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THE

STUDENT NEWS MAGAZINE

# CHRONICLE



# THE CHRONICLE

The North Central College Chronicle is published once a semester by students of North Central College as a forum for providing news, opinion and information of interest to the campus and the greater community.

The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Chronicle editorial board or of North Central College.

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

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What defines us?

It's a question we try to tackle in this issue. We share the stories about what makes us seen and understood. We look at what differentiates us from each other, but also what brings us closer together.

We look into ourselves and explore the characteristics that define us individually: sexuality, music, fashion, athletics. But we also look around to see what has defined our campus: the emerging rise of NCC football, the college's struggles with accepting its racist past, managing bias incidents in recent history and promoting a culture of diversity and inclusion for future students.

While we explore what has defined in the past, we open the opportunity into how we can define ourselves for the future. So, while you read through our stories, we encourage you to think about what has made you the person you are today.

And remember that what defines you today isn't certain to define you tomorrow. Identities evolve as we and societies evolve.

So, as we continue to define our own stories and the stories around us, enjoy The Chronicle's latest print issue.

When brainstorming ideas for this 2022 fall semester print issue, we knew that we wanted to create something that everyone could relate to. To be able to open this book and feel seen and understood. For our student staff to be able to write something that defines them. To share stories and bring us closer together. We all have different identities, but we aren't all that different from one another

Identity is one of those words that has differing meanings and definitions between individuals. Gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, beliefs and more are building blocks upon the foundation of identity. We all developed through the years and as a team, we wanted to be able to create a hard copy of stories that have created us into the people we are today.

We would love to thank our writers and creators. Without them, we would not be able to put together this very important print issue. They collaborate and put together an even better edition each semester. The writers are creative and passionate. Our illustrators, photographers and designers are compelling and talented. They make this job as co-editors in chief extremely easy because we have such a dedicated team.

To you, our reader. Thank you. The Chronicle is known for their online coverage of campus and local events. However, the constant positive feedback we get from our audience about our print issues provides us with affirmation to continue doing what we love. We hope that you find something in this print issue that resonates with you. A story that brings back a memory from your childhood. A quote that reminds you of who you were in the past and who you are currently. A graphic or photo that makes you ponder how a print issue could make you stop and think about the people around you and how we affect the world around us.

Again, thank you for your constant support and we are extremely grateful and proud to share with you our identity print issue.

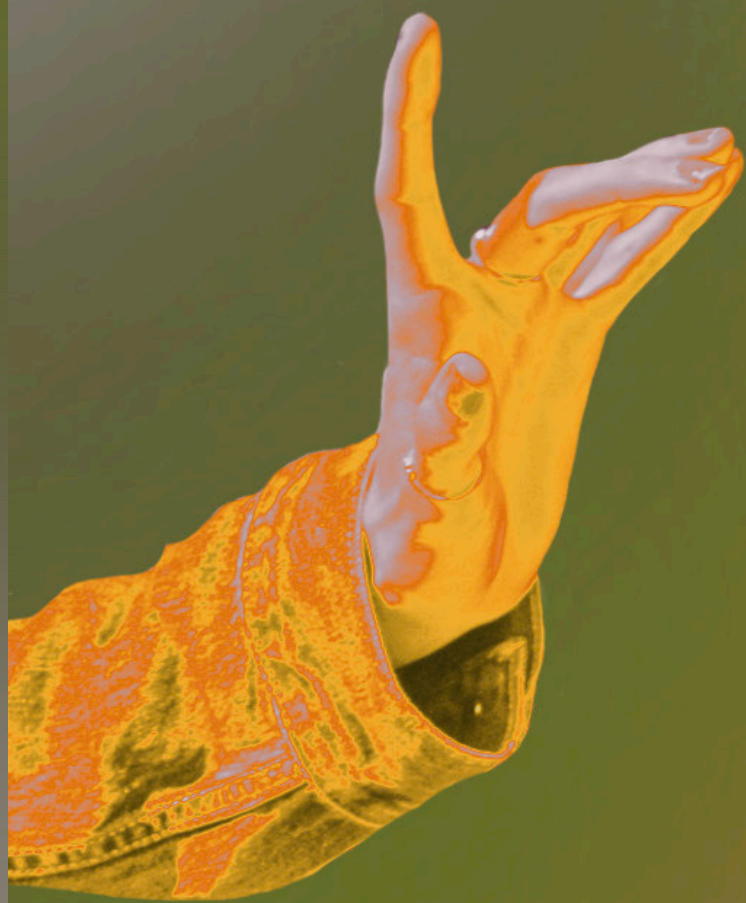
Best,

Kristin Roy-Chowdhury, '23  
Adrian Martinez-De la Cruz, '23

Handwritten signatures of the editors. The top signature is 'Kristin Roy-Chowdhury' and the bottom signature is 'Adrian Martinez-De la Cruz'.

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# IDENTITY SHAPES YOU YOUR STORY SHAPES THE WORLD

Sabha Fatima - Co-News Editor  
Graphics by Caitlin Mourek

Who am I? I am a first-generation immigrant, a minority in both race and religion - a somebody, one rainbow fish in a crowded sea. At the same time, I am also a leader in many ways, whether a third-year senior in college or an older sister with much guidance to give. I have talents and skills that define me and challenge me every day - a someone; a person with a story to tell.

That person was molded and empowered every time my perspective was challenged by the people in my life. And yes, more often than not, my point of view has been challenged before it was accepted, because of who I am or what I look like. Only after hearing my story, my perspective, have all my identities been welcomed or at least tolerated due to stereotypes and societal norms that were not easy to dismantle. There are people whom I look up to, and now those that look up to me. As people, we influence those around us in ways that we may never find out, strengthening some people and causing others to reflect.

Who am I? Well, it is difficult to answer that question; I end up editing my response depending on who is asking and why they are asking. Like quickly flipping through the pages of a picture book, I can code-switch between several languages, once again, depending on whom I am speaking to. I am fluent in some, others not so much. When I moved to New York with my parents as a first-generation immigrant at five years old, I had to shift my language enough to adapt to my peers; English first, then all others.

I am a Muslim American. I am an Indian American. I was born in Qatar in the Middle East but grew up mostly in America. I grew up in New York and Illinois and went to school in the United States from kindergarten until college. I am not one; I am all. I guard each of those identities and fight to keep each one safe. But holding onto one aspect of my identity, I tend to let another go for a bit. I re-adjust to make room for another and the previous one slips away and out of sight for a while. I identify as one of those, or all of those at the same time - and I cannot choose between them.

Who am I? I am a daughter, a sister, and a friend. I am the eldest of three and the guinea pig child that had to carve her own way in the world. Thankfully, I had a bit of help from parents, professors, friends and other role models along the way, but sometimes it was my own self that pushed me through the darkness to see the light of the next day. Every one of my roles brings new meaning to my life and bouncing between each of

them multiple times a day can be an exhilarating task that carries a heavy burden. But I persist, as we all do.

You are a reader and I am a writer. Tomorrow, you could be a speaker, and me, a listener. Each person sees me from a sole perspective, yet I see them with all of mine. There is beauty in that perspective, but no single person sees the whole story, which makes it all the more important to share each of your stories with the world.

I am a college student studying neuroscience, psychology and communications. I am both an international student and a first-generation student. I am an editor and writer, a mental health activist and a mentor to peers and siblings. I am a learner and a thinker, but I am also an innovator and an influencer. I listen to people younger than me and see the changes the world has gone through since I was in their place. I listen to people older than me and absorb the wisdom and knowledge they bring to experiences I have not yet sought out.

Who am I? Sometimes I am hard-working, and sometimes I am lazy. Sometimes I am wise, sometimes not so much. Sometimes I am outgoing, sometimes very reserved. Sometimes I fly, sometimes I fall. Sometimes I am a leader, sometimes a follower. I am a disciplined student, an academic; science is my passion. At the same time, I am someone that loves to have fun with family and friends because that is what matters most to me at the end of the day. All these traits blend to form one person that changes considerably with the flow of time: me.

With hatred spreading like wildfire in the world today, we have no choice but to impart our knowledge, speak the truth and tell our stories to uproot evil and plant the seeds of some semblance of good. Our words have incredible power and it matters how we use them to guide ourselves and others. The great part is that no one person is clear-cut and well-defined by any given label. Restricting ourselves to one label, one trait, or one identity, will not do justice. As we say in Psychology, you are not one single unitary self, but a multitude of selves and personas.

We are all results of actions, thoughts, and processes - we are a complex set of roles and stories that only we have read page-to-page in our hearts. I have shared a snippet of my story with you today, and maybe you will share yours one day with the world.

SO I ASK YOU ,  
WHO ARE YOU ?

# YOU 'RE MORE THAN WHAT THE STATSHEET SAYS

Sam Corbett- Sports Editor  
Graphics by Caitlin Mourek  
Photography by Karen McClain

There's no surprise that sports help define us, especially if we are athletes. Our daily schedules are mapped out; we know when we eat, practice, work out, do homework and sleep. Sometimes, our lives are constantly rotating back and forth between school and our sports.

The other day, when filling out a personality quiz for a class. It asked me for three skills and things I enjoy doing. I genuinely found it difficult to name something that didn't have to do with baseball or lifting weights. It stood out. All through high school, the first word that people associated with me was "baseball". Was the same thing happening now?

There's no way to escape that feeling sometimes. As an athlete, you spend countless hours perfecting your craft. You want to represent your team, coaches, family and everyone else rooting for you. You feel compelled to succeed at the highest possible level. Sometimes, life gets lost in the grind of being a student-athlete. You forget to check in with your friends, you aren't as social, or whatever it may be.

At times, it feels like the only thing that matters in life are the stats next to your name. We've all had a great game and felt on top of the world. We've also all had terrible games where we just want to be shut off from the outside world.

Everyone must give up their sport at some point. Besides the stats, what else is life about once you hang up the cleats? For some, that's a dreadful question.

The good news is that you're in charge. You decide what happens in your life. For me, I know baseball has played a big part in my upbringing and my identity. It taught me how to fail and how to learn from failure, how to be a team player, how to communicate and countless other life lessons.

"(Volleyball) has taught me a lot of things but I've learned a lot off of the court. Whether it's personal successes or failures, my life outside of the gym is just as valuable to me as it is when I'm in the gym," said Sarah Elischer, '24.

Personally, baseball also taught me that I have a life outside the game. Having dealt with injuries, I've had extended periods of time where I couldn't compete,

and I was stuck having to spend my time doing other things. Because of those instances, I learned how I truly like to spend my free time, and I knew how to answer those personality quizzes for class without just sounding like a jock.

I learned how much I want to try stand-up comedy by trying to write and perform jokes. I learned how much I like to analyze movies. I learned how much I like to work on cars. Most importantly, I learned that I'm more than just an arm that can throw a baseball. There's more to me than just being a jock.

"I know I'm more than just an athlete because I'm somebody's daughter, sister, cousin or trusted friend, and they'll all value me the same no matter how I perform in a game," said Elischer.

Sports help define us. They give us a sense of belonging and camaraderie. They are a part of our lives, but they should never be our entire life. We're more than what numbers show up next to us in the record books at the end of each game. We have hobbies, interests and stories that help define us that don't have a game or match involved in them.

Sports are a part of our stories, but not the entire picture.

"Soccer boosts my public image. It connects me with others, and I've grown close with a ton of people. After years of close friendship, there's more to my relationships with them than the game," said Sid Marquardt, '24.

Yes, I identify as a baseball player. But I'm also a son, brother, friend, broadcaster, writer and student. The game means so much to me, but it's not the entire story.



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# HOW TO IDENTIFY YOURSELF AS MORE THAN AN ATHLETE



# A WORTHY PROTAGONIST

Elizabeth Meagher - News Writer  
Graphics by Caitlin Mourek  
Photography by Sarah DeRosa

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I am equal parts blood and ink. Perhaps in the novels my mother wrote, the imagination my father instilled in me and the tales I spun in my head like straw into gold, I first began to see myself. I began to discover the extraordinary in the mundane.

I am a story, though I may not be a worthy protagonist. As often as I am clever, benevolent, hopeful and heroic. I'm idiotic, self-serving, pessimistic and reliant. Sometimes I fear I fall more into the latter category. But I rest my case. I am a story. Or, more accurately, I am a library, a culmination of thousands of stories that make me who I am.

As I mentioned, my mom is a storyteller. When I was in elementary school, she wrote me into her books: a precocious imp of a girl with a dirty-blonde bob and a penchant for cracking cases. As much as my mom wanted her character to live up to me, I wanted to live up to the tales she wrote, to be worthy of one of my own.

From then on, I spent as much time in imaginary worlds as I did in reality. That's how I became Nancy Drew, finding clues where there were none with my trusty flashlight in hand. Next was Hermione Granger. Then Ella of "Ella Enchanted."

Though the stories I read have changed; I haven't. On some days, I'm Elizabeth Bennet; witty, bold and unapologetic. Other times I'm Scheherazade, telling wild tales to entertain myself and others, and occasionally doing so to weasel my way out of trouble. But, most of the time, I'm me. A combination of everything I've read, experienced, felt and done. I'm the quiet bookworm in the corner, the dreamer who lives in memories and future fantasies.

I may not be a worthy protagonist, but I'm a protagonist all the same. I'm stuck seeing the world through my lens, tainted as it is at the end of a long and arduous day, I reach for my notebook and twist my ordinary experiences into fantastical ones. Maybe my fallibility isn't a curse; maybe it's a blessing. Aren't flawed heroines much more interesting?



# SILKEN STORIES

Jules Billings - Culture & Vision Editor

Graphics by Caitlin Mourek

Photography by Sarah DeRosa

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Fashion forward, fashion fail, fashion flop and so on. Clothing is the first layer of defense we present to the outside world. To find the heart of a person, one must first get through layers of feathered boas, pressed suits and bedazzled jean jackets.

These pieces of fabric often carry deeper meanings than one might suppose. As individuals, we choose certain items based on how they make us feel or what impression we want to give. As a society, we popularize specific styles and trends to fit larger messages about our cultural values.

So, what does our clothing say about us? Why do we choose the things we wear?

## A TALE OF TWO TRENDS

With each fashion choice we make, whether we understand our decisions or not, we send a message to the world. As time passes, popular culture, both consciously and subconsciously, picks certain styles to bring into the limelight.

Current trends move quickly and are largely inspired by social media platforms, like TikTok and Instagram, as well as celebrity influencers. Ongoing fashion trends include the “clean girl” aesthetic. The style often includes solid, neutral colors, slicked back buns, light makeup, baggy jeans and a youthful glow. This look tells a story to the world: the wearer is put together, healthy and most likely wealthy.

In recent years, purchasing and wearing clothing from thrift stores has also become popular. What once may have indicated that someone came from a lower income household has drastically shifted into a statement of identity. Now, those who thrift are considered bold, trendy and environmentally friendly.

Molly Fisher, '23, weighed in on how she uses clothing to express herself:

“I like to dress like the chaotically organized artist. Anything that screams dark academia, Jane Austen protagonist, 80s tomboy or Annie Hall. Altogether, it’s a show of independence and intelligence. I’m a creative person, and I hope that is expressed through my fashion choices. I like feeling like myself in what I wear,” said Fisher.

Today’s trends differ drastically from those a few years ago. No longer do most young women wear Puka shell necklaces and oversized tees. Times change and styles fade, but the fads we choose to follow, and those we dislike, still shape the identity we present to the world.

## CODIFIED CLOTHING

As trends come and go, clothing often becomes coded. Popular culture will pin a label to certain style choices. Suddenly, the cuff of a pair of jeans indicates a person’s sexuality; a large collection of flannels in a girl’s closet must mean they like other girls, and a lack of clothing certainly shows that they sleep around.

There are religious markers we express through our clothing. Someone with a gold cross around their neck might try to indicate to the world that they follow Christianity. Likewise, a kippah paired with a Star of David may portray the same dedication, but to Judaism.

A headscarf is also commonly worn in the Muslim community to show religious commitment, although many Western cultures have codified the piece of fabric to represent oppression and a lack of self-autonomy. While certain instances exist where the choice to wear the hijab is abused by authority figures, it is generally a means for Muslim women to show respect to God.

Labels come and go, and different articles of clothing come to represent different identities, but ultimately the wearer oversees what their choices mean.



## STYLISH STORYTELLING

In all actuality, most people dress for comfort or what they believe compliments them the best. Many reject brands and choose clothing based purely on their own whims. Maybe they're influenced by popular culture, maybe not, but their style still tells a story.

It weaves a tale of likes and dislikes, passions and fleeting fancies. Our styles constantly change as we grow.

“Fashion means how I express myself through the clothes and accessories I wear. It's unique for everyone and it's always changing” said Nicole Brandy, '24, “loved playing dress up when I was younger and I still think about fashion as that now, a real-life game of dress up.”

As a society, fashion means freedom. It represents the choice of how to present ourselves to the world. We choose which parts of us are acceptable for public consumption and which to keep buried, and we hand them to those around us on the platter of our appearance. It is an intricate web we weave—a story with redacted parts— but it's one threaded with silks, cottons and polyester.

# AN EXPLORATION OF FASHION AND IDENTITY

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# IDENTITY IN A SOCIAL VACUUM

Abigail Black - News Writer  
Graphics by Caitlin Mourek

A lack of social experience can complicate identity development, especially during pre-teen and early teenage years. I'm sure many people remember that period from around fourth grade to the end of high school, although the content and level of fondness may vary. How did your circle of friends, afterschool activities, and classes help shape who you are today? Can you imagine what it may be like for those who have gone through much of school online? Being able to grow your identity without peers be influenced by and mirror is difficult, I know from personal experience.

When I was about fourteen years old, my family moved from the little rural town we had lived in since I was two, to a still small but growing suburban area. I had been homeschooled for a good four years by then and had absolutely no desire to go back to public school like my sister did. I have always been very introverted, with a tendency toward anxiety. The idea of going back to school, introducing myself in front of a classroom of teenagers, sitting in a cafeteria, and walking among them in crowded hallways sounded absolutely horrible. So, while my little sister returned to public school, I said "no thank you please keep me in homeschooling". And my parents were alright with that. Although it is not a decision I necessarily regret, it did have consequences for me.

Due to my homeschooling, I had a limited number of friends that I kept in touch with. After moving, those friends were about an hour away. We found that we didn't talk much anymore. And without school obligating to me into meeting and interacting with my peers, I found myself at a loss of what to do socially. I'll admit it took me a little while to realize this, as I mentioned before I was never the most outgoing person, as a child often my favorite thing to do was curl up with a book. But eventually I did take notice, feeling disconnected and discontent, but I had no clue what to do about it.

I distinctly remember sitting with my mother on our back patio on a summer night, talking about these feelings. As it turns out my mother was feeling much the same as me. She has a variety of health problems that have kept her as a stay-at-home mother for much of my life. In moving, not just my social support system had been demolished but hers as well. And neither of us had the means or idea of how to change that. We just sat companionably there in our pajamas and robes, aching in tempo, watching the stars.

It got better eventually, of course. I began to attend community college and my mother made friends at church and with her nurses. But that experience had an effect, especially because of the age I was at. Without peers

to stumble through teenage years with, I found myself experiencing the trials of 'finding yourself' with only my family for company. It took until I was nineteen for me to feel fully comfortable with myself.

Of course, I was more of an unusual case. But although I supported social distancing, I sometimes look back and ponder the effect COVID isolation could have on teenagers' personal identity.





# DIVERSITY AND BIAS ON CAMPUS

Adrian Martinez - De La Cruz - Co-Editor in Chief  
Graphics by Caitlin Mourek  
Photography by Sarah DeRosa



According to NCC's website, the college values "diversity in all its forms, and we are committed to building a welcoming, inclusive community for all students, faculty and staff."

However, the school's recent record of bias incidents, especially before the coronavirus pandemic, have muddied NCC's commitment to diversity.

Beginning in the fall of 2018, student researchers discovered racist imagery in The Chronicle and NCC's yearbook from the 1900s that included displays of minstrel shows, –racist theatrical shows that based its entertainment on stereotypes– blackface and overall racist attitudes the college held in the 1900s.

## SPARKS FOR CHANGE

Dorothy Pleas is the associate dean of students, as well as the director of Multicultural Affairs, which is in charge of providing diversity, equity and inclusion programming and training for students on campus.

Pleas is also the chair of the Bias Incident Response Team, or BIRT. It's comprised of multiple members from different areas of the college, such as Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Athletics, Residence Life, and Campus Safety. BIRT is tasked with handling bias incident reports. Learning For Justice defines a bias incident as "conduct, speech or expression motivated, in whole or in part, by bias or prejudice."

Davin Allen, '20, M'22, is the area hall director for Seager and Schneller residence halls. Allen has been at the college since 2016 as an undergraduate and graduate student, as well as a resident assistant. Allen said many things occurred in the last couple of years that sparked significant change in how the school's administration looked at diversity on campus. For example, two major incidents involving dry erase boards on campus caused a larger campus forum that included faculty, administrators and senior leadership of the college. These incidents not only sparked a campus forum, but also student protests.

According to Pleas, around 2019 and 2020, Multicultural Affairs saw a trend of racial bias incidents on campus which including vandalism and slurs being yelled out of cars. These insinuations spurred students and administration to ask for more training for incoming students in an effort to make the campus more inclusive.

Post-pandemic, Allen gives credit to the Office of Multicultural Affairs, as he said it has been structured to benefit student on an individual basis. He also credits the resurgence of multicultural student organizations like the Latinx Student Association, Black Student Association, Korean Club and Muslim Student Association for getting student involved again.

## ISSUES THAT PERSISTS

Despite the progress made, Allen still believes there are ways the college can still improve. "I can't say it's perfect, right? Because I know that there's still students on campus that are saying that they don't feel like they belong. They don't feel like there's space for them on this campus," he said.

Allen believes that hiring diverse faculty and staff will benefit students. When they see a professor or upperclassmen who look like them, they can be a resource that can provide some mentorship according to him. Allen also said that money needs to be set aside and used for diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

In more recent times, Pleas notes a few issues, such as a trend in transphobic and homophobic vandalism on campus. As well as interactions some students had with faculty they found offensive and microaggressive.

She also said sometimes Multicultural Affairs has issues getting students engaged in trainings and programming, especially if the students are not part of the identity being covered. "We try to emphasize that for different commemorations or trainings or dialogues we're having, those are open to all student," Pleas said. "We encourage in our presentations at the CARD classes, is come out to events, or bring a friend and come out to a club meeting."

And while Pleas said she has not noticed people push back against the trainings, in Fall 2019, mandatory racial bias training for NCC students caught the attention of far-right website Breitbart. They interviewed Hope Flynn, a NCC student who was the president of the college's Turning Point USA chapter at that time. Flynn told the website the trainings provided obvious information and found some of the concepts as ridiculous.

## A NEED FOR TEAM EFFORT

Not only does Allen think it will take the school's commitment and effort to promote diversity and inclusion on campus. But he believes it needs to include the surrounding communities to be on the same page with NCC in their institutional efforts to help and support students from various backgrounds. However, whatever next steps the college takes, Allen thinks they need to happen soon.

**"I THINK STUDENTS ARE TIRED OF CONVERSATION AND WANT ACTION NOW."**

# NAVIGATING A WORLD THAT REVOLVES AROUND ROMANCE





## A PERSONAL ESSAY

Josiah Cook - News Writer  
Graphics by Caitlin Mourek  
Photography by Sarah DeRosa

Growing up, I always thought the romance songs that got drilled into my eardrums were something to be made fun of and not actually taken seriously. They were always about heartbreak and their significant other leaving them. Even though some of them are a little bit cheesy, people actually enjoy them because they make them feel less alone in their struggles.

My sister and cousins were in the car one time and an Olivia Rodrigo song came on, and they were singing their hearts out. My sister and I have made fun of those kinds of songs and have made over-dramatic impressions of heartbroken people.

Now, my sister and cousins are in serious relationships. I'm happy that they found people who they feel comfortable with, but I still find myself bewildered by the concept of people relating to songs such as the Rodrigo song and playing them because they miss their significant other.

I will admit, I do enjoy a romantic song, but only if it's about a crush or liking the idea of someone not actually wanting to follow through with being in a relationship. I know what that's like, I've been there. But navigating a romantic situation always seemed like something that happened to other people, not me. I know that sounds like the precursor to a young adult novel where the "quirky" girl falls in love with her dream guy. In most books it's very heteronormative, but that's the thing: I've met the perfect person for me, they make me feel content and happy. But, I have absolutely no desire to be romantically involved with them.

Over quarantine, I discovered that I identify as aromantic and asexual, or someone who doesn't experience romantic or sexual attraction. Hence the "a-" prefix, which means nothing or absent. The whole aroace umbrella can be very confusing. You can be aromantic and have a sexual orientation, asexual and have a romantic orientation, or you can be aromantic as well as asexual and have neither. Being aromantic and asexual differs from being allosexual or someone who does experience romantic or sexual attraction. It can be used as an umbrella term for people, regardless of orientation, who experience sexual or romantic attraction.

You may be thinking, being asexual or aromantic can't exist, everyone should experience those feelings. However, from personal experience, I can't say that I've ever felt a strong desire to have a romantic partner that wasn't motivated by just the fear of missing out, which is essentially what amatonormativity is. Amatonormativity, or the societal force that presumes romantic relationships are the normal thing that everyone has or wants, is the technical term for the broader issue. Personally, I feel no desire to be in romantic or sexual relationships with anyone, regardless of gender, though I do experience aesthetic attraction, or appreciating

someone's physical appearance. Romanticism in and of itself is a great thing, as it actively searches for beauty. But glamorizing romance or spending all of the collective energy that we have yearning for a romantic partner or consuming media centered around one's quest for love kind of feels exclusionary to people that don't feel that's necessary in their lives. I am not implying that romantic relationships are a bad or detrimental thing; in fact, they seem quite lovely in theory. However, when I'm expected to want those things and not have a true desire for them, then that may prove detrimental to the mental and physical wellbeing. Before I realized I was aromantic, I used to yearn for a romantic partner. Yet, I would get super frustrated because my crushes wouldn't materialize. I wanted to feel that spark that really wasn't there. It almost made me feel that I was in a mirage where nothing really manifested itself even though I thought it did. I realize that I like the idea of being in a relationship rather than actually being in one. I could attribute that to its over-glamorization in society. Marriage is the end-all be-all accomplishment in life for some people, especially for those who adhere to a more traditional religious view of marriage.

Although I am not in a romantic relationship, I feel that I am content with where I'm at in life, studying the things I am passionate about and actively taking time to make sure that I am happy and comfortable with my relationship to the world at large. I would advise against telling aromantic people they haven't "found the right person yet" because how do you know they're not perfectly content with the people they have found. It's discredit to people who they may have stronger connections to than a romantic partner ever would. After all, allosexual people might not have found the right person either, as many marriages end in divorce. It shouldn't be controversial that marriage and happiness are not mutually exclusive.

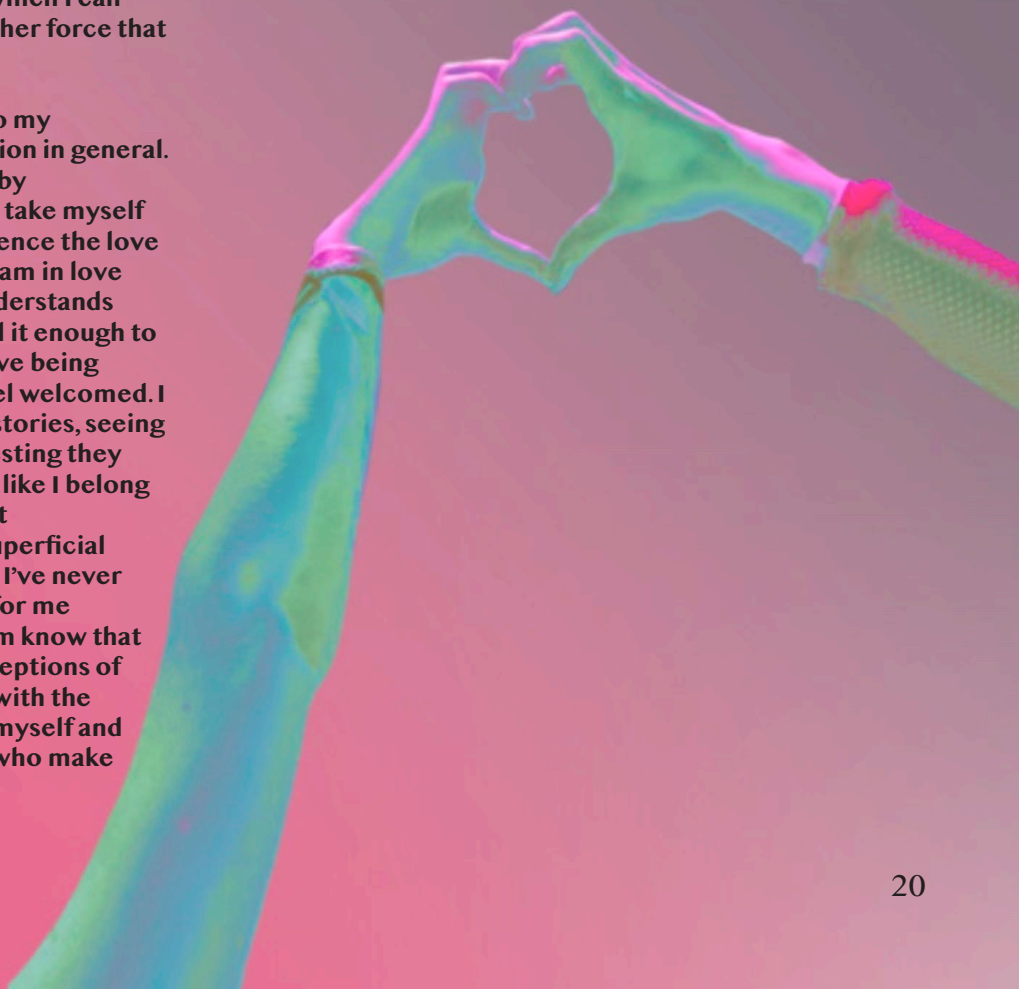
I try not to consume content centered around romance, primarily because the amatonormativity stresses me out. Plus, aroace experiences are often misrepresented in the media, as people are either viewed as heartless, emotionless robots, or just sad and pathetic losers who are in denial that they can't get someone to go out with them. The truth is that romance is overhyped by the media and Hallmark uses it to sell more merchandise, or what I like to call "big marriage". All of the romance movies, novels and love songs plant ideas in the minds of young people and tell them that they can only be happy if they get a significant other by the end of high school. There's a reason that Ed Sheeran is the most listened artist on Spotify, he sings about the attainable goal of falling in love, because that's what people want to engage in. Its essentially a cash grab for big corporations that profit off of sadness of young people.

The way I've learned to deal with not having a romantic partner and live my best life is to tell myself that I'm not missing out on something that I didn't really want in the first place. I glamorize other areas of my life. I believe society should do a better job glamorizing other things than just romance. For a long time, I thought I was lacking in life because I didn't have a romantic partner, but I realized there is more in this world to love. After all, love isn't inherently romantic. I can live life on my own terms, find beauty by being my truest self, and no romantic partner could ever make me as happy as I am now. I am fully able to articulate myself to those around me so that I can build and continue to establish a support system for myself that I quite frankly value way more than dating or marriage. Marriage is an arbitrary word for a human constructed concept, and I don't have to participate if I don't want to. That doesn't make me any less valid, despite what Hallmark tells me.

I can focus on deepening my connections with those I love in ways other than romantically. I would much rather have a supportive group of people in my life who I can tell everything to and cry to, such as my family, friends and former high school English teachers, instead of just one person to go to for everything. To me, just having one person seems very exclusive and leaves little room for error. Humans are social creatures, and friendships or other non-sexual, non-romantic relationships with others, are very beneficial and encouraged. I can listen to those that tell me I'm alright as I am. Those who have helped me discover that writing is a weapon with which I can combat amatonormativity and every other force that tells me I'm unworthy of love.

I'm an introvert by nature, which adds to my uncomfortableness with social interaction in general. I've learned to be confident on my own by focusing on what makes me happy. I can take myself to a bookstore on a date and just experience the love that surrounds authors in a bookstore. I am in love with the way my brain produces and understands language and being able to comprehend it enough to formulate my thoughts into writing. I love being surrounded by communities where I feel welcomed. I love meeting others and learning their stories, seeing them around and finding out how interesting they are. I need stability in my life and to feel like I belong somewhere. I try to focus on the current relationships that I have rather than a superficial passionate devotion to someone whom I've never met and never will. If anyone feels bad for me after reading this, I would like to let them know that maybe it's about their internalized perceptions of what makes a person whole. I'm in love with the world around me, learning more about myself and fostering connections with the people who make me feel at home.

**I'M IN LOVE WITH THE  
WORLD AROUND ME,  
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# TEN IDENTITY PODCASTS

Fredelyn Pierre Louis - Podcast Editor

Graphics by Caitlin Mourek

Photography by Sarah DeRosa

## 1 “DIVERSITY: BEYOND THE CHECKBOX”

In this podcast, The Diversity Movement’s, Jackie Ferguson interviews industry executives and explores what diversity, equity and inclusion mean to them. She also examines why businesses should enforce diversity and inclusion initiatives and why that’s the honorable thing to do.

## 2 “STILL PROCESSING”

This podcast from the New York Times is entertaining, and educational. It’s hosted by journalists Jenna Wortham and Wesley Morris. The two discuss race, diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace and vital cultural conversations.

## 3 “CODE SWITCH”

Code-switching involves adjusting one’s behavior or expression to make others feel more comfortable, and that’s where NPR’s diversity podcast draws its name. Since 2013, journalists Gene Demby and Shereen Marisol Meraji, have explored race, culture and identity with insight and intellectual vigor. While Meraji is now an occasional contributor rather than a host, “Code Switch” remains as compelling and thought-provoking as ever.

## 4 “THE DIVERSITY GAP”

These conversations are essential, and they’re only effective if listeners turn their knowledge into action. “The Diversity Gap” is about helping people take action. The podcast host, Bethaney Wilkison, talks to industry leaders about where they see gaps in diversity and offers solutions to fill them.



## 5 “MAKING GAY HISTORY”

“Making Gay History” looks at the key figures from the LGBTQ+ movement from 1945-1990. Author and historian, Eric Marcus, uses decade-old audio archive of rare interviews to create intimate, personal portraits of known and long-forgotten champions, heroes and witnesses to history.

## 6 “RACE AT WORK”

Host Porter Braswell wants to create a safe space to discuss how race affects workplaces and outcomes. In “Race at Work”, produced by the Harvard Business Review, executives share their career journeys and talk about how race, equity and inclusion have influenced their paths.

## 7 “DISABILITY MATTERS”

Disability Matters, hosted by Joyce Bender, has been on a mission to employ and empower people with disabilities since 2004. With over 700 episodes, the disability employment consultant talks with professionals about recruitment, mentoring and accessibility in the workplace.

## 8 “ASIAN ENOUGH”

This podcast explores being Asian American. The podcast hosts: Jen Yamato, Johana Bhuiyan, Tracy Brown and Suhauna Hussain of the Los Angeles Times, invite guests of Asian descent to share personal stories and unpack identity on their terms. They explore the vast diaspora of cultures, backgrounds and generations and try to expand how being Asian American is defined.

## 9 “THE WILL TO CHANGE: UNCOVERING TRUE STORIES OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION”

Host Jennifer Brown has more than a decade of consulting with Fortune 500 companies. She uses her experience to create a persuasive case for leaders to embrace diversity and form more enlightened and productive workplaces. On her podcast, she invites CEOs, best-selling authors, entrepreneurs and activists to tell their stories of diversity and inclusion.

## 10 “LATINOS WHO LUNCH”

With hosts FavyFav and Bebelito, discussions surrounding race, gender and class in the LatinX communities are analyzed. According to the show’s website, the topic’s goal is “maintaining visibility, accessibility and philosophy of de-centering white, male dominating cultural practices.” While the duo isn’t producing new episodes, exploring the 200-episode archive is a great way to learn about intersectionality.

# DO BIRTHDAYS SHAPE YOUR IDENTITY ?

Tabby Zuniga Diaz - News Editor  
Graphics by Caitlin Mourek





As a Mexican, my coming of age was when I turned fifteen. When a girl turns fifteen, a large party known as a quinceañera is usually thrown to celebrate a young girl becoming a woman. This practice involves many traditions like the giving of the last doll, which symbolizes the quinceañera is leaving childhood. The changing of the shoes from a flat to a high heel, to symbolize how she is becoming a woman, all the way to the dance of the quinceañera has with her chambelanes, the male members of her court of honor.

The thing about birthdays is that, at some point, it feels like you are hitting a milestone. Especially early in life when one turns fifteen, sixteen, eighteen or twenty-one. They each come at a point when a person is in high school, leaving high school, entering college and ultimately leaving college. It can be really challenging to navigate all the changes that come as you get older and grow up.

## THE POSITIVES OF BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays can often be a meaningful reminder of your life. "I feel like birthdays definitely do matter a lot, especially considering the idea of how it's kind of like your own personal milestone," said Jaydon Brown, '23. "I feel like every year gives you a recap of what you have done, but also keeps you motivated."

From students to professors, birthdays can be a large celebration to join people together annually.

"In my family, birthdays were always a really big deal and I have continued that tradition with my own kids. I can remember my parents having a theme for my younger birthdays and a cake to go with that theme, and I now I carry on that tradition," said Jennifer Shah, assistant professor of education.

When asking other people if they care at all about their birthdays, not everyone seems to care if they aged another year. For some people, birthdays don't hold any significance.

"Birthdays have never really mattered to me. Growing up, it didn't feel like there was a need to celebrate," said Grace Malatia, '24.

## GETTING OLDER

Year after year, age can become more meaningful for some. But for others, it can be burdensome.

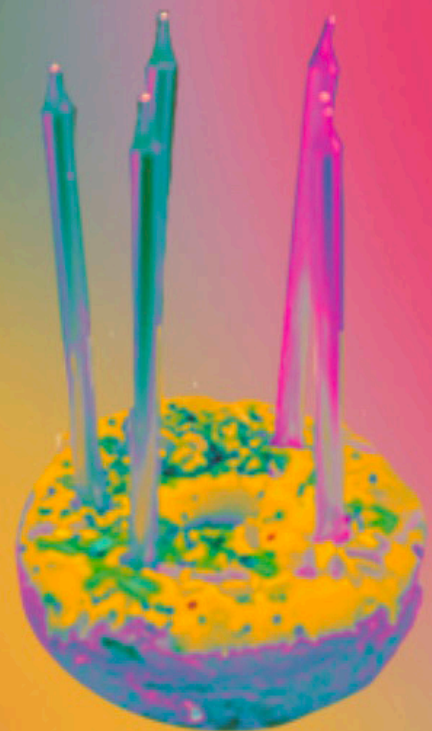
"It matters in fewer intervals as you get older. When you are younger, from one to two, that matters more, and as you get older, for example, twenty-three to twenty-four, there's not a lot of difference," said Brown.

Personally, I always feared getting older. When turning seventeen, I felt happy. Seventeen felt safe; it felt young enough to conquer the world, and innocent enough not to be seen as a threat. Everything after eighteen felt like a

rush to get to a destination not fully thought out. Like I was rushing to get somewhere without a clear understanding of what I even wanted. Being young feels reassuring in a way where it feels like I have an excuse to be innocent, or not know how to do simple things like paying for a parking ticket.

In some ways, I base a lot of my identity on my age, more so than anything else. I worry about what my life is going to look like at fifty or even next year. I worry about how I will look, and how I will view the world.

In terms of celebrating my milestone birthday, I didn't have any. Not a sweet sixteen like many others have. Not even an eighteen birthday. Mainly because of the fear of getting older. I didn't feel any different going from one age to another. Now, reaching twenty-one years old, maybe will be the year I celebrate my birthday.



# ASTROLOGICAL IDENTITY

Isabelle Mahoney - Co-Multimedia Editor  
Graphics by Isabelle Mahoney & Caitlin Mourek

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Be honest, you've checked what your horoscope has said about you, your day or your upcoming week at least once in your life. Many people study their horoscopes to learn about their traits and habits or see the outlook for their week, month and the year ahead.

Your horoscope is based on what star was present in the sky when you were born in the specific elliptical section that day. It is believed that personality traits are affected by the movement of the stars. Throughout this section there are characteristics of each of the signs and famous people born in that same zodiac and professions that align with common personality traits in the zodiac. Of course, a zodiac doesn't define a person or their identity. Still, it can help people understand some of their personality traits, and it's always fun to see if the zodiacs can predict different things throughout someone's life. One day you might even want to take a zodiac compatibility test to see how compatible you and your super-secret crush are!



# FIRE SIGNS

## ARIES

MARCH 21 - APRIL 19

**Common Traits:** Eager, Dynamic, Quick, Competitive

**Celebrity Aries:** Robert Downey Jr, Lady Gaga, Jackie Chan, Emma Watson

**Possible Professions:** Dentist, Surgeon, Financial Analyst, Construction Worker



## LEO

JULY 23 - AUGUST 22

**Common Traits:** Dramatic, Outgoing, Fiery, Self-assured

**Celebrity Leo:** Barack Obama, Jennifer Lopez, Daniel Radcliffe, Madonna

**Possible Professions:** Actor, Designer, Marketer, Event Planner



## SAGITTARIUS

NOVEMBER 22 - DECEMBER 21

**Common Traits:** Extroverted, Optimistic, Funny, Generous

**Celebrity Sagittarius:** Brad Pitt, Taylor Swift, Jacke Gyllenhaal, Miley Cyrus

**Possible Professions:** Brand Ambassador, Instructor, Personal Trainer, Public Relations Manager



# EARTH SIGNS

## TAURUS

APRIL 20 - MAY 20

**Common Traits:** Strong, dependable, sensual, creative

**Celebrity Taurus:** Dwayne Johnson, Megan Fox, David Beckham, Adele

**Possible Professions:** Fashion Designer, Landscaper, Manager, Financial Advisor



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# VIRGO

AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 22

**Common Traits:** Practical, Loyal, Gentle, Analytical

**Celebrity Virgo:** Keanu Reeves, Beyonce, Michael Jackson, Blake Lively

**Possible Professions:** Researcher, Investor, Therapist, Executive Assistant



# CAPRICORN

DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 19

**Common Traits:** Serious, Independent, Disciplined, Tenacious

**Celebrity Capricorn:** Rowan Atkinson, Michelle Obama, Jim Carrey, Meghan Trainor

**Possible Professions:** Manager, Teacher, Computer Programmer, Nurse



# AIR SIGNS

## GEMINI

MAY 21 - JUNE 20

**Common Traits:** Versatile, Expressive, Curious, Kind

**Celebrity Gemini:** Angelina Jolie, Johnny Depp, Marilyn Monroe, Morgan Freeman

**Possible Professions:** Teacher, Public Relations Professional, Communications Specialists, Project Manager



## LIBRA

SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 22

**Common Traits:** Social, Fair-minded, Diplomatic, Gracious

**Celebrity Libra:** Will Smith, Kate Winslet, Hugh Jackman, Kim Kardashian

**Possible Professions:** Human Resources Manager, Legal Analyst, Event Planner, Business Owner



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# AQUARIUS

JANUARY 20 - FEBRUARY 18

**Common Traits:** Deep, Imaginative, Original, Uncompromising

**Celebrity Aquarius:** Christian Bale, Ellen DeGeneres, Cristiano Ronaldo, Shakira

**Possible Professions:** Environmental Engineer, Trainer, Mediator, Scientist



# WATER SIGNS

## CANCER

JUNE 21 - JULY 22

**Common Traits:** Intuitive, Sentimental, Compassionate, Protective

**Celebrity Cancer:** Tom Hanks, Meryl Streep, Robin Williams, Tom Cruise

**Possible Professions:** Nurse, Content Manager, Speech Therapist, Social Worker



## SCORPIO

OCTOBER 23 - NOVEMBER 21

**Common Traits:** Passionate, Stubborn, Resourceful, Brave

**Celebrity Scorpio:** Leonardo DiCaprio, Julia Roberts, Ryan Gosling, Katy Perry

**Possible Professions:** Psychologist, Physician, Engineer, Market Analyst



## PISCES

FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20

**Common Traits:** Affectionate, Empathetic, Wise, Artistic

**Celebrity Pisces:** Adam Levine, Rihanna, Justin Bieber, Camila Cabello

**Possible Professions:** Recruiter, Physical Therapist, Social Worker, Sales Person





# EDITING YOUR IDENTITY

Kristin Roy-Chowdhury - Co-Editor in Chief  
Graphics by Caitlin Mourek  
Photography by Sarah DeRosa

We have all grown up in different cultures embedded in our households. Some where religion was the basis of all and others not so much. Where dinner was always at 5 p.m. sharp or in front of the T.V. with some takeout. Neither of them better than the other, those moments are what shaped us into who we are today. That being said, we were taught how to “be ourselves” when in reality, we were trained and raised a certain way. Most of the time, when you’re under someone else’s roof or overly supported by another, it is difficult to create, understand and proclaim an identity. That’s kind of a lot for a young person to take in. College is that chance to edit your identity.

According to the dictionary, identity is the fact of being who or what a person or thing is. When we are growing up in the education system, we are told to be so many different things and have the most ambitious dreams. However, that is not how we create distinguished characteristics that last. Personalities change in every stage of life; hormones play a toll on identities for sure. But the culture that we were raised in as children is the mold for our identity for the developmental stages of our life. When we are surrounded by so many people that have influenced us –family members, teachers and friends– for so many years, it makes it seem like that is the only part of you. Yet, there is so much more to be discovered. That discovery stage is called college.

This is the time where you soak yourself in homework, clubs and your own mind. You never realize how much is going on inside until you sit quietly alone in your college dorm room. These years are truly the developmental years. You can escape from the town you grew up in and make this new place your home. Some may think that means you can make a new version of yourself. But that is wrong. You cannot erase your past and all the events that occurred in your life before college that made you who you are. You can still hate brussels sprouts in college, it’s okay. Clearing and restarting your identity should not an option; editing your identity is.

Sexual orientation, religion, gender, decision making, clothing choices and time management can have a new meaning in college. You meet hundreds of new people a day and learn their stories. Yet, you need to start processing your own. This is the chance to do that without having your previous structure affect you. American Psychology Association (APA) studies consistently find that the majority of college students either currently want to or are trying to increase their emotional stability, conscientiousness and extraversion. Secondly, attempts and desires to change personality are inversely related to psychological well-being, meaning that the desire to change your identity will affect your overall mindset.

Also, current levels of certain personality traits are inversely related to desires or attempts to change them. The APA findings show that people like to adapt themselves to new surroundings, but there are side effects and some things that will not change in our identities. Even if we are trying to change how extroverted we may be,

there are still introverted parts about us that won’t go away when we are piled in a packed elevator in New Hall. Individuals who want to edit themselves because they know that there is a better version of themselves is good. Those who want to change because they’re around a certain group of people may never find their way because they have nothing concrete.

Personalities change. Lifestyles change. The person that you want to be and that you know is truly deep inside does not change. Let that individual out. Let them see the sun and blossom into a better version of what you already were. You do not want to look back on your college years and not remember who you were because it changed so often. Find that person today. Do things that make you uncomfortable because that is where you find your limits. There is no one else like you so you might as well be yourself. Edit as you may see fit but know that the mold from your childhood won’t disappear. The feeling you get when you smell the morning dew. The gut reaction when you know you just did something wrong. The overwhelming feeling when you look into your future or even at your bank account. Core memories and feelings stick with you, no matter how much editing you may do. Let yourself be you, your true identity is the legacy that you will find someday.



# THE TRUTH :HOW I CAME TO TERMS WITH MY IDENTITY

Michael Griffin - Co-Multimedia Editor  
Graphics by Caitlin Mourek  
Photography by Sarah DeRosa

Identity is difficult. It's complex; however, deeply engrained in ourselves. How we present ourselves to our friends, families, coworkers or lovers differs based on every single person's individual feeling towards their identity. Coming to terms with our identities can sometimes be the most difficult part of becoming an adult. Our early adult years are some of the most formative in our entire lives. All around us in every single class there are wonderful people who have identified themselves and really found their truth when they looked in the mirror one day. These are some of their experiences:

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“Growing up gay in a Catholic household, I faced a longstanding internal conflict with my identity, I found it hard to truly understand my sexuality with the lack of a support system I had. Upon meeting others in my community, I finally learned what it means

## TO EXPRESS MY TRUTH

(and) live my life freely. Now, I am happy to say that I have come to fully accept myself and I am proud to have conquered the struggle I have gone through to get to this point,” said Jake Keller, '26.

Coming to terms at a young age that I have mental illness was difficult. Most kids don't have to leave school for months at a time to seek out treatment just to feel better and be able to function. This made me feel awfully alone and as if I was somehow doing something wrong just by existing. While I don't see mental illness as an identity per se, it definitely has an influence on who you are and the way you navigate the world ...  
I still have to reassure myself that it's okay to

## EXIST AS I AM

and have come to embrace the lows with the highs when it comes to having mental illness. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to receive treatment for my illnesses growing up, as I know this isn't the reality for the majority of people struggling with mental disorders,” said Sydney Chmielewski, '24.



“It wasn’t until high school where I realized that I am attracted to men as well but still had a really hard time accepting it. It wasn’t until 2020, which was conveniently COVID year, that I stopped being in full denial and accepted it. Once I was able to do that, my gender identity and everything else that followed became apparent as I became more able to

## EXPRESS

## MYSELF FREELY<sup>,by</sup>

finally starting to live on my own. As time has gone on, I’ve more or less adopted the mentality of it really doesn’t matter what anyone else thinks of me, as long as I know my truth that’s enough and that has helped me a lot figuring out who I am,” said Sir Walter Nelson, ‘24.



# MUSIC 'S INFLUENCE ON IDENTITY

Jesse Hudgins - Vision Writer  
Graphics by Caitlin Mourek



Music has been around for centuries, it has influenced the masses in every civilization.

When talking about the influence music has had the obvious is to go to the cultural impact. It influences fashion, mindset and other choices made in life. It has developed throughout the years with each different movement like the Mods and the Flower Childs. Nowadays, there is still a distinct identity to each genre. Someone who attends a punk show will dress differently than someone going to a country show.

There are certain genre styles you can see in an everyday outfit from different listeners. For example, in a lot of indie scenes you see bright colors and button ups. While at a punk show you will see denim, vests with buttons and torn jeans.

Music can also shape individuals on a personal level. It can affect emotions and mentality, as well as influence choices and hobbies in life. "I don't recall what it was initially that I gravitated too, but I can't envision a life without it now. My friends, hobbies, goals all formed through the influence of music in some way. Whether by myself or on stage with others, I've found that everything makes sense in those musical moments," said Austin Paulson, '23.

Music can have a very powerful influence over one's identity. It can help mold your day-to-day lifestyle. "Between being in (marching) band for the past ten years and being a part of WONC, music made me into the person who I am today," said Zoie Morack, '24. "Without music, my life would be quiet and boring and to be honest, that is something that I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy."

Speaking from self-experience, the music I listen to has influenced my fashion style throughout middle school and high school. I now wear band t-shirts, black jeans, leather jackets and Hawaiian shirts. It also impacts the kind of music I write. I have written emo, punk and pop punk music throughout my tenure as a musician. It also affects the artists I see live in concert. Going to shows like Alkaline Trio, Bad Religion, Calling All Captains and Blink-182.

Overall, the importance of music in one's identity is understated. Music has helped form personalities and outlooks for centuries and continues to do so today. It has provided diversity and uniqueness to every one of us and will do so for years to come.



# HOW FOOTBALL HAS SHAPED NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE 'S IDENTITY

Evan Bruner - Sports Editor

Graphics by Caitlin Mourek

Photography by Karen McClain

Identities can't always be chosen, they are earned over the course of time. The journey to gaining the reputation as one of the best football programs in Division III wasn't overnight for the North Central Cardinals. Their rise to dominance has proven to be worth the wait.

As wild as it may sound to current students, there was a time when NCC was just another small school with a football team that wasn't worth noting. That all changed when John Thorne was named head coach in 2002. In his first year at the helm, Thorne led the Cardinals to their first winning season since 1997. Thorne's tenure as head coach marked the turnaround of NCC football. In his twelve years as head coach, the Cardinals never finished with a losing season and won eight straight CCIW championships.

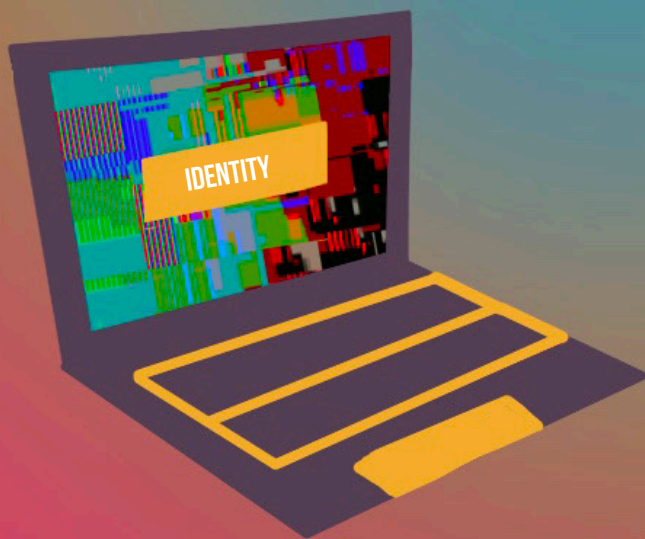
Thorne's time at NCC completely changed the culture of the school's football team and paved the way for his son, Jeff, to hit the ground running when he took over as the Cardinals head coach in 2015. NCC continued to dominate in CCIW play and were regular playoff contenders but were still not getting the same national respect as the traditional powerhouse schools. Once again, identities must be earned, never given. In 2019 the Cardinals did just that. After suffering an early season loss to Wheaton, the Cardinals barely made the playoff field, but once they were in, they couldn't be stopped. Of their five playoff wins, four came by double digits, including a 41-14 blowout over Wisconsin-Whitewater in the Stagg Bowl to claim the program's first-ever national championship.

Since then, the Cardinals have shown that 2019 was far from a fluke. After the cancellation of the 2020 season, NCC put together another run to the Stagg Bowl, where they fell to Mary-Hardin Baylor. In 2022, they once again are ranked at the top of Division III football. Now under first-year head coach Brad Spencer, we are seeing that the Cardinals' dominance is no longer dependent on one coach, player or recruiting class. NCC football's identity has been over twenty years in the making, but it's not just about reaching the top; it's about staying there. The quest for perfection is a never-ending battle and one that has continued to keep the Cardinals hungry despite all their success. For all the great moments NCC football has experienced in recent years, there is reason to think the best may be yet to come.



IDENTITIES  
MUST BE  
EARNED  
NEVER GIVEN





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