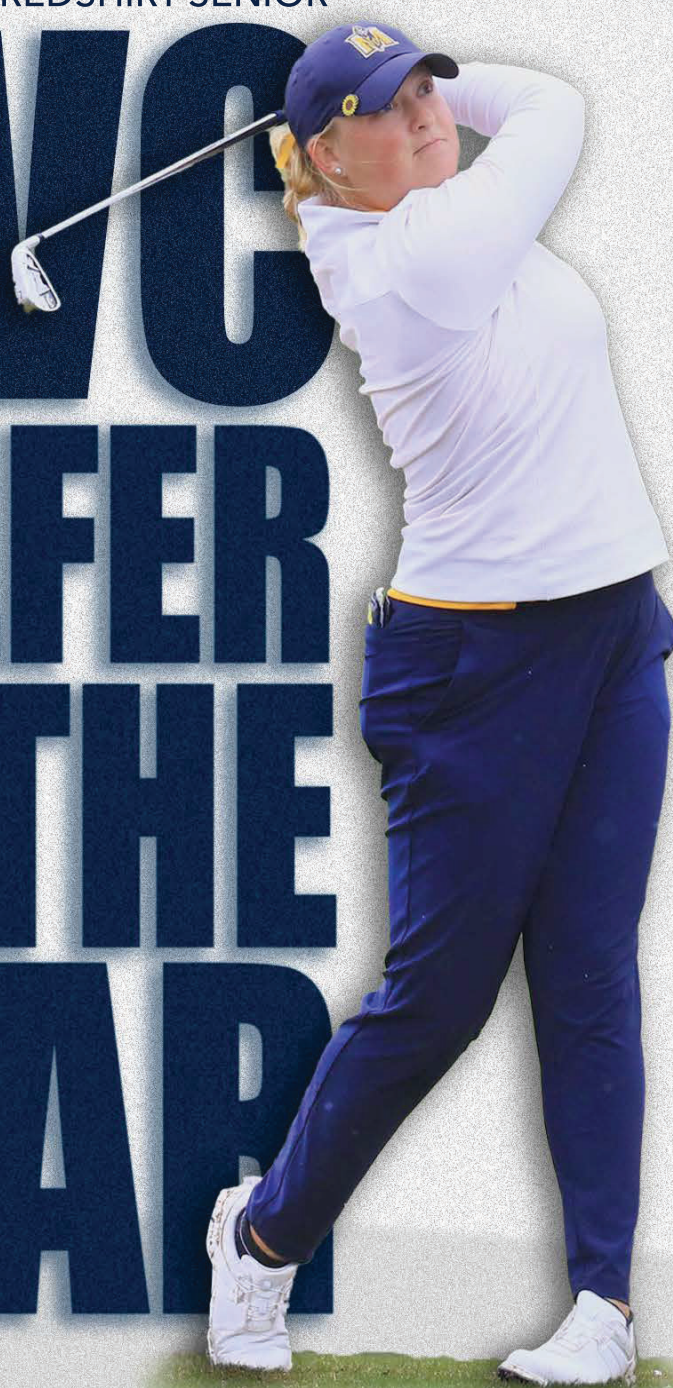


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**MVC  
GOLFER  
OF THE  
YEAR**



**GOLFER OF THE YEAR**  
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CONFERENCE

**RUNNER-UP CHAMPION**  
2023 MISSOURI VALLEY  
CONFERENCE  
(231 STROKES)

**CHAMPION**  
2022 OHIO VALLEY  
CONFERENCE  
(214 STROKES)

SHANN RILEY/ THE NEWS  
PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE WINDER

# Softball tops Aces in three-game series

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The Racers looked to improve their conference record against the visiting Evansville Aces on Friday, April 14, during Alumni Weekend at the University.

Evansville entered the weekend with a record of 20-20, as Murray State boasted a record of 26-14. The series between the two teams took place at Racer Field through Sunday, April 16.

## Game One

The Aces dominated in the Friday matchup, as they struck first in the top of the third inning. They piled on two more runs in the inning to take a 3-0 lead.

Evansville got hot again at the top of the fifth inning, where they scored four more runs after junior outfielder Alexa Davis hit a grand slam.

The Aces won the Friday game by a score of 7-0, as the Racers were unable to get a run on the board.

Junior right-handed pitcher Jenna Veber got the start on Friday and received the loss. Senior right-handed pitcher Hannah James and freshman right-handed pitcher Bre Haislip were also on the mound on Friday.

Between the three pitchers, the Racers allowed seven hits and three earned runs and struck 11 batters out. Murray State had some fielding trouble, committing three errors.

In total, the Racers recorded five hits. Freshman outfielder Jadyn Thompson, senior infielder Gracie Osbron, junior catcher Taylor Jackson, freshman infielder Ailey Schyck and freshman utility player Adison Hicks made up the Racers' five hits.

## Game Two

The Racers' luck turned around on Saturday, April 15, as they

were able to get on the board first at the bottom of the second inning. Senior infielder Lindsey Carroll singled to get on base. She stole second and advanced to third after a sacrifice flyout. Carroll then scored on a wild pitch to give the Racers a 1-0 lead.

Evansville responded in the top of the third inning after a two-run home run gave them the lead. After the game hit an offensive dry spell.

The next run came at the top of the sixth inning after Evansville hit a RBI triple to up their lead to 3-1. The Racers retaliated at the bottom of the same inning, thanks to a two RBI double by Schyck, evening the score. Freshman outfielder Bailey Broemmer was brought in to pinch hit, and she delivered, hitting a single to drive Schyck home and give the Racers a 4-3 lead.

The Aces tied the game back up in the top of the seventh inning after a sacrifice flyout brought in an Evansville baserunner. Murray State was unable to score in the bottom of the seventh inning, so the game went into extra innings.

The game was taken all the way to the bottom of the ninth inning. With two outs, Osbron doubled down the right field line to get into scoring position. The very next at-bat, junior infielder Jenna Fischer, doubled to right field to drive in Osbron and give the Racers a 5-4 win over the Aces.

James, Veber and Haislip all saw action on the mound on Saturday. They combined to allow eight hits, four earned runs and a walk, and struck two batters out. Haislip received the win, as she pitched the final two innings of the game.

As a team, the Racers had a total of 10 hits. Four were by Carroll, who had three singles, a double and a stolen base. Thompson, Osbron, Fischer, Jackson, Broemmer and Schyck all also had hits. Four Murray State batters walked.



Rebeca Mertins Chiodini/The News

Senior infielder Lindsey Carroll throws a runner out in game three against Evansville.

## Game Three

Schyck got things started in Sunday's game, as she hit a triple to drive Carroll home at the bottom of the second inning. Junior utility player Saxon Radcliffe doubled in the same inning to bring Schyck home to give the Racers a 2-0 lead after two innings.

Broemmer hit a single in the bottom of the fourth inning to bring in Carroll to score for her second time of the game. Sophomore outfielder Erin Lackey then doubled, allowing Broemmer to cross home plate and give the Racers a 4-0 lead.

Radcliffe drew a walk on a full count, and with the bases loaded in the bottom of the fifth inning, Fisher advanced to home and added another run onto the board for Murray State. A wild pitch in the same inning

opened the door for Hicks to score.

The Aces scored twice in the seventh inning, but the Racers' offensive onslaught was too much. Murray State won the final game of the series 6-2.

James got the win for the Racers, as she allowed one hit, three walks and no earned runs and struck seven batters out in six innings.

Murray State had eight hits and two walks in Sunday's win. Carroll recorded two hits, two runs, a walk and a stolen base. Lackey, Osbron, Schyck, Jackson, Radcliffe and Broemmer all also recorded hits.

After going 2-1 on the weekend, the Racers' record is now 28-15, fourth place in the MVC standings.

The Racers will travel on Friday, April 21 to play a weekend series against the Indiana State Sycamores.

# Murray State

Shann Riley/The News

## ATHLETICS SCHEDULE

### APRIL 21

Track & Field vs. Eastern Kentucky @ Richmond, KY **ALL DAY**  
Women's Tennis vs. MVC @ Normal, IL **10 a.m.**  
Softball vs. Indiana State @ Terre Haute, IN **3 p.m.**  
Baseball vs. Evansville @ Murray, KY **5 p.m.**

### APRIL 22

Track & Field vs. Eastern Kentucky @ Richmond, KY **ALL DAY**  
Softball vs. Indiana State @ Terre Haute, IN **2 p.m.**  
Baseball vs. Evansville @ Murray, KY **2 p.m.**

### APRIL 23

Mens's Golf vs. MVC @ Coal Valley, IL **ALL DAY**  
Softball vs. Indiana State @ Terre Haute, IN **NOON**  
Baseball vs. Evansville @ Murray, KY **1 p.m.**

### APRIL 24

Mens's Golf vs. MVC @ Coal Valley, IL **ALL DAY**

### APRIL 25

Men's Golf vs. MVC @ Coal Valley, IL **ALL DAY**  
Baseball vs. North Alabama @ Murray, KY **5 p.m.**

### APRIL 26

Softball vs. Belmont @ Murray, KY **3 p.m.**



Redshirt Sophomore Dustin Mercer, Baseball  
Rebeca Chiodini Mertins/The News

For more information  
visit [GoRacers.com](http://GoRacers.com)

# Rising prices, biodiversity win at photo competition

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Lifestyle Editor

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In an opportunity to exhibit their research, students across several different majors and academic disciplines came together to participate in the University's fifth Images of Research Competition.

The Images of Research Competition is a juried photography competition that challenges students to try and capture the essence of their academic research through photography. The contest is open to all students.

Murray State Libraries in collaboration with the Office of Research and Creative Activity has been in charge of administering the competition since its beginning in spring 2020.

Associate Professor of University Libraries Dana Thompson, who originally came up with the idea to bring the competition to campus, served as the head of this year's competition jury.

Thompson, alongside Assistant Professor of Photography and New Media Cintia Segovia Figueroa, Associate Professor of Evolutionary Biology Laura Sullivan-Beckers and Director of University Galleries T. Michael Martin, selected this year's winners.

Submissions were evaluated on the basis of overall originality or creativity, aesthetic appeal of the image, relationship between the image and entrant's research and the clarity of written description and title.

"I personally look for a strong connection between the image and the descrip-



Photo Courtesy of Dana Thompson  
Man rides bicycle through rural Mexico in Jesus Gallego Moreno's 'Hoy No Hoy Gasolina.'

tion, looking for the specific tie to the student's research to determine my rankings," Thompson said. "Each of this semester's winners and honorable mentions has a strong tie to research a student is doing at Murray State University."

The jury panel selected senior graphic design major Jesus Gallegos Moreno as the competition's first place winner. Moreno's image, "Hoy No Hoy Gasolina," explores

the impact of rising gasoline prices in developing countries like Mexico.

Moreno's image, shot in front of a primary school in the Mexican village he grew up in, depicts a man who is riding a bicycle. Moreno explains in his image description how gasoline prices have changed how transportation looks in rural Mexico.

"Some of the rural parts of these countries, to be specific,

have stopped buying new vehicles and moved to more conservative, or gas efficient, methods of transportation," Moreno wrote.

Moreno also said the rising gas prices have led to gas stations reducing their hours. Specifically, in rural regions, they may only be open a few days a week. Accordingly, his image was shot on one of the days the local gas stations were closed.

The second place image was shot by senior psychology major Vara Ramayanam.

Ramayanam's "The Healing Power of Flowers" explores the beneficial links that have been observed between flowers and psychological well-being.

Ramayanam captured the pink magnolias showcased in her image in front of Faculty Hall.

"I have always had an appreciation for the beauty and diversity of flowers," Ramayanam said. "I have spent time admiring flowers in gardens or parks, and over time, this appreciation has grown into a desire to learn more about them."

During the course of her research, Ramayanam has attributed benefits, such as decreased stress, improved mood and increased productivity, to flower exposure.

The competition's third place winner was submitted by graduate student Megan Zerger and titled "Colorado Tiger." Zerger received her Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife and conservation biology from Murray State in May 2022.

Zerger's research explores the role of hormone production in the severity of chytridiomycosis, a deadly disease that is responsible for global amphibian population declines and extinctions.

see **IMAGES OF RESEARCH**, page 8

# Philanthropy Week celebrates nonprofits, environment

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The nonprofit leadership studies program is hosting Philanthropy Week with a "Nonprofits and the Environment" theme for its first year with in-person activities.

The week was originally to be conducted in person when it began in 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic changed those plans. This year's events will be the first to occur in person since Philanthropy Week began.

The Nonprofit Resource Center, the Department of Organizational Communication and Leadership and the Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business made the event possible.

Elise Kieffer, assistant professor and director of the NLS program, said Philanthropy Week is intended to give students an opportunity to engage with the nonprofit sector.

"These events are intended to be campus wide," Kieffer said. "This is the first year that we've had a focus, as opposed to just all of nonprofit and philanthropy. Because of the really horrible natural disasters we've experienced in Kentucky the last few years, the tornadoes and the flooding, we decided to focus on conservational advocacy and education."

University alumna Shelly Morris gave a lecture titled "The Nature Conservancy of Kentucky" on Monday, April 17.



Photo courtesy of canopyky.org  
Canopy, a nonprofit that aims to help improve Kentucky businesses, will be speaking in the Curris Center theater at 7 p.m. today.

NLS students also gave various presentations on environmental nonprofits on Tuesday, April 18 as a requirement for their Nonprofits and the Environment course.

The Louisville-based entity Canopy is hosting the keynote presentation in the Curris Center theater at 7 p.m. today. Canopy aims to promote best practices within the for-profit sector and certifies Kentucky businesses for their work toward social and environmental impact.

To close Philanthropy Week, the Nonprofit Resource Center will conduct the Donna Hurdon Award for Civic Engagement Ceremony in the Business

Building on Friday, April 21.

"The award was established to recognize recipients who embody Donna's steadfast and compelling commitment to philanthropy and civic engagement," according to a University press release.

A graduating student also will receive the Nonprofit Senior of the Year Award on Friday.

"No matter what our job is in the nonprofit sector, at some point, you're going to be part of...either a fundraiser or a networking or advocacy event," Kieffer said. "We try to give our students opportunities to participate in and even plan and coordinate these kinds of events."

Kieffer said she values Philanthropy Week because it reminds people the NLS program is active.

"Nonprofit as a field of study is relatively new," Kieffer said. "Really, for maybe only the past 20 years, have you been able to get a degree in nonprofit. ...By doing these kinds of events, we are educating the campus that we are here and that we are interactive and that it's something fun to be a part of. Not just fun but impactful."

Anyone with questions about Philanthropy Week or the NLS program can contact Kieffer at (270) 809-3307 or [ekieffer@murraystate.edu](mailto:ekieffer@murraystate.edu).



Photo courtesy of Dana Thompson

(Clockwise from left) Honorable Mention Vanessa Sivils's 'Hopeful, Not Helpless,' depicts bobcat; Second place winner 'The Healing Power of Flowers' by Vara Ramayanam depicts magnolias; and third place winner 'Colorado Tiger' by Megan Zenger depicts the Arizona tiger Salamander.

### IMAGES OF RESEARCH, from page 7

"Colorado Tiger" depicts the Arizona tiger salamander, which is the only salamander species found in Colorado. Zenger said in her image description the salamander in the image was found during the course of her data collection for her master's thesis.

The competition also recognized two honorable mentions: "Hopeful, Not Helpless" by senior earth and environmental science major Vanessa Sivils and "Pick up your feelings" by junior studio art major Wesley Hammer.

Sivils depicts a 6-year-old bobcat named Barkley in her image. The image and Sivils' research explores the lives of animals that are kept in captivity for various reasons.

The bobcat pictured in the image has lived most of its life in captivity in Land Between the Lakes.

"As an 8-week-old kitten, [Barkley] was struck by a car that shattered his back legs and lower spine," Sivils

wrote. "He made a successful recovery over the long course of a year, but his time in rehab has rendered him imprinted on humans. Because of his familiarity, he is no longer a candidate for release."

Hammer's image, shot at Nashville's Play Dance Bar, depicts a drag performer named Nichole Ellington Dupree. Hammer's research and image explores gender presentation and identity.

"As a transgender individual, I've always loved being able to explore the LGBT community and showcase the joy of being queer," Hammer said in. "It is important for me to showcase this joy because many people forget that we are human too... I want to show how the government can not stop people from being the best version of themselves."

To see all of the winning images from this year's Images of Research competition, visit [digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/steeplechase](https://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/steeplechase).



## Senior art exhibits explore domesticity, religion

### Raleigh Hightower

Lifestyle Editor

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For many students in the Department of Art and Design, their educational careers at Murray State lead up to the moment they display their final Bachelor of Fine Arts exhibition in the Clara M. Eagle Gallery.

This semester's series of senior practicum exhibitions included work from eight students pursuing their BFA, and seven students pursuing either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science within the Department of Art and Design.

The opening reception for the senior exhibitions was held on Friday, April 14. At the reception event, students were given a chance to give statements about their artwork and the pieces featured in their exhibits.

The first exhibit visitors will see when entering the gallery from the Mary Ed Mecoy Hall Gallery entrance is senior graphic design major Abby Kyle's "Olive Branch." In Kyle's exhibit, she explores the creative process and design behind creating a clothing brand.

Within the exhibit are several photos of models wearing the "Olive Branch" T-shirt designs, isolated copies of T-shirt designs hung on one wall, several actual T-shirts and the "Olive Branch" brand logo.

According to Kyle's artist statement, her designs have ties to Biblical themes.

"My aim with the apparel I'm designing is to spark conversation and reflection rather than explicitly state any specific ideas or values the wearer might hold," Kyle wrote. "Not everyone will interpret each of my designs to have ties to Biblical themes, but I hope the viewer wonders about the importance of the words and the nature imagery."

The exhibits featured on the main floor of the Eagle Gallery include



Kay Shackelford's 'honey, i'm home' exhibit on display in the Clara M. Eagle Gallery as a part of the senior practicum and BFA exhibitions on display. Abbie Michalek/ The News

"Finding Solace" by senior studio art major Cassie Melcher; "Artisticco" by senior graphic design major Alma Garcia; "Corporeal Forms" by senior studio art major Ella Curran; "honey, i'm home" by senior studio art major Kay Shackelford; "Clamor of a Catalyst" by senior studio art major Gretchen Ruth; and "Cosmic Displacement" by senior graphic design major Meg Slatton.

"honey, i'm home" by Shackelford explores the phenomenon, emotions and circumstances that complicate the surface appearance of objects, specifically domestic objects.

The exhibit is dominated by a large kitchen table in its center, surrounded by oil paintings of common domestic items and scenes. The scenes in these paintings include the ironing of clothes, removing a stain from a tie, washing dishes and the cleaning of an oven.

"My work utilizes motifs such as

irons, laundry baskets and kitchenware that are attached to traditional gender roles, examining the tension that these items emit and at the forefront, how I have internalized it," Shackelford wrote in her artist statement. "This deeply contrasts my love for the domestic and its ability to foster moments of intimate care and bonding."

"Cosmic Displacement" by Slatton explores the themes of ethnicity, race, sexuality and self acceptance through comic art containing imagery of space, aliens and "otherworldly" objects.

One of the works featured in the exhibit, "Interposed & Orbiting," is a collection of sci-fi graphic novels that center around aliens, which Slatton says is a metaphor for her own Mexican identity.

"Using aliens and outer space as metaphors allows me to create a more digestible story for my

audience, while also allowing me to depict my experiences in a more comical way," Slatton wrote in her artist statement. "I love that my multicultural experience will be more easily understood by a wider audience, but it's frustrating to feel the need to simplify my experiences."

The upper floor of the Eagle Gallery is housing the BA/BS practicum exhibit alongside senior graphic design major Jesus Gallegos Moreno's BFA exhibit, "Vulture Pictures."

Contributors to the BA/BS practicum exhibition include senior studio art majors Rebecca Curtis, Mahaila Rickman, Skyler Pointer, Molly Ramsey, Winter Smith, Olivia Swaidner and Miranda Tynes.

Anyone interested in viewing all the senior exhibitions can visit the Clara M. Eagle Gallery on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The exhibits will be in the gallery until May 4.