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The Weekly Ringer

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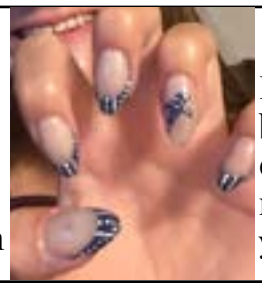
Anna Goodman / The Weekly Ringer

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The Weekly Ringer

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President Trump's new One Big Beautiful Bill threatens student financial aid at UMW

MEREDITH MORRIS & MEAGHAN VAN DYKE
Staff Writer & News Editor

The University of Mary Washington's reputation as one of Virginia's cheapest public universities may soon no longer be a reality for many students.

This comes after President Trump signed his "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" (OBBBA) into law on July 1, 2026, limiting financial aid options for university students.

"That is directly showing what the barrier to entry is for everyone who doesn't have a spare $100,000."

- Mia Guille

According to an email sent from the financial aid office to students on June 22, "Undergraduate students must be enrolled in at least 6 credits per semester to be eligible for Direct Loans."

"If you do not enroll in 12+ credits in the Fall semester, your Direct Loan will decrease in the Spring semester," the email continued.

Loans majorly changed due to OBBBA on July 1, 2026. These changes went into effect this semester and will not change again until July 1, 2028.

According to NBC News, students taking out financial aid loans may face loan restrictions and changes in their payment plan options.

Under the new bill, students can now borrow only $257,500 in their lifetime. Students studying professions such as law or medicine can apply for up to $200,000. The OBBBA has an "interim exception" period that ends in the 2029 to 2030 academic year.

"It limits how much people can get and it's really annoying because it's for people to pay for college when it's not exactly the most affordable sometimes, especially now," said senior biomedical major Tatiana Rodas.



Some students believe financial aid has not been communicative. *Anna Goodman / The Weekly Ringer*

The OBBBA also eliminates Biden-era financial aid programs in favor of two new financial aid options.

Under the first program, students can take out loans adjusted based on gross annual income. If a student's family makes less than $10,000 a month, the student must still pay at least $10 a month.

Under the second Tiered Standard Plan, students can take out loans based on their outstanding loan balance after 10-25 years. This plan seeks to lower high interest rates for students.

As the bill takes effect across the country, Mary Washington students say they are bracing for changes to their financial aid plans that may force them to change the number of classes they're taking and their status as an on-campus student.

"Because I'm on Chapter 35, I have to stay above 12 credits, so that doesn't really affect me. That being said, if I were to have a reason to go below, I cannot lose my funding and part of that too is because of these student loan caps," stated Mia Guillie, a senior marketing major.

"As long as they maintain their grant programs as best as possible, their in-house scholarships as best as possible, I think that there's nothing UMW can do in terms of this."

- Naomi Curran

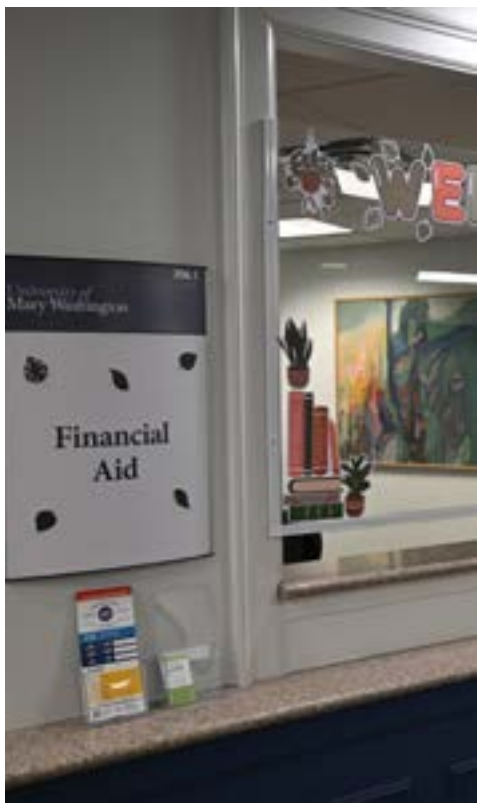
"I have to commute; I stopped receiving financial aid after my sophomore year," Rodas said.

Many students like Rodas already began experiencing issues obtaining funding for their studies before the OBBBA began, with stricter loan caps and fewer funding options than before.

"Last year my total grant money from the government was almost $8,000 and then this year it was, I think, $3,000," stated Guillie.

Other students also expressed frustration around UMW's communication about the financial aid changes.

"I haven't applied anymore for financial aid because I see no point and because UMW's financial aid office really hasn't reached out to help give me any options," Rodas stated.



President Trump's new financial bill is changing student loans. *Anna Goodman / The Weekly Ringer*

For out-of-state students such as senior historic preservation major Naomi Curran, the trouble of changing restrictions and programs is especially concerning.

"This is my last year, but if I decide to go to grad school, it will not be in my home state of Alabama," Curran said. "I don't qualify for residency in Virginia yet. Obviously it's definitely something that's really worrying."

According to NBC, government officials have also expressed concerns over the loan programs specifically targeting lower-income families, with less room for loan repayment mobility and loan caps.

"When you lower the amount of total money, you run the risk of people not being able to get anything or people not being able to get equity," Curran said.

Without old student loan programs, Guille also worries that higher education may become less achievable for students of varying financial need.

"The government can give you a third of what you need. Your school is giving you a fourth; the rest of that you can make up on your own. That is directly showing what the barrier to entry is for everyone who doesn't have a spare $100,000," Guilie said.

As of now, UMW admissions continues to advertise the school as an affordable quality liberal arts education. However, as the nation braces for change, Curran says the university must be ready to help students through new challenges.

"As long as they maintain their grant programs as best as possible, their in-house scholarship programs as best as possible, I think that there's nothing UMW can do in terms of this," Curran said.

Lost in the laptop labyrinth: Why UMW students need to close the screen and claim the education they paid for

TYLER BILLINGSLEY
Club Writer



Students using their laptops too much in class worsens discussions and destroys the point of attendance. *Thomas Jackson / The Weekly Ringer*

Whether you're in Combs, DuPont, Farmer, Seacobeck, or Jepson, if you choose to sit in the back of a class, you're familiar with one visual: an endless night sky of bright laptop screens dotting the classroom ahead of you.

This itself presents no real problem, but the visual noise can be distracting. It's convenient to take notes quickly and having notes for each class on a single device is indispensable for most students.

Any introvert familiar with the back row can tell you something else about every laptop screen they can see, with half of them flipping quickly between Google Docs and something else. Anything else. Block Blast, Google Snake, Messages, Discord, Outlook, Gmail. In the most egregious instances, I've sat behind students fully playing Minecraft in the middle of their lecture.

Using a laptop to play games during class is a flagrant and ridiculous misuse of technology. It's easy to see the texting, emailing and other misuses just as condemnable and while they're nothing to be praised, they're much more of a societal sickness than a sign of blatant disrespect.

"The goal of eliminating rapid tab-switching is not necessarily to maximize learning, but to allow yourself to exist without extra obstacles constantly vying for your attention."

- Tyler Billingsley

One day in class, I watched a girl a few rows ahead of me manage three text conversations and draft an email at the same time. With her messages pulled up in a smaller window, she rapidly clicked between contacts, waiting for the next message she could receive. Each message she received drew her further from the class at hand and the one she was actively paying for.

In her defense, she was not only coordinating multiple correspondences. She managed to squeeze in time for a few school-related activities, such as browsing the UMW Theatre webpage, looking at her major requirements and checking her school email. Ever the overachiever, she even fit in a few minutes to take notes.

Like the rest of her online activity, these notes were streamlined for efficiency and accuracy. She clicked back and forth from the online slides to her Google Docs and copied each word from the slides onto her document. To be safe, rather than copying it down on the sentence level, she broke it down into clauses before splitting her attention back to the online slides and the rest of her online life again.

"Using a laptop to play games during class is a flagrant and ridiculous misuse of technology."

-Tyler Billingsley

Technology is now used in nearly every part of our lives, with constant access to screens becoming more and more common. Along with access to the World Wide Web, there is also constant access to all of our demands and distractions at once. This is why we see students engrossed in their laptops rather than paying attention. How could they focus when they're in front of a portal to all of their work, social and academic obligations at once?

It seems only logical to multitask. If there's downtime in class, you can easily keep up your relationships by sending a few texts. If it's an easy class, why not focus on your work for another class? It logically seems the best way to get things done. However, students are not robots.

Learning consists of more than an empty Canvas Dashboard and students in class deserve to experience class rather than sit behind a screen, seemingly existing only in service of their to-do list.

Of course, all of this is easier said than done. For many of us, we've been operating this way since middle school, just using school-issued Chromebooks rather than our own devices, which host even more distractions. The goal of eliminating rapid tab-switching is not necessarily to maximize learning, but to allow yourself to exist without extra obstacles constantly vying for your attention.

Not focusing in class is not the end of the world. Everybody has a dull or easy class, one they know they can multitask in. Don't. If your attention is fading and you feel tempted to do something else, anything else, there are a few things you can replace productivity-chasing behavior with.

You could always try doodling or drawing in your notebook. It's a classic for a good reason. For those with poor art skills, drawing simple shapes and shading them in can be just as appealing.

You could start journaling in your class notebook. Write about your day. Or about how bored you are. Or why you hate that guy sitting a few rows next to you. Anything works. Bonus points if you look up and nod every few minutes so it looks like you're just a very diligent note-taker.

"How could they focus when they're in front of a portal to all of their work, social and academic obligations at once?"

- Tyler Billingsley

Try counting. In your head or on paper. See how far you can go with it. If this gets boring, start counting by sevens. Counting by sevens is hard.

These are all decent places to start, but coming up with your own non-digital time-wasters would be even better. Make it fun. Make it your own. Your laptop still exists after class ends. Give yourself a moment to be human.

The exception to the rule is if you are in a fight with your friends or partner. In that case, I'd ask you to kindly tilt your screen towards me and turn your font size as high as it goes.

DIY's comeback has reconnected me with my younger self

ANN KARR
Staff Writer



For Karr, the resurgence of the 2016 DIY trend has resulted in several creative projects. *Ann Karr / The Weekly Ringer*

2026 is the new 2016. Or at least that's what social media's been telling us. From music and filters to unicorn frappuccinos, it seems as though trends from 2016 just keep coming back. For me though, this "new 2016" trend has mainly been about the year of DIYs' comeback. Along with all these trends, I'm seeing more and more people just creating–bringing new life to a 10-year-old trend.

All of a sudden, I feel like I'm 11 years old again with my DIY YouTube channel, making anything and everything I could think of. Looking back, it's all I ever watched and made on YouTube. And lately, seeing active 2016 YouTubers such as LaurDIY or Aisha Marie preach about "creating something new that's totally you" has started to hit home more and more.

Although when you look closely at the comeback, it's not totally the same as it was before. I'm not being bombarded with a bunch of five-minute craft videos or useless DIY hacks I'm never going to use. Instead, the things I'm seeing are just people celebrating things they've created and wanting those who are similar to themselves to be able to feel that same joy. This "resurgence" is almost a way for our generation to fully get back to our creative roots and create something useful that shows off our personality.

"I think growing up with the times, as someone who is 21 now, I feel like I'm much more interested in making stuff on my own," said Quinn Davenhall, a senior marketing major.

Davenhall went on to talk about how, for him, DIYs have turned more into creating real-life objects and things he can truly use on a day-to-day basis. It's a huge shift from the types of DIY videos from the past, mostly focusing on arts-and-crafts-style works, Davenhall said.

"I remember slimes being pretty big. I would make picture frames out of popsicle sticks for my parents for Mother's Day and Father's Day," he said.

Rather than thinking of this as a resurgence, or a trend coming back from the dead, Madeline Timmons, a junior philosophy and law major, argues that DIY never went away.

"I almost feel like DIY kind of never fully disappeared. I just think things kinda shift to the trends and then kind of come out of them again," she said.

Timmons described her growth since 2016 when she was watching YouTube tutorials for DIY fidget spinners. As this year has continued, those DIY's have changed into heartfelt gifts and home decor.

"I think people, especially like in these recent years of kind of you know begin to kind of reminisce over the simplicity of the years of the later 2010s," Timmons said, "I think there's a lot of nostalgia associated with those times"

"2026 is the new 2016. Or at least that's what social media's been telling us."

- Ann Karr

"I think they are making a comeback because of people wanting to save money but they have evolved so much and there's so many new and more challenging things to make and do," said Megan Fallin, a senior business administration major.



The revival of this popular 2016 trend has influenced a new surge of homemade crafts. *Ann Karr / The Weekly Ringer*

"I made a cross stitch orange pattern, a bikini box, I do my own nails, I made a flower bouquet and made my own sweatshirt designs." Fallin said, "I saw it online but knew it would be cheaper to make myself."

For me, this year has been a year of rediscovery. I started doing my own Gel nails many years ago; however, I was never proud of what I made. That is, until this year. Something just stuck. It felt very serendipitous, especially doing it now on the 10th anniversary of the DIY craze. I started being proud of the nails I did. It's almost like I started seeing more people embrace the things they've created and it made me start to feel the same.

It didn't just stop at nails. I started creating collages and graphics that I printed out and displayed. I would scroll on social media and see new DIY trends that I just had to try, even something simple like pasting pictures onto fabric and framing them to add some whimsy to my room. It just took over somehow. Like the years were going backward and I was little me again, in my room, just wanting to be creative and make something that felt like mine.

Except now I'm not binging DIY videos all day long on YouTube, desperately trying to find one I want to make; instead, I'm scrolling on TikTok, Reels, or Pinterest and suddenly getting videos that actually make me think, "wow, I want to make that."

From what I can tell, besides the nostalgia, there are two main reasons why DIYs are coming back all of a sudden. The first is money. More and more people are choosing to create something instead of buying it, because the thing they want is just too expensive.

"I think people are realizing making their own versions of things is so much cheaper and saves them money," Fallin said.



Karr first started doing DIY 10 years ago. Now she's taking DIY creations to a whole new level. *Ann Karr / The Weekly Ringer*

The second and my main reason is the way you're able to create something that has been fully made by you and the pride that comes with that.

"They can be just a fun little craft you wanted to do on a random day, or maybe you're trying to create a new piece of decoration and you know want something long lasting in your home," said Timmons. "They can be whatever you want them to be."

Is 2026 really the new 2016? For me, I think it is. Being able to embrace the things I'm making while finding a way to make old things new has been what this year's all about for me.

For years, I tried to push my love for DIY aside. I stopped watching the videos I used to love and deleted my old DIY YouTube channel, almost as if I was trying to forget that part of myself. But I think little me is still there, just trying to get out. Maybe that's what this "trend" has really given me, just a way to let her out again. With every new thing I make, I feel like I'm finally allowing myself to enjoy something I spent so long trying to move away from.

How your student status can help you save your money

JENNA ROBERTSON
Staff Writer

Being a college student can sometimes feel like trying to make every dollar stretch a little further. Between tuition, textbooks, groceries and everyday expenses, finding ways to save money is important.

With admission, one of the easiest ways to save money becomes readily available to us through the use of our student status.

Student discounts are offered by companies in a variety of industries, including technology, clothing, food delivery and entertainment. Some are available throughout the year, while others are limited-time offers, especially during the back-to-school season.

The problem is knowing where to find them...

As college students, we often hear about different discounts all the time, but it can be difficult to know which ones are actually available to us and how to get them.

Services such as UNiDays, Student Beans and ID.me help verify student status and connect students with participating companies.

For some students, however, these services are not something they actively use.

Makeala Waddington, a Sophomore historic preservation major, said they heard of student discount services but have rarely used them.

While, for junior chemistry major Lexi Krug, student discounts have become useful for expenses she already has.

"I'm not paying full price for my Spotify or some other subscriptions," Krug said.

Krug uses ID.me to verify her student status and access discounts such as Spotify and Hulu. She found out about these discounts through a quick Google search.

That is one of the biggest advantages of student discounts: they can apply to things we are already paying for. Saving a few dollars every month may not seem significant, but those savings can add up over your entire college career.

Technology is one of the biggest areas where students can find discounts. Apple offers education pricing on eligible products, while Dell and Lenovo also offer students savings on qualifying purchases after students verify their status.

This can be especially useful during the beginning of the school year, when students may be looking for laptops, tablets, or other technology for classes.



The college experience can take a toll on your wallet. However, you can minimize these expenses by using these student discounts. *@thekrazycouponlady / Instagram*

Clothing retailers also offer student discounts. The clothing store J. Crew, for example, offers verified students 15% off eligible purchases in stores and online, with limits on how frequently the discount can be used.



Take advantage of your student status by finding the discounts offered to you by various companies and local businesses. *Chloe McCann / The Weekly Ringer*

Streaming services such as Spotify, Hulu and Peacock offer student pricing on eligible plans. Since subscriptions are recurring expenses, even a small monthly discount can add up over time.

There are also discounts on everyday shopping. Target is currently offering verified college students 20% off one purchase through Sept. 12.

With travel being a big expense for both in and out-of-state students, these deals extend to national rail services. Amtrak offers students ages 17 to 24 a 15% discount on eligible train fares with a valid student ID.

wThe discount can be especially useful for students traveling home for breaks, visiting friends, or exploring nearby cities. The discount requires tickets to be purchased at least one day in advance, with some routes and busy travel times being excluded.

However, it is important to check the details before assuming a student discount will always be available. Offers can have expiration dates, purchase limits, exclusions, or requirements to verify enrollment again.

The easiest way to take advantage of student discounts is to make checking for them part of your regular shopping routine.

Buying a laptop? Check for education pricing.

Signing up for a streaming service? Look for a student plan.

Shopping for clothes? Ask if the retailer offers a student discount before checking out.

We can also check services such as UNiDAYS, Student Beans and ID.me to see what discounts are currently available.

At the same time, a discount should not become an excuse to spend money we would not otherwise spend. Saving 20% on something we actually need is helpful. Spending $80 on something simply because it is 20% off is still spending $80.

For students like Waddington and Krug, simply knowing where discounts exist can make them easier to use.

Student discounts are not going to solve every financial problem that comes with college. But when we are already paying for something, there's no reason to pay more than we have to.

Want more school spirit at Mary Washington? Start giving students a reason to actually show up



Connections make campus alive. Without the events to foster them, only surface-level relationships can emerge. *@saeumw / Instagram*

CLAIRE LEATHEM
Social Media Editor

The first week back at school, before students can even get ready for class, the University of Mary Washington bombards the student body with events. Freshmen Welcome Week just wrapped up and the Campus Programming Board is not holding back.

Normally, students heading to their first classes of the semester will be stopped by volunteers and handed flyers detailing events for upcoming weeks all the way up to Nov. 20.

"Campus events have the opportunity to bring the Mary Washington community together to just have some fun and make new conenctions."

- Anna Woods

Campus events are incredibly important for a small school like UMW. Students cherish them when they're active; however, in the colder months, campus becomes a ghost town. This can be avoided by having more events spaced out throughout the semester instead of having a barrage of events that students may not even go to.

Students return after winter break with nothing to do but schoolwork. This demotes school pride and encourages students to become hermits. Everyone tends to keep to their own friend group and stay in their room. On top of that, the lack of a work and play balance causes students to experience repetitive, dry day-to-day lives.

All work and no play never ends well. Without social time to relax, students can get overwhelmed and stressed.

Campus events are what drive school spirit here at UMW and many students find them to be important pieces in building campus-wide kinship.

"Campus events have the opportunity to bring the Mary Washington community together to just have some fun and make new connections," said Anna Woods, a junior theatre major and Vice President of Campus Programming Board.

"What I love about CPB is that we try to plan events with all Mary Wash students in mind and the more people that come, the more we can bring up our school spirit," she said. "I would say besides sporting events, the most school spirit I see on campus is at our events."

Jala Lundy, a senior biomedical sciences major, is an employee of Student Activities and Engagement, agreed with this sentiment.

"I believe that events do boost school spirit and morale," she said. "When the basketball team made it to the finals, there were multiple events to celebrate, which I believe helped build up spirit and got everyone excited for our school's achievements."

At the beginning of the year, events like the Great Eagle Duck Hunt, Cinema on the Circle, Rocktoberfest and The Big Ash Bonfire encourage students in competitiveness, teamwork skills and promote new friendships. But in the middle of the year, these big events slowly fade.

"When everyone is reaching the limits of their free time, students and faculty alike and just no one is available to put these big events together," said Margeaux Grey, a senior elementary education major and CPB Karaoke chair. "I know from my time running karaoke, after a month or two from the start of the semester, a lot of people stop coming because they need to prioritize their studies."

While it is true that people get busy, UMW's most famous event, Devil Goat Day, is held during the busiest time of the year, yet the whole school always shows up for it.

Devil Goat Day has been an event on campus for one hundred years now. It is an event that is hosted at the very end of the spring semester right before finals and students care about it so much that they ditch the books and go all out.

At this event, classes are divided into two teams: graduation years that fall on even years are the Goats and odd graduation years are the Devils. Teams compete in different challenges to earn points and whoever ends with the most will win.

"Events create a sense of community that we wouldn't find in everyday life on campus. It's a way to interact with people in a positive way."

- Liz Lagatella

While the actual cost of Devil Goat Day is confidential, it is widely known that this event is expensive and that the school pours a large amount of funds into it due to its beloved reputation.

Before the 1990s, Devil Goat Day wasn't just a day, as it spanned across the entire academic year. Teams could earn points in different types of games and challenges, giving students an incentive to be interested in events year-round.

During the '80s and '90s, it started to lose popularity, leading it to be compacted to one day.

It would be greatly beneficial if the school could once again make Devil Goat Day events spread out across the year while still including ending in the Big Bash on the last Thursday of school that we all know and love.

It would be the best of both worlds. It would fill the colder, empty months with something fun for students to do. Students would be driven by competitiveness and school spirit.

Students would also form more attachment to their team and gain a sense of investment in a school-related topic that's not in a classroom.

"Events are beneficial because it brings all of the students together outside of the classroom," Li Li Avery, a junior business administration major, said.

Students are able to meet fellow classmates and get to know new people.

"Events create a sense of community that we wouldn't find in everyday life on campus. It's a way to interact with people in a positive way," said Liz Lagatella, a junior business administration major.

More events means more togetherness, and with this, the community that UMW preaches so much about can actually start to form.



By UMW promoting more events throughout the year, students can feel connected to campus instead of attending it idly. *@saeumw / Instagram*

Crime Column

MEAGHAN VAN DYKE
News Editor

The Crime Column is based on UMW Police reports from June 1 to Sept. 2.

Homicide

On June 3 at 5:38 p.m., there was a case of homicide at Emancipation and Eagle Village Drive.
This case is referred to FCPD.

Sexual Assault

On June 3 at an unknown time, there was a case of sexual assault an unknown location.
This case was referred to Title IX.

Fondling

On July 7 at an unknown time, there was a case of fondling at an unknown location.
This case was referred to Title IX.

Larceny of Scooter

On Aug. 17 at 7:22 p.m., there was a case of larceny of scooter at Eagle Landing.
This case is pending.

Larceny of Bicycle

On April 24 at 8:04 p.m., there was a case of larceny of bicycle at Eagle Landing.
This case is pending.

Larceny of Scooter

On Aug. 28 and Aug. 29 at 4:00 p.m., there was a case of larceny of scooter at Virginia Hall.
This case is pending.

New bookstore causes campus confusion



Boxes from the bookstore's new online campus pile high as students must now get their textbooks shipped. *Anna Goodman / The Weekly Ringer*

CAROLINE HAYES
Staff Writer

This semester, students won't be able to find books inside the UMW bookstore. Since this summer, the bookstore moved completely online, with the physical space on campus now only containing UMW merch. With this change, books are no longer physically available in the bookstore and must now be purchased through a website partnered with the University of Mary Washington, eCampus.

eCampus allows students to search for their classes online and find their assigned course materials, letting them purchase or rent books through the site. The change has affected how students interact with the bookstore, as they now rely on an online system rather than being able to browse and purchase books in person.

For some students, the change offers a bit of a silver lining.

"Overall, I don't think it's a terrible thing, because in a way it does kind of make it easier," said Travis Jimenez, a sophomore biomedical science and psychology major.

While Jimenez said the change has made ordering books easier, he feels the bookstore itself has lost some of its charm.

"I think it did kind of ruin the bookstore aesthetic, and going in there just feels bland now," he said.

While some students don't mind moving to online shopping, it feels different and new to those used to going in and buying books.

"I don't think it's the worst thing, but I do miss being able to walk into the bookstore and see everything in person," said Xander Mosley, a sophomore philosophy major.

Prices have also long been a topic of discussion, as required course materials often cost more than a hundred dollars per class. Students tend to try to look for cheaper options from other stores, sites or people.

"I didn't need to order a lot of textbooks this year," said Blake Mcmillian, a freshman. "The one I did have to purchase was super expensive, and I was questioning how I was going to even buy it."

Professors have noticed some challenges as well, particularly when it comes to getting books in time for class.

"In one of my other classes, I have the first assignment this Thursday and students have told me it's been an issue getting the physical book that quickly. I think it may create some problems that the bookstore and university did not intend," said Professor of English Gary Richards.

For Jimenez, the need for a physical bookstore is less about buying books and more about having a space that feels like a bookstore.

"I think our bookstore should bring back the physical books in person, just so it looks better, but also so we have those options," he said. "But if we do not, I think we should at least fill the bookshelves instead of just keeping it an empty, dead space."

For other students, these issues have raised enough concern that they have sourced their books from off-campus retailers, most citing higher costs and difficulties operating new interfaces.

"Seeing the physcial books reinforces, I think, psychologically that we're invested in reading, that we're invested in extracting meaning from these texts and talking about them."

- Gary Richards

"My experience this year has only been to opt out of the book for my class as I prefer physical books," said Alyx McMurdy, a junior elementary education major. "Even then, ordering them through the bookstore was a whole different thing, so I ended up ordering elsewhere."

While a handful of students and professors have yet to see the bookstore's new look, they say they believe moving it online might take away a staple part of the student experience.

"I loved the old system of seeing what other people were teaching, seeing the physical books there," said Richards. "Seeing the physical books reinforces, I think, psychologically that we're invested in reading, that we are invested in extracting meaning from these texts and talking about them."

Thomas Jackson contributed to reporting for this article.



The campus bookstore is chang ownership from Barnes & Noble to A Book Company LLC. The online bookstore has caused some challenges for students and professors ahead of a new school year. *Anna Goodman / The Weekly Ringer*

Know before you go: Your guide to Mary Washington's 2026 fall athletics

COURTNEY WERHAN
Staff Writer

As classes kick off at the University of Mary Washington this fall, so does a sports season full of rivalries, traditions, new faces and teams with something to prove.

Whether you are a new student, have not been able to catch a game yet, or a Mary Wash super fan, here is what you need to know heading into the fall 2026 season.

After an impressive 14-4-5 season record and a top-eight finish in the NCAA Division III Tournament, the UMW women's soccer team is the Coast to Coast Athletic Conference preseason favorite.

"It reflects all the work that we put in last season," said senior marketing major and forward Emily Box. "The rankings don't guarantee us anything and the expectation that we will go far is just motivation for us to work harder."

With 14 new team members, the team is aiming for a conference title and a trip to the NCAA tournament.

The road to a conference title starts early, with 14 games scheduled ahead of homecoming weekend.

The homecoming game brings high energy, as UMW takes on rival Christopher Newport University.

"The atmosphere that homecoming brings will give us an immense amount of excitement and encouragement to beat them for the second year in a row," said Box.

This season is not short on rivalries, with men's soccer facing two of its strongest opponents.

"CNU is our biggest rivalry game. It is always two great teams battling it out," said Jack Sturman, a senior business administration major and midfielder.

However, CNU is not the only team that brings tension.



The UMW women's soccer team won 2-0 against Randolph-Macon on Sept. 1. *@umwathletics / Instagram*

"CNU and Salisbury are our two rivals," said junior business administration major and goalkeeper Zaine Asim. "Those games are always very intense and competitive."

After a hard-fought loss last season against Salisbury in the C2C semifinals, the Eagles look to come back stronger this year.

While ranked second in the C2C preseason poll, the team isn't satisfied.

"We have the mentality of striving to be number one," said Sturman. "So being ranked second is more fuel to the fire and gives us more hunger to be better."

That drive carries into the offseason, as the team has worked to return to a standard they are proud of.

"I am most excited for students to see how hard we have worked during the offseason. Last season was not at our standard and we have worked hard to get back to a standard we are satisfied with," said Asim.

Now, the team hopes students will see that hard work on the field.

"We want the students to see all the passion we play with. We play super hard all the time and we hope the fans and students appreciate that," Sturman said. "Our games are always exciting. Students can expect a loud atmosphere with lots of passion."

While the soccer teams battle against rivals, they are not the only fall team chasing titles this season.

Field hockey is coming off another championship season and the team has no plans to slow down.

They enter this season as two-time defending Collegiate Field Hockey Conference (CFHC) champions, being picked as the preseason favorite to win the conference.

"Every preseason, we go in with one goal in mind: winning that CFHC title," said Dyanela Rivarola, a senior psychology and Spanish double major and forward.

Senior communication and digital studies major and midfielder Katie Royle is prepared to work for it.

"We feel we have earned that spot, but we must work harder than ever to keep that spot," she said.

Royle joins fellow UMW students, Mackenzie Proffitt, Grayson Scott and Tori Winans on the National Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA) Division III preseason watch list. Due to the CFHC being a newly formed conference, the Eagles have not yet been eligible for the NCAA tournament. However, a third conference title would secure them an automatic bid.

The season is about more than what happens on the field, with traditions and game day activities bringing the team together.

"Before every game, we meet up in the locker room and blast our pregame playlist," said Rivarola. "We also love doing each other's hair, so if you walk into our locker room beforehand, that's probably what you'll catch us doing."



Senior midfielder Anna Reed scored a goal in the field hockey game on Sept. 1. *@umwathletics / Instagram*

The traditions do not stop when the game ends.

"Tailgates are one of the most memorable parts of the UMW game day experience," said Rivarola. "After home games, family, friends and fans all come together to enjoy food, share stories and celebrate as one community."

Field hockey isn't the only team with traditions this year; women's rugby brought one back from the past.

The team has revived a historic slogan, "I am and always will be," which is now printed on the back of every player's warmup shirt.

The motto comes from the father of a former player, who attended every match for over a decade.

"He's the one who said, 'I am and always will be a Mary Wash rugger,'" said Greta Giese, a junior and conservation biology major and flyhalf. "Now the motto not only honors our supporters who will always be a part of the Mary Wash rugby family, but it is also a representation of the team's commitment to each other and the sport."

The team is coming off its best finish since 2017, with a 25-8-1 record. Assistant coach Emily Rees promises newcomers won't be disappointed.

"There's no difference between the laws of women's rugby and men's rugby. Be prepared to see breakaways from our backs, hard drives from our forwards and heads-up plays," she said.

Whether you know the rules to every sport or not, UMW's fall season has something for everyone, from longtime rivalries and new players to teams chasing championships and exciting traditions. So pick a game, grab a friend and experience it firsthand.

University of Mary Washington
Fall Sports Schedule

ANNA GOODMAN
Sports Editor

UMW volleyball returns the ball to Marymount during a 3-0 victory.
Photo courtesy of Joseph Ruedi

Women's Soccer (1-0)
Sept. 5 vs Bridgewater College
Sept. 9 at Eastern Mennonite University

Men's Soccer (1-0)
Sept. 4 vs Whitman College
Sept. 6 vs North Carolina Wesleyan University

Women's Rugby (0-0)
Sept. 13 at University of Maryland
Sept. 19 at George Washington University

Men's Rugby (0-0)
Sept. 19 vs Navy
Sept. 26 at Mount St. Mary's
Oct. 3 at Life University

Field Hockey (1-0)
Sept. 9 vs University of Lynchburg
Sept. 12 at Shenandoah University

Women's Volleyball (1-0)
Sept. 5 vs Southern Virginia University
Sept. 5 at Randolph-Macon College

Equestrian (0-0)
Sept. 27 at Sweet Briar College

Women's Tennis (13-7)
Sept. 5-7 at Bill and Sandra Moore Invitational

Men's Tennis (0-0)
Sept. 11-13 at Navy Invitational

Cross Country
Sept. 5 at Spider Alumni Open

Games are available to watch via livestream on the UMW Athletics webpage www.eagles.com/composite

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