



SGA kicks off
Adopt-a-Family
competition
Page 2



Students craft
Art from the
Heart
Page 3



Cross country
got crowned at
NCAA
Page 6

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EDGE Fair boosts student career readiness

By Draven Dabrowski
Sports Writer

The university held its inaugural EDGE Fair on Nov. 12, bringing dozens of employers, campus partners and mentorship opportunities to the Adanti Student Center as students explored ways to strengthen their career readiness.

Aimee O'Shea, the associate director of the Office of Career and Professional Development who oversaw the fair, said the goal was simple: make opportunities feel accessible.

"We wanted to answer a need our students have; they need an 'EDGE' in the job market," O'Shea said. "They need to see themselves in roles that resonate and matter to their development."

The EDGE Fair is part of a broader campus initiative led by OCPD to increase access to hands-on experiences that build resumes, confidence and career readiness.

Those partners represented the four "Southern EDGE pathways" the office is launching: southern grounds, community connections, family foundations and beyond borders.

For some students, the fair served as a starting point for exploring many options within their major.

Interdisciplinary studies major Connor Reed, a senior hoping to enter the field of artificial intelligence regulation, said the EDGE Fair helped him build confidence even when he was not sure he would find a perfect employer match at these fairs.

"I'm not sure I will find anything, but I still come here," Reed said. "Even talking to people with relatively similar topics has been helpful. I



Students networking at various tables at the EDGE Fair in the Adanti Student Center Ballroom on Nov. 12.

PHOTO | LILY RAND



Students writing their names down and talking to representatives at multiple tables.

PHOTO | DRAVEN DABROWSKI

am getting insight into the job market, and it links to human interaction, which can be helpful for students who are overwhelmed."

Nursing major Kaylyn Rivera, a freshman, hoped to find opportunities related to healthcare or

working with children, and she did.

"I actually made a lot of meaningful connections," Rivera said. "Events like these really can help students get more comfortable looking for jobs after college."

Many organizations at the fair had good things to say about the qualities which the university's students bring to the table.

Davaul Amin, an HR staff member from the West Haven Community House nonprofit, felt the

fair was a natural fit for the program.

"We want to look for students interested in working in nonprofits," Amin said.

The organization has regularly hired students from the university in

children's programs, praising how well students understand the needs of the local community.

"Southern students are very familiar with the culture and the needs of the area, which makes them great applicants," Amin said.

Launched only a year ago, the Career Closet quickly became one of the fair's most popular attractions

Heidi Atuaful, the graduate intern for the OCPD, said its mission reflects the university's commitment to supporting first-generation and low-income students.

"Professional clothing is expensive," Atuaful said. "We wanted to give students the option to get clothing for free for their interviews and career opportunities."

She noted that the EDGE Fair will continue to grow alongside their broader initiative.

"Now that we've established the fair, people will become more aware of what we have for them, and more students will come," Atuaful said.

The EDGE Fair is only the beginning of a long-term shift on campus, one that instills experiential learning into the core of the university's experience.

"EDGE will become a consistent part of how students understand their learning, their skills and their pathways forward," O'Shea said.

For students who missed the event, all employers and partners are listed in the JOBSS portal, and the OCPD encourages students to reach out directly.

"The growth of the fair is important, but the real transformation lies in helping every student feel empowered," O'Shea said.

See Page 5 for photos

Students voice concerns on longest government shutdown

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor

President Donald Trump approved legislation that ended the 43-day government shutdown, the longest in U.S. history, on Nov. 12.

According to NPR, the House of Representatives voted 222 to 209 to restore federal food assistance, resume pay for hundreds of thousands of workers and stabilize the air-traffic control system.

"They paused food stamps, so people in need weren't able to provide for their families," communication disorders major Amahya Walker, a sophomore, said.

Walker sympathized with families who struggled during the shutdown.

Due to the shutdown stretching across more than six weeks, it had a heavy impact on families, federal employees and economies nationwide.

Walker said it felt like leaders in Washington acted with no urgency to

resolve the crisis.

"I think it took too long to come to an agreement," Walker said. "It's like they didn't care about the repercussions."

While food assistance programs were reinstated, Walker said that restoring food benefits for November felt incomplete after families were left without help for weeks.

"Giving back food stamps for the month of November felt like a way to stop complaints," Walker said.

NPR also stated that the final funding bill passed only after six Democrats sided with Republicans. This allowed the government to reopen without the health care support Democrats had been pushing to add to the bill.

Although political leaders debated the long-term political outcomes, students were more focused on the shutdown's immediate impact on vulnerable communities.

"It had a powerful

effect on jobs and how the country flowed, and it made it harder for low-income families to thrive," accounting major Jayden Newell-Kemp, a junior, said.

Newell-Kemp also highlighted that the shutdown revealed economic gaps that formerly went unnoticed.

"Economically, stocks rose during the government shutdown, but other than that, it did not help rural areas," Newell-Kemp said.

The halt in federal operations disrupted more than just government offices. It rippled across job markets, small communities and families relying on consistent support.

For this reason, Newell-Kemp emphasized the importance of staying informed during major national events.

Many students believed that the shutdown created unnecessary hardships that many Americans had to face.

Psychology major

Jerome Lowery, a sophomore, said the uncertainty deepened stress for households already facing instability.

"I think that could be stressful because there's parents and families in the world with needs and wants with food and stuff," Lowery said. "They have insecurities with their home and food and shelter."

Lowery said he was relieved when the shutdown finally ended but believed national leaders should face accountability for allowing it to last so long.

"I'm glad it ended, and the president should be held accountable for allowing it to go that long," Lowery said.

For those watching the shutdown from campus, the event highlighted how national political decisions can impact everyday life, influencing everything from financial stability to public services and access to essential needs

Newell-Kemp said

his fellow young voters should pay attention to how political decisions affect their everyday life as well as others around them.

"I think knowing what's going on helps

with voting," Newell-Kemp said. "A lot of misinformation is spewed nowadays with social media, so it's important for us to be aware and seek out the correct information."



The United States Capitol's dome illuminated in Washington, D.C.

PHOTO | ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL