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“Cornell 7”: What Happens Next?

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“Cornell 7”: what happens next?

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The alleged gang rape case at Cornell University, now known nationally as the ‘Cornell 7’ case, has sparked conversations across the nation about campus culture, sexual assault prevention, and universities’ responsibility to investigate to their fullest capacity.

The resurfacing of the “Cornell 7” case has led to concern among students and faculty members alike at the University of South Dakota regarding what protections and protocols are in place to prevent situations such as this from taking place.

While the “Cornell 7” incident did not take place on USD’s campus, the university has had instances of on-campus sexual assault in the past. One reported sexual assault was the subject of a campuswide alert on Sept. 2, 2026, during the 2026-27 academic year.

University Police Chief Bryant Jackson ensures that while on-campus sexual assaults are not entirely unpreventable, the university works to prevent instances of sexual violence from occurring.

“Our role has both a prevention and a response component. We work to educate our campus community, reduce opportunities for violence, build trust with students, and make sure people know how to seek help,” Jackson said.

Jackson emphasized that all reports of sexual assault on USD’s campus are handled with equal care and consideration.

“When someone reports sexual violence to UPD, our role is primarily focused on safety, support, and the criminal justice process. We use trauma-informed practices, and our approach is to start by believing and listening to the person who comes forward,” Jackson said. “We want to return as much power and control as possible to the survivor by explaining their options, allowing them to make informed decisions when circumstances permit, and connecting them with resources such as medical care, counseling, advocacy, and Title IX.”

Jackson added that the affiliations of those involved should “never determine the quality or seriousness” of UPD’s response when handling instances of sexual violence.

“Whether a report involves a Greek life member, student-athlete, graduate student, employee, or someone with no particular campus affiliation, our responsibility is the same: take the report seriously, address

immediate safety and medical needs, preserve available evidence, connect the survivor with resources, and conduct an objective investigation when a criminal investigation is requested or appropriate,” Jackson said.

According to the university website, USD follows Title IX regulations. Under Title IX, discrimination based on sex can include sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual violence, stalking and sexual coercion.

However, while Title IX regulations are in place, some campus leaders such as Tiffany Paretti, co-president of Promoting Awareness, Victim Empowerment (PAVE), believe this case has the potential to further preventative measures.

“I think incidents like Cornell 7 can bring more attention to the importance of sexual assault prevention on college campuses, including at the University of South Dakota. They can encourage students and universities to have conversations about consent, accountability, and what it means to look out for one another,” Paretti said. “I think it’s important that these conversations go beyond simply raising awareness and lead to actual changes in how students are educated and how universities respond to reports.”

As far as responding to reports, UPD guarantees that when opening investigations into highly sensitive cases such as instances of sexual assault the emotional capacity is largely taken into consideration.

“Our goal is to avoid turning an interview into an interrogation of the survivor. We listen, allow time, avoid unnecessary judgment, explain what we are doing and why, and recognize that information may emerge over multiple conversations,” Jackson said. Jackson also explained that university law enforcement is aware that memory can lapse when subject to trauma, and UPD allows individuals to share information as they feel comfortable.

“A survivor may remember additional details later, provide information in a different sequence, or initially have difficulty talking about certain portions of what occurred. That does not automatically mean the person is being inconsistent or untruthful.”

Paretti emphasized that a large portion of ensuring sexual assault prevention is successful is instilling a campus culture centered around

information and action.

“I think one of the biggest things colleges can do is make consent education more consistent and realistic. It shouldn’t be something students hear about during freshman orientation and then never discuss again. Universities should continue these conversations throughout college and address real-life situations involving parties, alcohol, relationships, and peer pressure,” Paretti said.

Jackson concludes that he wants students to be aware that the university police department is there to ensure students’ individual safety as well as overall campus safety.

He states that UPD starts all trauma-related cases not by investigating, but instead by believing.

“And no student’s status, organization, athletic affiliation, Greek membership, or connection to the university changes that responsibility. Trust is incredibly important in campus policing, and we earn that trust by how we treat people when they come to us, particularly when they are experiencing one of the most difficult moments of their lives,” Jackson said.

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Samudzi's pastor: 'We shouldn't be doing this'

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When Nate Samudzi reported for a required immigration check-in Sept. 23, he expected to return home to Yankton later that day. Instead, he was detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and transferred to a detention facility in Minnesota, where he remains as legal proceedings continue.

The detention marks the second time Samudzi has been taken into ICE custody this year. In February, Samudzi was detained while vacationing with his family in St. Louis and was held for six days before being released.

While Samudzi remains in custody, his wife, Sydney, and their 1-year-old daughter continue to live in Yankton. The family has received support from friends, neighbors and members of Celebrate Community Church, where the Samudzis have attended for about three years.

"He is the most relaxed, easygoing, welcoming, go-with-the-flow guy that I know," Celebrate Community Church Pastor Jeff Todd said.

Todd says one of the most rewarding parts of knowing Samudzi has been watching his faith grow.

"It's been fun as a pastor to watch his faith grow and seeing him mature in his faith and take steps to grow closer to God," Todd said.

Even while Samudzi is in detention, Todd says the two continue to exchange Bible verses each day.

Todd said Samudzi's detention has affected members throughout the congregation.

"I have people on both sides of the immigration discussion, as our country is very polarized right now, and almost without exception, every single person says, 'This is not what we're talking about,'" Todd said.

Not only has the community been helpful emotionally but financially, setting up a GoFundMe campaign to help offset the loss of income while Samudzi remains detained.

Following his release in February, Samudzi was required to complete regular immigration check-ins and home visits.

Todd said Samudzi consistently complied with those requirements.

"I can absolutely verify that he has done every single thing that ICE has required him to do," Todd said.

Todd says the process of becoming a citizen is complex and cumbersome.

"Why are we, as a country, making it incredibly complicated, expensive. We think we have to actually spend taxpayer dollars to detain them while we try to figure out their case, instead of letting them work, instead of letting them do their job," Todd said.

Todd also said many Americans misunderstand the immigration process.

"He married an American citizen. Oh, isn't he good? Right. Obviously that's not the case,"

As of publication, Samudzi's future remains uncertain.

"it's now in the hands of the courts,"

Todd said.

Todd says he, the family and the community have been continuously calling the governor, legislators and local officials to find a solution.

"Our state government really needs to take a look and see how this federal policy impact our state's citizens," Todd said.

Samudzi's situation is not unique.

"There's literally hundreds of people in our state that are in a similar position. They want to be here, we want them here," Todd said.

For now, Todd encourages others to reflect on the broader way immigrants are treated.

"It's a really good time for us to take a good look in the mirror as a culture and ask, is this what we're wanting...we shouldn't be doing this to other human beings," Todd said.



Submitted | The Volante

Nate Samudzi and his wife Sydney hold their daughter.

South Dakota Supreme Court visits USD

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Last week the South Dakota Supreme Court held its annual session here on campus. The court heard various cases ranging from tax laws to murder charges.

Patty DeVaney is a Justice on the South Dakota Supreme Court and says these sessions play a vital role in the link between the justice system and its people.

"It's our opportunity to interact with law students there and be open to the public. We like to go on the road so that the public can see how we do our work," DeVaney said.

DeVaney says there is a great importance in letting the public understand and witness what goes on in their judicial system.

"We are trying to promote trust and public confidence in the work of the court, and it's important that the process is open to the public. I think sometimes when people see how the process works they have a better appreciation for the importance of the judicial process and the work of the courts," DeVaney said.

Though that's not the only purpose of these

visits. DeVaney also says that these sessions can play a role in encouraging students to pursue a degree in law.

"We're trying to recruit people to the legal profession. Like many professions, some of the numbers are declining, where we see more people retiring than entering law school," DeVaney said.

One of these prospective students is Dawson Van Ede, a USD student who is currently attending law school. Van Ede was excited at the opportunity of seeing the concepts and processes he'd been studying, being used in actual cases.

"Honestly, it was a much more fulfilling experience listening to the arguments and reading the cases after having one year of law school experience under my belt. It was cool to see some of the legal concepts and procedural hills I've been studying out in the wild, so to speak," Van Ede said.

Van Ede noticed that the concepts he had been studying were already making it easier to understand the legal process in practical examples.

"It was much easier to follow along and even predict what both sides of the case were going to argue about because, for the most part, I knew what the implied legal doctrines were in the case even if they weren't explicitly stated in the case summary packet," Van Ede said.

DeVaney was very appreciative of everyone who interacted with and made the USD session possible this year.

"I'd like to thank the people who came to watch as well as the law school who were very welcoming to us and did a great job of organizing this for us so that we can come every year," DeVaney said.

All justices are looking forward to future sessions with the university and DeVaney says they all love coming down each year.

"This is always one of our favorite sessions of the year since we get to come down and interact with the students at USD," DeVaney said.



Jacob Peirce | The Volante

Justice DeVaney listens to opening arguments.



Jacob Peirce | The Volante

Justices consider arguments from both sides during USD session.

Medical students visit rural South Dakota

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Three communities will begin welcoming medical students in March, 2027 as USD's Frontier and Rural Medicine program, FARM expands to 17 students.

FARM is a program where students spend 11 to 12 months in a rural community. This occurs during their second and third year (Pillar 2) of med school which helps them to complete their clinical rotation.

"FARM was created to help our workforce," said Jason Wickersham, M.D., SSOM associate dean of rural medicine and professor of family medicine, "We need primary care physicians out in rural areas."

Wickersham explained that FARM aids in showing students that there is great medicine in rural areas and being in primary care is a very rewarding profession.

At the clinical site students get to practice many different sides of rural medicine while gaining a better understanding of what it looks like to be a physician in a rural setting. "The relationships you build in that rural area are far beyond what you get on the main campus," said Wickersham.

Having close contact with instructors and the health care team allows for more hands-on training and interactions that Pillar 2 students might not otherwise receive. When the students

finish their FARM rotation they will move into Pillar 3 of medical school.

In Pillar 3, students are starting to look for different residency options where they need letters of recommendation from different physicians. A student who was in FARM has a better chance of getting an impactful letter than those who aren't in FARM.

"If I write a student a letter, then I say, I spent practically every day for a year with that student, that carries a lot more weight than if I did a two week rotation with a physician and he writes me a letter," Wickersham said.

While at the rural site students are encouraged to participate in different activities within the community. They are also required to find a need that they want to address and come up with a solution for it. FARM helps the students to gain knowledge of different processes and community engagement that they might not otherwise receive.

"That individualized relationship you build with your attending physician, the hands-on one-on-one training are all kinds of unique things about FARM," Wickersham said.

As of now there are 13 students at the seven active sites. Current standing locations are Vermillion, Parkston, Chamberlain, Pier, Mowbridge, Millbank and Spearfish. The three

communities being added to the list include Mitchell, Brookings, and Aberdeen.

Wickersham hopes that each site, present and future, will grow to at least two students if not more.

In the past, there were two more sites however some of the rural communities don't do obstetrics. Obstetrics is the focused care on the journey of pregnancy. Being able to provide care to mothers during their entirety of pregnancy is one of the FARM students' requirements. Without obstetrics they had to stop sending students which resulted in a decrease of students in the program.

The new sites will hopefully aid in the overload of students who want to participate in FARM. "We are having a little problem with the number of students wanting to be in Sioux Falls and having enough physicians to teach them, so this will help us a little bit to offload that Sioux Falls campus," Wickersham said.

Wickersham hopes the FARM program will continue to expand and grow and believes in the future of it.

"We're getting students to see what great medicine occurs out here," said Wickersham, "We're building a primary work force."

Vermillion hosts SDAEA and SDCAA Conference

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Last week, the University of South Dakota hosted to the annual South Dakota Art Education Association and South Dakota College Art Association Conference. The three-day conference ran from October 8th through October 10th.

The SDAEA & SDCAA Conference rotates between each of the six public institutions governed by the South Dakota Board of Regents, and USD was next to host.

The Department of Arts had been involved in planning this multi-day conference, with art educators and students from across the state coming to attend.

Lauren Freese, Chair of the Department of Art, was heavily involved in organizing the event, and expressed excitement in hosting the

conference.

"We wanted this to be a place where folks that are interested in art education could come together" Freese said.

The conference included workshops, keynote speakers, and activities for attendees. It was also an opportunity for educators to come together and to talk. The conference also had topics regarding the use of artificial intelligence in the classroom, a talking point amongst educators right now.

"It was an opportunity for art educators to share techniques, processes, lesson plans, to help them deal with new and emergent classroom challenges" Freese said.

Statistically, art, and humanity degrees are in decline. Falling enrollments, rising tuition,

shifting policy, and decreases in funding has plagued art departments in colleges around the United States. Freese highlighted the importance of having art education and fine arts as a necessity to education.

"Students need creativity and resourcefulness and the willingness to try something and fail and to experiment. What better way to learn that through creative activity" Freese said.

Notable speakers and visitors included photographer Natalie Christensen and painter Alex Kanevsky. Christensen currently has an exhibit up in the John A. Day Gallery at the Warren M. Lee Center for the Fine Arts.

The exhibit is open to all Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Business school enrollment rises

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This year the University of South Dakota has 10,040 students enrolled, a 3.5% decrease compared to the previous year. Despite this, the Beacom School of Business has increased enrollment by 1%.

Klaus Beckmann, the Interim Dean at the Beacom School of Business, points to many possible explanations for this increase in student enrollment.

"I think one of the reasons is that a business degree is still a very valuable degree," Beckmann said.

Part of the reason for such a high demand in business degrees comes from the need for accountants in South Dakota.

"There's a huge demand for accounting professionals, and I think that's why we are seeing a lot of students going particularly into accounting and finance. That's actually where we see the largest growth in terms of numbers for the business school," Beckmann said.

Beckmann believes students choose USD's business school over other programs and universities because employers value Beacom graduates.

"The number one reason for employers wanting graduates from the Beacom school is the quality of students that we are producing here. Part of that comes down to working with the industry. We have our career success center which is very helpful to connect students with the industry, we have tons of visiting employers coming here, we have our student clubs and networking events such as FMA which is our Financial Management Association," Beckmann said.

One area where the business school is struggling to attract students, despite its overall growth, is international enrollment.

"Where we start to see a little bit of a decline right now is with international enrollment. That's something that is a part of current political climates which is a little

bit harder for us to control," Beckmann said.

One way the business school retains high enrollment despite challenges of coming to campus physically is through their online programs. The school's online MBA, or masters of business administration, degree is an especially popular choice.

"Our online MBA is ranked amongst the top 25 online programs based on the Princeton Review, and we have been part of the best 25 schools in the nation for over 10 years now. So I think that tells you something about the quality of the program," Beckmann said.

Beyond just the quality of its programs, Beckmann says another reason the business school is attracting so many students is due to its affordability.

"Here is where students can really receive a good value for their money and I think that's why we see such good enrollment," Beckmann said.

Along with its high enrollment, the business school is making several changes and additions to

continue to bring in new students and to help the current students flourish.

"We just built a new sales center on the second floor, which is fantastic. This will really help students gain the skills they need for our new program, the Beacom Ready program, which is all about relationship building, critical thinking, adaptability and communicating value," Beckmann said.

The Beacom Ready Program is one area that Beckmann was particularly excited for in the coming years. Beckmann believes that it can and will be a great tool in fostering student success.

"Things such as internships, being part of Coyote Business Consulting, being part of a mentorship program, attending networking events, being a member of a student organization and taking leadership in said organization, those kinds of skills that learn through those experiences will be bundled up and made part of a Beacom Ready Certificate," Beckmann said.

Beckmann believes these are the skills that make successful students and future employees.

"When you leave our program you are adaptable, a great critical thinker, you know how to make ethical decisions, you know how to collaborate across different industries and technologies so that no matter what employers will throw at you, you will be able to respond, adapt and be successful," Beckmann said.

Beyond all the new changes and additions to the program, Beckmann believes the main factor for students staying with the business school will always be faculty.

"The commitment of the faculty to be there for students and have a good relationship with them to get them to the finish line, that's extremely important. And I don't necessarily think that's unique to the Beacom School of Business. I guarantee you'll find that a lot across campus, but we live it here," Beckmann said.



Nathan DeGreef | The Volante

The Beacom School of Business sees an influx of students.

“Protect College Sports Act” passes Senate

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On Sept. 28, the United States Senate passed the Protect College Sports Act (PCSA) of 2026 (S. 4668) in a 77-22 vote. The bill will now head to the U.S. House of Representatives, where lawmakers are expected to deliberate and edit the bill before a Senate floor vote.

The Protect College Sports Act, proposed by senators Ted Cruz (R-TX) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA), is a rare bi-partisan bill that focuses on setting national standards for college athletics. The act has been praised by many collegiate athletes, directors, and coaches. University of South Dakota Athletic Director, Jon Schemmel, shared that the proposed bill is much needed to keep college athletics successful.

“It’s the most essential thing we need to get done,” Schemmel said.

The bill addresses many of the concerns that have faced college athletics over the past decade, including “Name, Image, and Likeness” (NIL), limited transfers and player eligibility, etc.

The proposed goal of introducing federal oversight is to hopefully unify guardrails and guidelines under a national framework.

“It is much needed federal legislation to help the NCAA and Division I athletics to get back to a place that we can function with some semblance of governance,” Schemmel said.

Schemmel also noted that while

influential, it isn’t a guaranteed answer to problems.

“It isn’t the answer to all our problems, but it’s a step in the right direction,” Schemmel said.

He also expressed the urgency on some of the issues addressed, including the new regulations allowing for one free transfer for college athletes.

“Last year, 49% of all division one scholarship basketball athletes went into the transfer portal. Kids and agents are going to be much more thoughtful about if and when the right time to go is,” Schemmel said.

While the bill is expected to stall in Congress for a while, if eventually passed and signed into law, the college athletic landscape will change one way or another.

Schemmel emphasized how politicized this bill has become but clarified that it has the backing of beyond just politicians.

“It has the backing of all 32 division one conference, but also every major league sports organization and player union. There is a lot in the PCSA that’s great for student athletes,” Schemmel said.

Schemmel also confirmed that the athletic department has been in talks about the PCSA and future implantation.

“We’re very much ready for this to go into play,” Schemmel said.

To view more about the proposed bill, you can visit the Congress website about the bill.



Colton Tolly | The Volante

A USD football player goes to catch the football.



Colton Tolly | The Volante

A USD volleyball player spikes the volleyball.



Colton Tolly | The Volante

A USD soccer player attacks the soccerball.



Colton Tolly | The Volante

A USD basketball player goes for a layup.

New sports facility officially breaks ground

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Oct. 2 marked the official start of what will be known as the Gassen Family Fieldhouse at the University of South Dakota.

The ceremony was held at 10 a.m., and was open to the public to celebrate the facility breaking ground. The facility was named in honor of USD track and field alumni, Bill and Jill Gassen, who were both in attendance at the opening ceremony.

The facility will seat over 2,000 people, and is going to be the new home of the USD track and field team, the cross country team, and the triathlon team.

It will include several specialized areas for events, including; a 200-meter banked track, a 60-meter straight, as well as jump pits for long/triple jump, high jump areas, sections for pole vault and throwing cages.

For faculty and athletes, there will be

offices, lounges, hydrotherapy and more that will aid in practice and recovery.

USD is not stopping at the field house, as the university has a master plan for the athletics department as a whole, with the new facility only being the start of the plan.

The plan is set to bolster USD athletics and improve the overall quality of the athletic program itself.

The head coach of track and field, Lucky Huber, spoke at the ceremony.

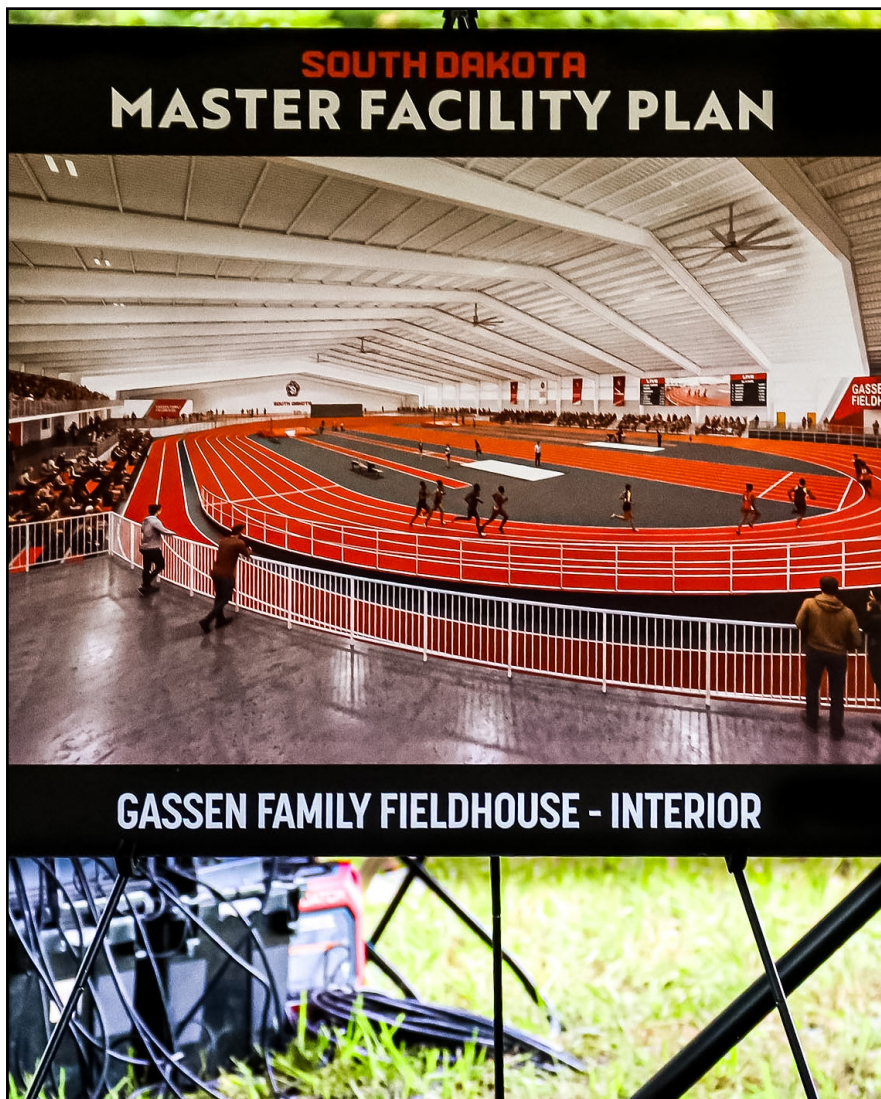
"It'll be world changing. It'll change everything that we do," Huber said. "To be able to bring something that's this elite of a facility here to USD is really exciting," Huber said.

The facility is expected to be finished in the summer of 2028.



Jacob Peirce | The Volante

Shovels propped up at the ceremony.



Jacob Peirce | The Volante

A rendering of what the facility will look like.



Jacob Peirce | The Volante

Track and field head coach Lucky Huber speaks at the ceremony.

USD basketball teams schedules announced

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The Sanford Coyote Sports Center (SCSC) will see plenty of action this winter as both the South Dakota men's and women's basketball teams prepare to open their 2026-27 seasons.

The two programs will combine for 19 home non-conference games, giving Coyote fans several opportunities to see both teams in Vermillion before Summit League play begins.

Both teams open their seasons Nov. 2 at home. The men's team will face Mount Marty, while the women's team will take on York University.

South Dakota's men's basketball team will play 18 non-conference games, including 11 at the SCSC

Eight of those home games will come during November.

The Coyotes begin the season with four consecutive home games against Mount Marty, Northern Kentucky, Cal State Fullerton and Houston Christian. Their first road game will be on Nov. 13 against Drake in Des Moines, Iowa.

The schedule also includes two road matchups against Big Ten opponents. USD will travel to Lincoln, Nebraska to face the Cornhuskers on Nov. 18 before taking on Iowa in Iowa City on Dec. 29.

South Dakota will also play Utah Tech at the Sanford Pentagon in Sioux Falls on Nov. 22.

The team will close

nonconference play Jan. 2 against Ozark Christian at the Sanford Coyote Sports Center before beginning Summit League play Jan. 7 at Oral Roberts.

The women's basketball team will play a 16-game nonconference schedule, including eight games at the SCSC. The Coyotes open with three of their first four games in Vermillion, facing York University, Texas Rio Grande Valley, and Idaho State. They will also travel to Sioux Falls on Nov. 11 to face off against Creighton at the Sanford Pentagon.

Their first true road game comes Nov. 18 against Chicago State, followed by a Nov. 20 matchup at Valparaiso.

USD will close November with a home game against Nebraska Wesleyan before traveling to Jacksonville, Florida, for games against North Florida and Abilene Christian.

December includes home matchups against Waldorf, Bradley, Drake and Bellevue, along with road games against Lindenwood, Montana and Boise State.

The women will finish non-conference play Dec. 31 at Boise State before beginning Summit League play Jan. 7 against Oral Roberts.



Source: GoYotes.com

A USD men's basketball player dribbles the ball.



Source: GoYotes.com

A USD women's basketball player goes to pass the ball.

Swim and dive season underway



Kylie Krajicek

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Source: GoYotes.com

USD swimmers get ready on the divers block.

The University of South Dakota swim and dive team has its sights set on February’s Summit League Championships after being picked first in the conference’s preseason poll. While the ranking has brought on high expectations; the team is focused on improving throughout the season and keeping their eyes on their end goal.

“It’s a great honor to be picked first, but at the end of the day, the preseason poll doesn’t mean much,” head coach Jason Mahowald said. “If we stay focused, work hard and continue to improve, everything else will take care of itself.”

The Coyotes opened the season with a win for the women’s team at Minnesota State, giving the team an opportunity early on to evaluate their progress and show areas of improvement.

“The meet confirmed some of the areas we knew we needed to improve, which gives us a good direction moving forward,” Mahowald said.

With a mix of upperclassmen and underclassmen, the team is continuing to build chemistry as the season progresses. However, the freshmen have been adjusting and learning what it means to be a part of a team at the collegiate level.

“They’ve done a really good job learning our training system and adjusting to how we do things. I think as they continue to get comfortable over the next few weeks, we’ll really start to see them take off,” Mahowald said.

As the athletes continue to improve, upcoming competitions will provide more opportunities for the Coyotes to gain experience before the championship. Although winning remains a priority, the team’s preparation has been centered around reaching their peak performance in the winter.

“Our focus has always been on the championships at the end of the season,” Mahowald

said. “We want to compete and win every time we get in the pool, but we also use each meet as an opportunity to improve and prepare for February.”

The team is also looking to have more athletes qualify for the NCAA Championships in March. Already having national-level experience on the team, they hope to raise expectations and encourage others to strive for the same goal.

“When you have a whole group of athletes who share the goal of competing at the national level, it raises the level of everyone around them and makes the team better,” Mahowald said.

As the Coyotes continue through the season, they hope to turn their No. 1 preseason ranking into results and deliver when it matters most at the Summit League Championships.

One nation, under surveillance

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I'm sure most people have at least read or heard of the book "Nineteen Eighty-Four" by George Orwell. In the dystopian novel, the fictional nation of Oceania is defined as an authoritative surveillance state, where privacy and individual thought are extinct.

Orwell wrote this novel as a warning against totalitarianism, mass surveillance and manipulation of thought, truth and language. It can feel like in today's world, we live in a near replication of that society. Mass surveillance in the United States is not a new problem, it has been around for generations.

Today's form of mass surveillance no longer requires having someone over your shoulder. Instead, it can include someone behind your screen, listening or recording every action you do. Surveillance CAN be a violation of your Fourth Amendment right. Maybe it is time to let go of calling it a conspiracy theory and declare it a national issue.

In its written form, the Fourth Amendment says, "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized" (U.S. Const. amend. IV).

The original reasoning to why this was included in the Constitution was to stop a government from interfering with personal lives. Before the United States ever was an idea, the British government often allowed British officers in the American Colonies to rummage through anywhere they wanted without a warrant. Over the centuries, the amendment has been redefined by courts across the country to have it better adapt to today's digital age.

Mass surveillance is nothing of a new talking topic or concern. There had always been assumptions and rumors, because of stories and reports from mouth to mouth. In fact, the government has in some way been involved in surveillance on citizens since the founding of our nation. Popular and notable forms of acts that our

government has done include opening people's personal mail, wiretapping, and planting listening devices in homes and buildings. After 9/11, President George W. Bush signed the USA PATRIOT Act, expanding government and law enforcement surveillance and updated laws and statutes to better adapt to the digital age.

Civil liberty groups like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) continue to claim that the act has further damaged Fourth Amendment protections and has vastly allowed for more in-depth and unnecessary surveillance on ordinary citizens.

In June 2013, one of the largest bombshells reports regarding national surveillance was dropped. NSA contractor Edward Snowden disclosed thousands of classified documents and accounts about a mass global surveillance system to a group of reporters in Hong Kong, with more documents being delivered to cable stations over the rest of that year. Within days, Snowden had his passport revoked and exiled to Russia where he is living in Moscow as a naturalized citizen to this day. Snowden is one of many contractors, employees, and former officials that have raised the alarm about government surveillance. It is partly because of Snowden's actions that Americans were made aware that the government has and will conduct surveillance. While his actions were consequential and a risk to national security, his actions also brought concerning revelations that can't be ignored.

As defined by international law, privacy is a fundamental right given at birth, regardless of identity. Our Constitution guarantees us rights and liberties. Those should and need to be respected one way or another. The question here is not whether security matters, but if it comes at the expense of freedom and privacy. Mass surveillance has deeply eroded the trust between citizens and government. If we really do value security and liberty, then we should demand that the government enacts oversight, and warrants real transparency. A society that watches people will treat said people as suspects, and therefore, no one is truly free.

OVERHEARDS

Here you'll find the weirdest, funniest and stupidest things we've heard during the week. Context is for suckers.

"You come into my house... you get castrated."

- Churchill-Haines Laboratory

"You can sign me up for sex trivia... minus the trivia."

- Beacom

"I've been itching to use my pepper spray."

- North Complex

Dusty Johnson



Courtesy of dustyjohnson.house.gov



Archived Photo from Fall 1997

U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson attended the University of South Dakota from 1995 to 1999, graduating with a bachelor's degree in political science.

While at USD, Johnson held several positions at The Volante, including reporter, section editor and business manager.

"Being involved with The Volante was one of my best experiences in college. As a reporter, I learned how to ask questions and follow leads. As a section editor, I learned how to set deadlines and manage a staff. The skills I developed at the Volante have been a tremendous benefit to my life, even though my career wasn't in journalism."

- Dusty Johnson

Today, Johnson represents South Dakota's at-large congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives. He has served in Congress since Jan. 3, 2019, and his current term runs through January 2027.

Building a family away from home

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With the holiday season approaching, one student organization has made it its mission to connect with residents of the Vermillion Care Center.

The Student Engagement & Refinement for Volunteering Empowerment (SERVE) organization’s Adopt-A-Grandparent volunteer program has made an impact on the environment of the Care Center, especially over the holidays.

Adopt-A-Grandparent typically has two events every month which are open to the public. Additionally, three to four students, who are assigned to a member of the Care Center, visit them for an hour each week.

Zach Moydell is the activities Supervisor for Sanford Vermillion Care Center. He said that residents may not always have family that is able to visit during the holidays, so it’s “nice to have that extra set of hands with volunteer programs to help out.” The Care Center decorates so it feels like “home for the holidays” for the residents.

Madison Meier is the social secretary chair for SERVE’s Adopt-A-Grandparent, who helps decide what the events will be. Their most

recent event was on Oct. 8, which included crafting a fall wreath. These events usually draw about ten to 30 residents.

“It brings a sense of community,” Meier said.

Meier said some residents may have grandchildren who are out of state. So the Adopt-A-Grandparent program is similar to residents having a new grandchild to learn and love. For the college students, it reminds them of visiting their own grandparents.

Moydell said that he encourages volunteers to interact with the residents. Whether that’s one-on-ones in their room or working on an activity with them, residents need human connection.

“The residents love it. It’s positive for everyone who wants to participate,” Moydell said.

The Adopt-A-Grandparent program bridges the gap between college students and the Care Center residents. Residents and college students get to interact with people that they wouldn’t typically on a daily basis.

“Having [new] faces come in there, they get to learn more about campus life,” Meier said.

Some Care Center members may not have gotten the opportunity to attend college. Meier

said that they are “fascinated to learn about what college is like.”

Adopt-A-Grandparent is a program that benefits both the resident and the student. Even with the age gap, there is still an opportunity to learn about each other’s experiences when conversing. Moydell said that some of the residents have life experiences and stories that can be beneficial to anyone, but especially the younger generation.

“They’re different sources of wisdom. Everything that you’ve been doing, I promise you, they’ve done before,” Meier said.

Meier said that they’re fascinated by how well students can use technology and have numerous extracurriculars on their plate. Conversations with residents also help students learn how to have an intellectual conversation with people that are older than them.

Moydell said that this experience has the opportunity for students to be exposed to a career in long-term care.

The next event will be held at the Vermillion Care Center from 2:30 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. Thursday Oct. 22, where they’re planning to paint pumpkins.



Submitted | The Volante

Residents craft fall decorations with volunteers.



Submitted | The Volante

Adopt-A-Grandparent colors wreath with resident.

Planting the “Victorious” garden

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After more than a year of hard work and preparation, the University of South Dakota’s sculpture garden is now filled with native prairie plants.

USD’s Environmental Club and American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) partnered with students from across campus to restore the landscape through their Planting the Prairie event.

This project began last September, when members of the clubs gathered to wash seeds harvested from prairie remanence. They continued hosting activities throughout the year to prepare the seeds for planting. By October of this year, the plants were ready to be placed in the garden.

These native plants frame the garden’s central sculpture named, “Victorious.” The sculpture was created by Colleen Cutschall, an Oglala-Sicangu Lakota artist, and was inspired by Oscar Howe’s “Woman Scalp Dancer”.

“It was very influential to see indigenous plants being planted here with the sculpture that was

[created] by an indigenous artist,” Jade Ecoffey, vice president of AISES, said.

Ecoffey also discussed the garden being renamed “Ohiye”, the Lakota word for “victorious”, in Cutschall’s honor.

Ellie Goetzinger, president of the Environmental Club, said the plants illustrate the sculpture’s name.

“We always say that all the plants kind of represent and embody that really well because they’re victorious and resilient; they come back year after year and survive through harsh winters,” Goetzinger said.

Resilience is a central theme of the Planting the Prairie project. Because the plants are native to the area, they are better equipped to handle the local climate. They also require less maintenance than the non-native plants on campus, which reduces the workload for faculty.

This restoration initiative was completed as a result of community effort. The event, held Oct. 7, was originally scheduled for three hours. However,

because of the large turnout, all the work was done in about an hour.

Goetzinger and Environmental Club Vice President Eliza Wilgers said their favorite parts of the project involved working with different organizations to make the event possible.

“Seeing other people also get excited about the same things is really great,” Wilgers said. “I just think this entire project has brought the community together in so many different aspects.”

Wilgers also said the event allowed participants to learn from one another.

The project provided education about the plants’ history and meaning, as well as the process of harvesting seeds and growing them into plants. The organizations hope the event will become an ongoing effort rather than a one-time project.

In the future, they hope to bring more native plants to the USD campus and the Vermillion community to “make [campus] look like a beautiful space,” Ecoffey said.



Submitted | The Volante

The “Victorious” sculpture surrounded by new plants.



Submitted | The Volante

Native prairie plants from harvested seeds.

Anna Moore pushes for community

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Anna Moore, a sustainability and environment instructor at the University of South Dakota, advocates for community involvement and the reuse of items. Those interests have influenced her participation in and administration of a Buy Nothing Facebook group.

Moore was born and raised in Northampton, Massachusetts. She attended Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, graduating in 2018. After college, she worked as a seasonal sustainability coordinator for concert venues. “I knew that job was going to have to come to an end at some point,” Moore said, “It being seasonal and all that.”

When Moore saw an email announcing that USD was looking for a campus recycling coordinator to grow and develop its program, she immediately looked into the opportunity. The position also included a graduate assistantship that allowed her to earn a master’s degree in sustainability while working part time as the campus recycling coordinator.

“I had the experience, it sounded interesting,” Moore said. She took the position in 2020 and later became a sustainability support specialist for Sodexo.

As of 2024, Moore is an instructor at USD. She said her favorite part of the job is mentoring students outside of the classroom as they work to make positive changes. She also helps coordinate and advise the environmental club on campus.

Moore coordinates the Sustainability Living Learning Community, a newer program on campus that is still being developed. The group has held two successful events.

Additionally, Moore advises different sustainability leaders.

“I feel like advising [turned] out to be more than simply choosing classes, you know, and so I enjoy it,” Moore said.

She helps students find internships, plan for the future and make the most of their time at USD.

“My whole life I have been interested in change making, specifically around environmental issues and social justice issues,” Moore said.

She said those interests contributed to her participation in the Buy Nothing group.

Buy Nothing is a Facebook group and app where users can give and receive items and services at no cost within their community. Moore has been a part of a Buy Nothing group since 2018. To join, users must send a request for access to the group serving their community. They are accepted if they live within the group’s designated area.

Moore is now an administrator for the Buy Nothing Facebook group in Vermillion and encourages her students to explore what it offers. She also said that she would be willing to supervise a Buy Nothing-based internship in which students could complete some of the training offered by Buy Nothing and help others join the group.

Buy Nothing has two key functions; first, it supports reuse, one of the most effective forms of waste reduction.

“Reduce is the most effective, reuse is the next most effective and recycle is the last, least effective,” Moore said, “Buy nothing is a way of reusing.”

Second, the group connects neighbors.

“It creates more social cohesion in the community,” Moore said.

Through the Buy Nothing group, users interact with their neighbors and strengthen

their community connections. Users post items on the page and wait for others to comment. The person offering the item then chooses whom to give it to.

Moore has both received and given away items through the group. Recently she needed an outlet adapter and a woman in the group reached out to say she had one.

“I have more of a relationship with that person because she gave it to me. And when I use it I will think about her,” Moore said.

Several campus resources are similar to the Buy Nothing app. The Shared Shelf in Akeley-Lawrence 210 and Charlie’s Cupboard allow people to give and receive items.

Moore believes the Share Shelf and Buy Nothing create a sense of unity.

“I think that what sustains both of these systems, all these gift giving systems, is the gratitude that you feel when someone gives something to you.” Moore said.

She plans to continue working on sustainability projects and opportunities to connect the campus with the larger community.

“Sustainability is about making the world a better place,” Moore said, “We have more than enough if we share with one another.”



Vivica Kreul | The Volante

Share Shelf located on the second floor of Akeley-Lawrence.

Review: Show ‘stopping’ first play

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The University’s theater recently closed its curtains on the first production of the year. “Stop Kiss,” was performed during Dakota Days for three evenings Oct. 1-3 followed by a Sunday matinee on Oct. 4.

On paper “Stop Kiss” is a romance, but like many good love stories, it goes beyond just romance. The play centers around two women named Callie and Sarah, as they work to navigate their identities, careers and relationships.

“Stop Kiss” is a story about love, and it’s a story about self discovery,” Logan Culhane said.

As the actress portraying Callie, she had a broad perspective of the show.

“I get to experience all of these different relationships,” Culhane said.

The play’s relationships are intertwined with heavy, yet important topics including violence, autonomy and homophobia. Specifically, the play portrays violence through the experiences Callie and Sarah face as queer individuals. The play was not doom and gloom though; the weight of violence is countered by moments of joy and levity.

Culhane described the story as an “emotional whiplash.” It unfolds across two timelines: the first takes place in the present, after a hate crime has occurred; and the other takes place in the moments leading up to the incident. The play’s funnier moments do not diminish its meaning. Nor is it so tragic that it stops resembling real life; as the play shows there is always hope for the future.

“Where there’s love there’s always hope,” assistant director Christina Foltz said.

Despite its hardships and tragedies, the story is not defined by them and instead maintains an optimism rooted in love.

The emotional impact of the story was carried by the work of the actors and crew. Foltz described bringing the production to life as a collaborative process. That work was evident in the audience’s response.

The vivid performances brought the audience into the story. Culhane’s mannerisms, from her voice to her movements, brought Callie to life. She wasn’t the only one, all of the characters felt human and relatable.

From the acting to the set and blocking, every element felt cohesive, the play didn’t feel like it was simply lines being recited, but it felt like a story that was real and important.

“We really impacted audiences in the way we wanted to,” Culhane said.

The cast hoped not only to pull at the audience’s heartstrings but also to communicate the play’s message effectively.

Culhane said she had worried about how the audience would react, including whether someone might walk out because of the play’s content. Thankfully, that did not happen.

“I just feel lucky to be able to have been a part of a production that took place here in a small town in the Midwest, and that it happened and that it exists now,” Culhane said.

She explained that sharing queer stories and art made the production feel especially important.

The Theater Department’s next performance called “anthropology” shown in the Arena Theatre Oct. 22 until Oct. 25.



Colton Tolly | The Volante

The set of “Stop Kiss” before the performance.

Connecting Vermillion through art

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Lunchbox Studios will soon celebrate its one-year ribbon-cutting anniversary, which took place on Nov. 15, 2025. Since their opening, they've focused on creating a space for connection and learning.

"We've had so much support from our community, and that's what we wanted to do: finding a way to get more people to make some art and seeing the value that art has when you add it to your life," Michelle Riedel, co-owner of Lunchbox Studios, said.

Michelle and Grant Riedel are teachers within the Vermillion School District.

"Our main goal is to keep the studio running and keep it as something that can be our connection to Vermillion; a place where people can come in and spend time together," Michelle Riedel said.

This year, Lunchbox Studios introduced the Fall Clay Club, a three-month long hand-building

series. Participants can create custom clay pieces once a month, inspired by the season. The Riedels said people can come in anytime the studio is open to finish their projects.

"We've been doing more hand-building classes. We did summer art camps with the kids, and those were really successful, so then we heard a lot of adults say that they wanted to do it too," Michelle Riedel, said.

Throughout the year, they've worked to expand their business. Lunchbox Studios is now a full University of South Dakota vendor, making and selling the art kits students may need for classes ranging from drawing to photography.

In the future, the Riedels hope to offer wheel-throwing classes and give people access to an open studio.

"A lot of people have been wanting to come in and do pottery wheel stuff, so we've slowly

been working on our back room. We have pottery wheels and all the equipment, so we are trying to make it work for them," Grant Riedel said.

Lunchbox Studios is trying to meet people's needs. They hope to partner with other artists in town so they can teach other art forms.

"I think the best part of this is that we get to grow as artists too, because we get to learn through everybody experimenting together and kind of sharing their ideas and what is working for them," Michelle Riedel said.

Reservations are only needed for the workshops; otherwise, visitors can come in and look around for art supplies and other things. If people decide to stay and work on something, the Riedels will explain the process.

"[Lunchbox Studios] has been an adventure; it's been so exciting to create something that people really enjoy," Michelle Riedel said.



Nadia Castillo | The Volante

Pottery ready to be picked up by community members.



Nadia Castillo | The Volante

USD student **painting a mug.**