The University of Mary Washington's Independent Student Newspaper
Serving the community since 1922

The Weekly Ringer

VOLUME 100 | ISSUE 3

September 18, 2026



The first hints of fall in the air bring new friends to campus

As UMW students walk to their morning classes, this little Eagle fan finds a new way to enjoy the cooler weather.

Meaghan Van Dyke / The Weekly Ringer

INSIDE THE RINGER

News | 2
New bill could restrict Universities boycotting Israel



Opinion | 3
Housing at Mary Wash sets students up to fail



Life | 4
Personal Essay: Remembering Gloria Steinem



Sports | 8
New locker rooms provide UMW athletes with a space to call their own

The Weekly Ringer
Editorial Staff

Editor-in-Chief
Grace Wagner
weeklyringer.eic@gmail.com

Managing Editor
Emma Kingkeo
weeklyringer.managing@gmail.com

News Editor
Meaghan Van Dyke
weeklyringer.news@gmail.com

Opinion Editor
Salem Sanders
weeklyringer.opinion@gmail.com

Life Editor
Chloe McCann
weeklyringer.life@gmail.com

Sports Editor
Anna Goodman
weeklyringer.sports@gmail.com

Online Editors
Hannah Holstrom
Sophia Tompkins
weeklyringer.online@gmail.com

Social Media Editors
Claire Leathem
Izzy Schefferman
@theweeklyringer on Instagram

Copy Editor
Kyra Donlon
weeklyringer.copy@gmail.com

Faculty Advisor
Sushma Subramanian
ssubrama@umw.edu

Corrections

Please report any corrections to Grace Wagner at weeklyringer.eic@gmail.com or Sushma Subramanian at ssubrama@umw.edu

Advertisement

Please direct all advertising inquiries to Emma Kingkeo at weeklyringer.managing@gmail.com

Bell tower logo designed by Bernadette D'Auria '22

Universities boycotting Israel could face financial restrictions under new House bill



Students participated in a 2024 protest encampment on Jefferson Square. *Photo courtesy of Amirah Ahmed.*

LIAM HOWARD
Staff Writer

The House of Representatives passed legislation last week that could restrict certain federal funding for colleges and universities that participate in boycotts of Israel, raising questions about what the measure could mean for institutions like the University of Mary Washington.

The Protect Economic and Academic Freedom Act of 2026, or H.R. 4795, passed the House on Sept. 3. Introduced by Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.), the bill would require colleges participating in certain federal programs to refrain from commercial boycotts of Israel that are not based on legitimate business reasons. It would also require institutions receiving certain federal funding to treat academic programs involving Israel the same as those involving other foreign countries.

Supporters of the legislation argue that federal funding should not support universities that discriminate against Israeli institutions, businesses or students. House Education and Workforce Committee Chairman Tim Walberg, R-Mich., said following its passage that universities should not use taxpayer-funded programs to discriminate against Israelis.

"Our universities should not use taxpayer-funded federal programs to discriminate against Israeli students, faculty, institutions or businesses simply because they are Israeli," Walberg said.

The legislation has also generated concerns over free expression and academic freedom, particularly as universities across the nation have become centers of debate and protest surrounding Israel's war in Gaza.

At UMW, Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs Ranjit Singh said he believes universities have a particular responsibility to remain places where controversial political issues can be openly debated.

"My view is that if you cannot protest something in good conscience at a public university, then you can't protest anywhere," Singh said. "This is where we discuss a lot of stuff, right or wrong and you're allowed to be wrong too at a university."

Singh, who has lived and worked in Palestine, has previously participated in campus discussions surrounding the conflict. He expressed concern that government action involving universities and political expression could discourage some members of university communities from speaking openly.

He pointed particularly to younger faculty members who have not yet received tenure.

"Think of it from the perspective of, let's say, you're a newly hired faculty member, an assistant professor; you have to wait five years until you get tenure," Singh said. "So it does intimidate younger faculty from speaking their minds. Or at least it has that ability, right? Because they're not tenured yet. They don't have job security."

Debates surrounding Israel and Palestine are not new to UMW. In April 2024, a pro-Palestine protest and encampment took place in Jefferson Square. UMW permitted the protest to continue but prohibited the encampment, citing health and safety concerns and university policy. Twelve people, including nine students, were eventually arrested for trespassing after remaining in Jefferson Square following an order to leave.

Singh said he and a former student spoke on the steps of George Washington Hall the morning of the arrests and criticized the decision to arrest the protestors.

Singh connected the incident to UMW's history with figures such as civil rights leader and former professor James Farmer and alumna Jean Donovan, both of whom are remembered for acting on their beliefs in the face of injustice.

"We are teaching all this in class, you know, like if you see injustice, don't be quiet, act," Singh said. "And we hold these people up as icons. Yet you're arresting students who, in good conscience, nonviolently are saying, 'I see something and I think it's wrong.'"

Student activists have also called for UMW to take action related to Israel. Shane Maguire, co-chair of UMW's chapter of the Young Democratic Socialists of America, said his responses reflected the chapter's broader position, which opposes H.R. 4795 and supports UMW participating in boycott or divestment efforts involving Israel.

According to Maguire, the previously active UMW chapter of Students for Justine in Palestine advocated for the university to divest from Israel and organized protests calling on UMW to respond to the conflict.

UMW YDSA also believes the legislation could discourage student activism even though its restrictions focus on actions taken by universities rather than individual students.

"The passage of this bill would defang the student peace movement from one of its biggest tools to oppose genocide on college campuses," Maguire said.

The chapter wants UMW to publicly oppose the legislation. Maguire said doing so would be consistent with the university's previous efforts to facilitate discussion surrounding Israel and Palestine.

"If the university is serious about their prior stated commitment to facilitating discussion on this campus around Israel-Palestine, they should publicly and privately oppose this bill," Maguire said.

UMW has previously identified free expression and dialogue as priorities in its response to the conflict. In a November 2023 message to the university community, UMW President Troy Paino said the university's priorities included protecting free expression and diverse viewpoints while creating opportunities for education and dialogue.

Whether the newly passed House legislation will directly affect UMW remains unclear.

When asked for the university's response to the bill and its potential implications for UMW, Amy Jessee, executive director of University Communications, declined to comment while the legislation remains under consideration.

"The legislation in question is still pending, so it's too early for any comment," Jessee said.

H.R. 4795 would still need to clear the Senate and be signed into law before taking effect. In the meantime, its House passage has renewed a debate over how universities should respond to calls for boycotts and divestment related to Israel and how far the federal government should go in attaching conditions to university funding.

For now, UMW has not taken a position on the pending legislation, while members of its campus community continue to debate what role universities should play in responding to the conflict and where to draw the line between institutional policy and political expression.

Housing at Mary Wash sets students up to fail

SALEM SANDERS
Opinion Editor



UMW apartment building 8 is actively undergoing renovations, will the endangerment of students persist? *Anna Goodman / The Weekly Ringer*

The email came in the middle of the day, in between classes, without warning. Another student had been assigned to the room originally meant to house only her.

"It just felt like I had no control over my own space," said Chiara Baez, a junior double major in history and political science.

Housing has been a strain on every student who has ever attended UMW, as the university constantly ignores students' requests for changes and general fixes. The ongoing neglect of the student body has made me reconsider rooming here.

When looking to enroll somewhere, comfort is one of my top priorities. None of the housing arrangements at UMW seem remotely inviting or cozy.

When trying to navigate the system, the issue isn't just whether enough housing exists—which is another can of worms entirely—but what that housing actually looks like upon arrival.

Krish Kapoor, a senior economics major, remembers moving into his campus apartment and immediately realizing something was wrong.

"My door hinges weren't even on when we moved in," he said. "You need a basic tool set to live here."

Problems extended beyond small inconveniences. Kapoor described a kitchen where appliances failed in ways that made daily life unpredictable.

"Our dishwasher isn't even bolted in," he said. "Every time you open it, it tilts forward. One night I used the microwave and all the outlets went out—including the fridge."



UMW bleeds money due to neglect. *Anna Goodman / The Weekly Ringer*

This should not occur anywhere, let alone a university you are spending thousands to attend.

Kapoor, who is handicapped, said accessibility is another overlooked concern. "There's one handicap parking spot on each side and neither of them are close to the buildings," he said. "It's not practical."

Other students described similar patterns with problems lingering long after move-in from hasty room assignments. If UMW cannot consider their students' needs, why should I consider feeding into their housing system?

Emily Ohlinger, a sophomore elementary education major who lives in Eagle Landing, said maintenance issues have become part of daily life.

"Our door doesn't lock properly and sometimes we get stuck inside," she said. "Our front door doesn't always close, which is a safety issue."

She described a series of breakdowns throughout the year, such as a leaking toilet, a broken heating and cooling unit that took months to replace and a kitchen light that fell from the ceiling and shattered.

"It has become abundantly clear that the university's main focus is to ignore and deny until students stop complaining."

– Salem Sanders

"Maintenance said it was installed incorrectly," she said. "All the wires were fried."

It has become abundantly clear that the university's main focus is to ignore and deny until students stop complaining, subsequently making campus living an abysmal nightmare every semester.

When requests are taken seriously, students say the process can be slow or incomplete.

"The renovations don't actually fix things," Kapoor said. "They shut down buildings multiple times to fix one issue at a time."

In Jefferson Hall, one of the university's older residence buildings, students describe a mix of aging infrastructure and inconsistent upkeep. Brandon Paulus, a sophomore cybersecurity major, said the building feels outdated in ways that affect daily comfort.

"In the winter, it's unbearably hot," he said. "I wake up sweating. And then there's mold; you don't always see it, but you can feel it."

Mold has been an issue here for a while, resulting in the demolition of many buildings that do not adhere properly to health codes. The basics of structure and the foundation itself are heavily disregarded, which worries me for any future constructions.

Paulus also said bathrooms and shared spaces are not repaired sufficiently, showing signs of neglect.

"Towel racks are broken off the walls, showers don't drain properly and people don't really clean up after themselves," he said.

For many students, the stress of housing extends beyond physical conditions to how assignments and communication are handled.

Christian Fleming, a junior business administration major, recalled arriving at his apartment to find an unexpected roommate already living there. "We thought he was a squatter," he said.

In no way shape or form should we have to feel unsafe in the living situations the university designates to us.

Ainsley Graf, a junior linguistics major, said she and her roommate were initially told there were no available apartment spaces during the first day of sign-ups.

"My roommate is immunocompromised, so we contacted ResLife," Graf said. "They told us there were rooms, but not for women."

According to Graf, those rooms were designated for men and she was told that if they remained unclaimed, women might be allowed to take them later. "When we asked for clarification, that's what they told us," she said.

Graf said the situation only changed after they escalated the issue. "When we said we would contact ODR, suddenly a room was available for us," she said.

Experiences like Graf's highlight inconsistencies in how housing availability is communicated and who has access to it.

"This should not occur anywhere, let alone a university you are spending thousands to attend."

– Salem Sanders

Chiara Baez said structural limitations in housing often make these situations harder to resolve. "If you don't already live in a building, it's almost impossible to get into it," she said.

For students seeking accommodations, the process can be especially difficult. Katalina Dave, a freshman, said her request for a single room was denied despite multiple medical diagnoses. "I have sleepwalking, anxiety and depression," she said. "I submitted all the paperwork and it was still denied."

She describes the process as frustrating and invasive. "I feel like you shouldn't have to prove your disability so much," she said. "It makes you feel ashamed."

Knowing these problems exist, and as a commuter student, I feel firm about avoiding campus housing altogether. Having control over my living situation is the one thing I know I have for certain. UMW expects students to thrive while attending, but how can that begin if where they are housed cannot operate or sustain them?

Rooms are assigned. Problems are reported. And in many cases, students say, those problems remain unresolved. "They'll give you a room no matter what," Kapoor said. "But the question is if that room is livable."

Personal Essay: Remembering the life of Gloria Steinem and the generational legacy she left for women in the newsroom



Gloria Steinem left a permanent mark on the field of journalism. *Instagram / @gloriasteinem*

MEAGHAN VAN DYKE
News Editor

The day Gloria Steinem died, I got a text from my aunt in Baltimore with a link to an article announcing the news and a separate message a few minutes later:

"Congrats on your new role as editor! Will your paper cover Gloria Steinem's passing? She was a 'shero' of Grandma Mary and mine and I'd be interested to see your paper's coverage."

This didn't surprise me in the slightest. My grandmother, who marched in Chicago civil rights protests and collected heaps of Ms. magazines, seemed like the poster child of the average Gloria Steinem fan, the journalist who spent her entire life fighting for gender equality.

When I was younger, she used to ask for mailed-in copies of the newspapers I wrote for my family that I called The Van Dyke News. When I would become a journalist, she told me she would call me the "golden grandchild" the day she got to read my name in print. Until she died, she did everything in her power to teach me that the only thing holding me back from achieving everything I wanted was my own will and ambition, not my gender identity.

The only reason I'm able to write an article like this in the first place is because of people like Gloria Steinem.

When Steinem first started in the journalism field, she, like a majority of female reporters, was given stories on what was largely known as the "women's pages," or pages that more heavily focused on fashion, lifestyle and more "traditionally feminine" topics. According to the National Women's History Museum, Steinem once pitched a political story to The New York Times Sunday Magazine and was told by her editor, "I don't think of you that way."

Even as I looked back at the archival pages of The Weekly Ringer's predecessor, The Bullet, most of the articles were more lifestyle-oriented. More "hard-hitting" news came after the university became co-ed in 1970 and even then, a majority of these stories were written by men.

Still, a majority is not all.

Steinem had her first breakthrough in her late 60s with her piece "A Bunny's Tale," published in Show magazine. The investigative article followed Steinem in her journey through the Playboy Club, exposing the sexism and poor conditions that sex workers in the Playboy business faced.

After that, Steinem spent her life building a portfolio of work dedicated to uniting women of all socio-economic, racial and ethnic backgrounds towards a common goal. The goal, Steinem explained in her final essay, published in The New Yorker, was for every person's "full-humanity" to be acknowledged, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender identity or socio-economic background.

And even though they are buried behind other names in lower headlines on the page, The Bullet still carries the name of its early female reporters under the most influential event coverage at our university.

I must admit, one of my favorite study motivators when I'm procrastinating or feeling discouraged in any class, journalism or otherwise, is to look up edits of women in journalism on TikTok. Most of these women who first come up—Joan Didion, Gloria Steinem—have a certain appeal to me. They're like foremothers, people who faced harassment and assault (things I don't know if I would be brave enough to storm) and saw their name published in print anyways.

Even the writers in the early editions of The Bullet, writing under a column titled "Inquisitive Reporter Asks," talking to professors who dismissed their all-female students as "not attractive enough" or "too goofy" (according to a real piece published in a 1946 edition of The Bullet), speak to me. To me, they are saying, "Look what I have accomplished. In the face of a world that wants me to be a certain way or serve a certain purpose, I have still done it."

When I look around our now female-dominated newsroom, I can't help but feel we've taken these inklings of our foremothers clawing their way into these rooms and are now able to make something beautiful from it.

Outside the student-journalist world at UMW, women were still denied opportunities and privileges in our then all-women's college, a space that was thought to be pretty progressive only 50 years ago, when women were discouraged from even going to college.

According to student handbooks, women were only permitted to wear skirts or dresses to classes for decades. Old yearbooks had pictures of house mothers who enforced strict curfews and visiting policies, and the university itself was exclusively a teaching college for several years.

Still, Steinem wasn't perfect. That's why today, the women of Mary Washington stand in a unique position. With the rise of conversations around trad wives on social media and the reversal of women's healthcare decisions such as Roe v. Wade, college-age women hold so much future decision-making power in their hands. I am among those, as bosses and older family members often tell me, who have the daunting fate of spinning headfirst into a future no one can yet identify.

In her final essay, Steinem writes, "When you're lucky enough to live a long life, as I have done, your role as an older person is to remind us how far we have come."



Gloria Steinem braved the storm to carve out a space in the newsroom. Her determination helped create a path for women like Meaghan Van Dyke to follow. *Meaghan Van Dyke / The Weekly Ringer*

Each and every one stands on the unfulfilled dreams of the women before us. There are stories, even if they've been lost in our family lines, of dreams of being scientists or writers that were squashed by lack of opportunity mixed with the expectations of a patriarchal society.

When I lost my grandmother in the summer of 2020, my father found a stack of newspapers from when I was younger by her bedside. Years later, she had still kept them.

While my grandmother, a fierce feminist herself, lived her life working her dream job as a librarian in Chicago, this insistence that I pursue my dreams in what is still a very male-dominated field feels to me like one generation passing the foundations of a torch to the next. She never got to see my name in print, but the promise of it was enough to satisfy my grandmother that her work, and the work of women like Steinem, would not die with them.

All of us women, regardless of what college or field of study we're in, have the unique opportunity now to seize careers that weren't even considered possible. Just being here, failing that one test or dragging ourselves to the 8 a.m. lecture, is taking the opportunities fought tooth and nail for by the women before us, dreaming of even being accepted into college.

It is why, for Steinem, my grandmother and the countless other women whose work has gone into getting me where I am today, that I write.


THE 39 STEPS
Adapted by
Patrick Barlow
From the novel by
John Buchan
From the movie by
Alfred Hitchcock
UMW THEATRE
TICKETS ARE $5 w/ UMW ID AT
THE KLEIN THEATRE BOX OFFICE
IN THE LOBBY OF DUPONT HALL
(Limit TWO tickets per UMW ID)
OPEN IN KLEIN THEATRE
SEPTEMBER 17 THRU 27

UMW students raise alarm over broken security systems

JENNA ROBERTSON
Staff Writer

For some University of Mary Washington students, concerns about campus safety have centered on something as simple as a door.

At the Eagle Landing Garage, students have reported that doors that normally control access to the garage have remained open for weeks. At the UMW apartments, students have also raised concerns about doors that do not close or lock properly, as well as reports of an unfamiliar person entering a residential building.

"I'm paying almost $400 for a parking pass in there when people, like, random people, are just parking up there. You kind of just have to hope and pray that no one's in there, I guess."

- Stephanie Clark

While students have long been aware of these concerns, several said they had not received direct communication from the university or UMW Police about the situations.

The Eagle Landing Garage doors were affected by a storm before all students had returned to campus, according to UMW Police Chief Michael Hall.

"We're working now to correct that, to try to fit things in place with generators and things like that," he said.

Police increased patrols around the garage and monitored cameras while the university worked to correct the problem.

Stephanie Clark, a junior psychology major who lives in Eagle Landing, experienced problems with the garage doors firsthand when she tried to leave the garage with a friend.

"We had difficulty getting the door open and had to use another side of the garage," she said. "If an emergency were to happen, no one could get out."

Clark called the UMW Police non-emergency number on Aug. 16 to report the problem. She said, "They just opened both doors instead of just having one door open. Because for a while, it was just people going in and out of the same door."

Since then, she said the doors have remained open.

She also said students pay for parking and that leaving the garage open makes her question who can access the building.

"I'm paying almost $400 for a parking pass in there when people, like, random people, are just parking up there," said Clark. "You kind of just have to hope and pray that no one's in there, I guess."

Aliya Ather, a junior physics and chemistry double major who lives in Eagle Landing, said she had noticed that garage doors requiring an Eagle One scan appeared to be open more often than usual.

"I mean, now that I know that the doors have just stayed open for the past like three weeks, I feel a bit uncomfortable," Ather said.

For Ather, controlled access to the garage is part of what makes students feel comfortable leaving their vehicles there.

"I feel like it gives a sense of safety that is for the students and no one else can get in, so you don't have to worry about anything happening to your vehicles," Ather said.

The garage concerns come as some students have also been discussing an incident involving an unfamiliar person entering the UMW apartments.

The person reportedly approached a student's apartment and presented themselves as someone encouraging students to apply for jobs and interviews. The student did not engage with the person, left and contacted the police.

According to Chief Hall, the person was not an FBI agent or other law enforcement officer, despite what some students had heard through word of mouth and social media.



Students living in Eagle Landing said the garage doors in the parking garage have been open for several weeks, raising concerns from students around safety. *Meaghan Van Dyke / The Weekly Ringer*



UMW Police have said that patrols around the garage have increased. *Meaghan Van Dyke / The Weekly Ringer*

UMW Police reviewed camera footage, identified the person's vehicle and later identified the individual. Hall said police spoke with the person and barred them from all university property for a minimum of four years.

Hall said a student held the residential building door open for the individual. UMW Police strongly discourage students from allowing people they do not know to enter residential buildings.

"Think about your residential hall as your dorm room, said Hall. "When you're at home, your front door is the front door to the building. And your bedroom door would be your residence hall here. So use that mindset that, 'Hey, is someone in your family going to open your front door and let someone come back to your bedroom?'"

Haley Smith, a junior biology major living in the apartments, questions why students seem to be hearing about the situation from each other instead of from university officials.

"It seems concerning that this is only being talked about amongst students, rather than anybody in charge or from the police themselves," Smith said.

Communication from administration to the student body is a common concern among students.

Colin Lewis, a senior computer science major, said he learned about the apartment situation through Yik Yak rather than an official university message.

"There just hasn't been any communication from the school about it," Lewis said.

He said relying on social media can mean students miss important safety information.

"Even on Yik Yak, it's easy to miss stuff and if you just didn't check it for like a day or two, you could have just missed this," Lewis said. "When it's definitely something that should have been at least one email, probably a couple, being like, 'Hey, we know about this. We're planning to do something about it.'"

Hall acknowledged that communication could have been better. He said officials initially did not believe a broad message was necessary because the garage issue occurred before the majority of students returned to campus.

"I was looking at the broader community instead of the narrow community, which I'll take the hit for," he said.

“Keep your chalk off our walk!”; Chalker stirs student protest



Students have been erasing and writing over the messages left by the anonymous chalker on College Ave. In response, a new club called “Chalk It Up” was formed to “use sidewalk chalk to spread love.” *Photo Courtesy of Lee Spickard.*

LEE SPICKARD
Contributing Writer

Students returning to campus this year took notice of chalk inscriptions covering sidewalks in Fredericksburg. Unlike messages in the past encouraging students on their walks to class or promoting student government races, most of the messages were repetitions of “Pro-Life, Anti-Flock,” “Abortion is Murder,” or “Christ is King”. These messages have drawn responses from University of Mary Washington students as the anonymous chalker has focused on College Avenue.

The individual known on Instagram as @deflockfxbg, takes credit for the chalking, often posting photos and videos of his chalk inscriptions. His mission, according to the account’s description, is “Pro Life. Anti Flock. People › Politics.”

The first @deflockfxbg post was published in late August of 2026, with a reel of a chalk message stating, “Hi, Did You Know ABORTION is MURDER? Well now you do.”

While some students agree with anti-flock camera messages, they find it difficult to reconcile this with the “pro-life” messaging of @deflockfxbg. One freshman, Franklyn Phillips, believes the chalker is intentionally targeting UMW students.

“He knows his audience. A small liberal arts college with a majority woman population and a large queer community seems like the perfect place to showcase his opinions against them,” said Phillips.

Other students don’t entirely disagree with the chalker’s methods.

“If the University says he can’t put his beliefs on the sidewalk, then they can say that for anyone,” said junior environmental science major, Maddie Binkley. “The sidewalk is public property, and as such he has every right to put whatever he wants on it.”

Under Fredericksburg law, ordinance 19-04, sidewalk chalk is not classified as graffiti, and UMW policies regarding chalk do not apply to College Avenue. “University Police have communicated with the Fredericksburg Police Department regarding the matter,” Chief of Police and Associate Vice President of Public Safety Michael Hall said. “Because the sidewalks along College Avenue are located within the City of Fredericksburg’s right-of-way, the University’s chalking policy does not apply in that area.”

While @deflockfxbg has had multiple interactions with the police by his own admission, regardless of police and UMW intervention, students have taken matters into their own hands. People have begun attempting to clean up the chalk using water, chalking it out or editing the messages to reflect different values.

In response to the de-chalking attempts, @deflockfxbg has increased his efforts, posting as many as six times in 24 hours. In a social media post on Sept. 3, he says, “UMW students must not like my art. Half of the message keeps getting erased for some reason. Luckily, I have a lot more chalk.” Since the post, students have seen an increased number of messages on College Avenue, from both UMW students and the chalker.

On College Avenue, in front of the Cedric Rucker University Center, @deflockfxbg wrote, “Pro-Life, Anti-Flock; sign the petition!” Students responded with chalk messages stating, “Keep your chalk off our walk!”

UMW students have also taken the initiative to create an opposing account, @prochoice_antiflock. Their mission is to “combat the creep writing ‘pro-life anti-flock’ near the UMW campus.”

Beyond taking to social media, students have also created a new club on campus, the UMW Chalk it Up club. The club believes in “using sidewalk chalk to spread love”, as well as promoting positivity, inclusivity and awareness. The Chalk it Up club is hosting a “Chalk off Our Walk” event on Sept 17 to encourage UMW students to “spread love instead of hate on College Avenue.”

The content of his messages has also recently changed. Phrases including “God made man + woman” and “2 genders” have appeared near campus. The chalker has also erased UMW students’ writings, editing ‘Trans Rights’ to instead say, “Trans are a mental health crisis.”

On Sept. 14, @deflockfxbg attributed the change in messaging to UMW students. “Gm UMW friends! Everyone already knows FLOCK is bad, but not everyone knows there are only 2 genders... so now my mission has slightly shifted!”

This change has drawn a response from the LGBTQ+ community on campus as well as allies, who protest these messages via chalk. Some have written “Trans is Beautiful,” “Trans rights are human rights,” and links to the LGBTQ+ suicide prevention nonprofit, the Trevor Project.

“This campus has such an alive and diverse queer community and I have no doubt they will fight against this ‘chalk’ and nail,” said Phillips.

As students and @deflockfxbg compete for space on the sidewalk, they’ve also engaged in verbal confrontation. Phillips, who spoke with the chalker, says he entered the conversation asking questions about his reasoning for the messages.

“Our voices never raised and he did not interrupt me (nor I him); however, he often strayed away from my or another person’s actual question and was often rude,” Phillips said.

While Phillips’ interaction with @deflockfxbg remained calm, UMW advises students who observe conduct they believe may violate university policy or raise safety concerns to contact University Police.

“As a general practice, we encourage students and other community members to contact University Police if they observe conduct they believe may violate the law or University policy, or if they have concerns about their safety,” Hall said. “Reporting concerns allows the appropriate authorities to review the situation and respond as appropriate.”

While the chalker continues his efforts, UMW students respond in kind.

“As a population of liberal college students, we have a right to be upset about it and fight back. As we have been doing with chalk art of our own,” says Binkley, as students continue responding to the anonymous chalker while writing “Trans Rights,” “Women’s Rights,” “Pro-Choice” and other similar messages.

Crime Column

MEAGHAN VAN DYKE
News Editor

The Crime Column is based on UMW Police reports from Sept. 9 to Sept. 16.

There has been no crime reported since The Weekly Ringer’s last publication on Sept. 11.

New locker rooms provide UMW athletes with a space to call their own

LIAM HOWARD
Staff Writer

University of Mary Washington student-athletes began using new locker-room facilities at the Battleground Athletic Complex this fall, giving several field sports more space to store equipment, prepare for competition and spend time together as teams.

According to an October 2025 announcement from UMW Athletics, the university broke ground on the multimillion-dollar modular locker-room facility that month, with the facilities scheduled to become available for use in August.

The project was designed to provide dedicated locker-room space for seven NCAA field sports and serve nearly half of UMW's student-athletes.

In the announcement, the university stated that the new complex includes three locker-room spaces with dry locker areas, showers, toilets, sinks and washers and dryers. Each room was designed to hold between 45 and 50 lockers.

UMW Athletics said the facilities were planned for field hockey as well as men's and women's soccer to use during fall and baseball, softball and women's lacrosse to use during the spring. This addition gives men's lacrosse dedicated access to existing space in UMW's Physical Plant.

"These permanent facilities at the Battleground complex provide teams with a central place to gather, hold meetings and prepare for practices and competitions," UMW Director of Athletics Patrick Catullo said.

The university also identified improving the student-athlete experience and supporting recruitment and retention as goals of the project.

According to UMW's "Name a Locker" fundraising page, the university also created a campaign connected to the project that allowed supporters to contribute $1,000 to name a locker in honor of an individual.

Donors could choose which team they would like to name a locker for. A limited number of lockers were available per team.

For junior field hockey player and biomedical science major Caroline Carns, the new space has already changed how her team uses its locker room.

"Overall, having this new locker room benefits the teams as there is space to spread out, leave your gear in a safe place and spend quality time with our team," Carns said. "I feel supported as a UMW field hockey player by having a place to call ours for our field hockey season."

"It feels more official, I think you have a certain expectation of what it looks like to be a college athlete and having a locker room definitely completed that vision."

– Erin Sutton

The additional space has given the field hockey team more opportunities to use the locker room for activities beyond storing equipment and preparing for practice.

"We have been able to spend more time in the locker room because of the larger space compared to our previous locker room," Carns said. "For example, tomorrow we will be able to watch game film from our own locker room instead of having to go to an alternate location."

Carns said one of her favorite additions is having an individual place for each player to organize belongings while still being able to sit together as a team. She also said the coaching staff worked to decorate and personalize the room for the field hockey program.

The larger and more open space has also affected how the team spends time together.



The University broke ground on the new locker room project on October 23, 2025. *@umwathletics / Instagram*



An anonymous donor donated $1,000 to name a locker in honor of Roy Gordon. *@umwathletics / Instagram*

The coaches added rugs and couches to the locker room, and the players added decorations to make the space feel inviting.

"I think for us to have such an open space that we can decorate, we have rugs and couches in there, it contributes to how we can mesh and gel as a team," sophomore field hockey player and communication and digital studies major Erin Sutton said.

The location has also made UMW's sports medicine staff more accessible to the field hockey team.

Team members can now walk to the athletic trainers' office instead of having to drive from their locker room.

"Having it right next to the Phys Plant, where we see our trainers before and after practice, has been very helpful for us since we had to drive there in the past," Sutton said.

For Sutton, the new facility has also changed how she views her experience as a college athlete. While she said the facilities would not have heavily influenced her original decision to attend UMW, having them now has made a difference.

"It feels more official," Sutton said. "I think you have a certain expectation of what it looks like to be a college athlete and having a locker room definitely completed that vision."

Sutton also said the investment makes her feel that the university recognizes the importance of having a place to connect beyond practices and games.

"It's nice to feel like they understand we need a space where we can connect more as a team and also to feel like we're wanted and they care about our well-being and not just our performance," Sutton said.

University of Mary Washington
Fall Sports Schedule

ANNA GOODMAN
Sports Editor

Women's Soccer (3-1)
Sept. 19 vs Batten University
Sept. 23 at Hood College

Men's Soccer (4-0)
Sept. 19 at #23 Washington and Lee University
Sept. 23 at Bridgewater College

Women's Rugby (1-0)
Sept. 19 at George Washington University
Sept. 26 at Christopher Newport University

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

Field Hockey (4-0)
Sept. 19 vs Gettysburg College
Sept. 23 at #21 Washington and Lee University

Women's Volleyball (2-3)
Sept. 22 vs St. Mary's College of Maryland
Sept. 26 at Gettysburg College

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

Women's Tennis (0-0)
Sept. 18-20 at Bill and Sandra Moore Invitational

Men's Tennis (0-0)
Sept. 19-20 vs UMW Kickoff Classic

Cross Country
Sept. 19 at South Region Preview

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

-

Full schedule not listed above. Most recent games included. **Bold** indicates home game.