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The Parthenon, November 3, 2021

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THE PARTHENON

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Marshall Joins the Sun Belt, C-USA Dwindles



Marshall University formally announced and celebrated a transition to the Sun Belt Monday following the announcement of Marshall University President-elect Brad Smith last weekend. | Photo Courtesy of Austin O'Connor

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Half-way through the second quarter, the crowd at the FIU-Marshall game were on their feet when a squirrel ran 65-yards to cross the goal line near the student section.

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Brad Smith Announced as New University President

By TYLER SPENCE
MANAGING EDITOR

Brad D. Smith, former CEO and current chair of the board of the software company Intuit, has been chosen as Marshall University's new president, succeeding the outgoing Dr. Jerry Gilbert, the university's board of governors announced last Thursday.

Smith was CEO of Intuit for 11 years and stepped down in 2019 to found the Wing 2 Wing Foundation which aims to help young people be properly equipped to succeed – especially in an entrepreneurial capacity – in the Appalachian region.

The foundation grants scholarships to Ohio State and Marshall Universities. Smith also serves on the board of Nordstrom and Momentive the latter formally known as Survey Monkey.

Smith pledged to resign from all of his board memberships to focus on his new role as university

president.

Smith's candidacy has been shrouded with equal parts excitement and controversy. During his visit with students a few weeks ago, a senator in Marshall's student government association confronted Smith about practices that existed during his time as CEO of Intuit.

The same senator also attempted to pass a resolution asking the board to reconsider his candidacy, which was shot down almost unanimously in a subcommittee.

There was also concern about a potential conflict of interests, as Smith just a few years ago made the biggest donation in Marshall University's history.

However, it should be noted Smith and his wife Alys made a \$25 million donation to West Virginia University just last year – the same amount he gave to Marshall.

The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission has found no reason that Smith should

not be considered fit to serve as university president.

There was also concern among faculty about the lack of experience Smith has in academia, which he acknowledged in his meetings in his time in Huntington a few weeks ago.

Smith pledged to make a strong effort to understand academia as well as to surround himself with those who do have that experience. He also brought up the increasing amount of universities that are choosing candidates outside of academia to become their presidents.

The announcement was made following the formal vote made by the Board of Governors this morning – which was unanimous, however, multiple sources have confirmed the decision was made during last week's executive session with a single opposing vote. Smith will become the first Marshall president to be an alum since Michael Joseph Farrell, who served as interim president in 2005.

Students Protest Brad Smith During Presidential Acceptance Speech

By CONNER WOODRUFF
REPORTER

A small group of protestors held a demonstration against the selection of Brad D. Smith as Marshall's 38th president.

The protest, organized by the Marshall Sustainability Club, was held at the Joan C. Edwards Playhouse during Smith's introduction speech only hours after the board of governor's decision earlier in the morning.

The group of protestors demonstrated with signs, forming a line inside the playhouse directly outside of the auditorium that Smith was speaking in.

Once Smith's speech was concluded, the protestors were asked by police to leave the building; however, the demonstration was continued outside.

Once Smith's speech was concluded, the protestors were asked by police to leave the building; however, the demonstration was continued outside.

Julia Pritt, a member of the Sustainability Club featured at the protest, believes that Smith's lack of experience working in an educational environment.

"Brad Smith is the only finalist who didn't have any educational experience," Pritt said. "I think the number one person leading an educational institution should have educational experience."

Pritt also had issues with that she finds to be glaring conflicts of interest regarding Smith's relationship with certain members of the board of governors and his past multi-million-dollar donations to the University.

"I take issues with his ties with one of the people on the board making the decision," Pritt said. "It's just so evident that without money it would not have been a question about whether or not he would have been involved with this at all."

Smith briefly spoke with The Parthenon about his feelings towards the recent controversies around his status as a presidential candidate.

"I start by celebrating the fact that I had students and others in the constituency group that had questions about either my qualifications or my legitimacy," Smith said. "It is important to have that civil discourse and that diverse perspective because it always leads to better outcomes and better decisions, it made me a better candidate, I think it will help me be a better president."

Jessica Spoor, the Marshall University senior and Student Government Association senator who drafted a resolution asking the board of governors to reconsider Smith's candidacy, spoke with Smith briefly after his speech.

"He immediately recognized me," Spoor said. "I said 'I would love to hold some kind of event like an open forum with you (Smith) so we can get the students to get to know you and also address these concerns, because I still have these concerns.'"

Dr. Montserrat Miller, Executive Director of the John Deaver Drink Academy, was happy to see the student protestors standing up for what they believe in.

"I don't think there is anything but a positive

assessment to be made when students voice their concerns, this is a university, it is the training grounds for democracy," Miller said. "I am happy to see students voicing their concerns."

Spoor, having a recent history of arguing against Smith's status as a finalist for the president's seat, had positive feelings towards the group of protestors.

"It kind of makes me feel validated to be honest," Spoor shared. "I am glad they are out here and showing support for what they believe in."

Smith will be working with and learning from President Gilbert over the coming months to prepare for his time as Marshall's 38th President.

Conner Woodruff, woodruff9@live.marshall.edu



Once Smith's speech was concluded, the protestors were asked by police to leave the building; however, the demonstration was continued outside. | Isabella Robinson

Technology being added to Cabell County Public Library

By ALAINA LASTER
REPORTER

The age of the internet has made many changes to Cabell Library, most recently its magazine section.

“We have thousands of magazines, and you can search them by audience or language, or type like craft magazines,” said Sara Ramezani, the library’s assistant director for Popular Services. “You can sort them by preference or in alphabetical order or search right in the search bar.”

The library originally had less than 50 options for readers to choose from. Now, with their new online resource, Libby, they have access to over 3,600 magazine titles. Their magazine access is different from books and audiobooks. Online readers are limited to having 10 books at a time, and when one is checked out by someone else, the reader is placed on a waitlist until it becomes available again. Magazines are limitless; there is no maximum number or time that you are allowed to access it. It can also be held by more than one reader at a time.

“Most likely it is just one click away if you have a library card and pin number,” said Ramezani.

Magazines, books, audiobooks, and music are all available through the library’s digital collection. Library cards provide access to free music streaming through the program Freegal (free, legal, music).

“If you like music like me, you must have a free application and service that we offer that you can stream unlimited music per day without commercials. You can download twenty songs a month and it is permanent without paying for it,” said Ramezani.

The resources available through the library are free to use with a library card and pin number. As a Marshall University student, or a resident of the Tri-State Area library cards are free.

“Using a library, the statistics show that we are still working, and that we are still used. That is my goal, I want to see that those things we pay good money for are used,” said Ramezani.

“One of the things we do because our collection of magazines here in this building doesn’t circulate, we are always seeing what’s being used and what’s not being used,” said David Owens, assistant director for Adult Service.

Owens said the goal is to look at what they have physical copies of and plan accordingly. Those that are being

read more often will be kept while the ones that are not may be removed but would still be available to readers via the online resource.

“It doesn’t impact access either because if you want to look at a magazine in this building you have to be in the building to look at it, and if you are in the building, we can get you on a computer to look at it, so it doesn’t diminish access,” said Owens.

Ramezani said libraries are a source of information, reliable and not so reliable. The Cabell Public Library will not ban, or police the resources people use, but the staff understands the importance of researching through reliability.

“We as libraries, and public libraries specifically, think that public education is about being conscious and aware of false news, fake news, wrong news, anything like that,” Ramezani said. “We do not filter, and we do not ban but we do want to educate and teach people that you have a way to recognize the reliable resources, not something that somebody shared. It is our responsibility as librarians to try to provide that information for people to be educated.”

Owens said if a person visits to conduct research, the librarians will help them find the correct sources.

“Working in a library system, it is so engraved in you that you provide an authoritative source that it seeps into everybody’s psyche when you work here that that’s what they do,” said Owens.

The sources available are available to all, and it is up to readers to make the decision of whether they trust it, said Owens.

“If somebody wants to look at unreliable stuff, we can’t stop them. We are not here to police but if somebody has a legitimate reference question, one of the things we always do is provide the source material for them so that they can then make their own informed decision as to whether that is reliable or not,” said Owens.

The library is located at 455 9th St. in Huntington.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF ALAINA LASTER

Academic Freedom Reviewed Over Testimony Ban

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (AP) — The University of Florida has been asked by its accrediting body to explain how denying a request by three professors to serve as paid experts in a voting rights lawsuit conforms to standards for academic freedom and avoids undue political influence.

University leaders prohibited professors Dan Smith, Michael McDonald and Sharon Austin from being paid as expert witnesses in a lawsuit that says Florida's new elections law harms voting rights. Over the weekend, school officials said such testimony would go against the school's interest by conflicting with the administration of Republican Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

On Monday, Belle S. Wheelan, president of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on Colleges, told news outlets the organization planned to investigate the university's decision.

Smith chairs the university's political science department, McDonald is a national expert on elections and Austin studies African American political behavior. All have testified in other cases as paid expert witnesses before.

Later Monday, University of Florida President

Kent Fuchs and Provost Joe Glover said in a letter to the campus community that the school will immediately appoint a task force "to review the university's conflict of interest policy and examine it for consistency and fidelity."

They said it is critical that the policy advances the university's interests while protecting academic freedom. They also said the professors are free "to testify pro bono on their own time without using university resources."

The university "has a long track record of supporting free speech and our faculty's academic freedom, and we will continue to do so," their letter said.

In response to the university leaders' letter, attorneys for the professors said Tuesday that they'll fight for the scholars' right "to speak on their own personal time, as citizens and as scholars."

"By picking and choosing which of its faculty can testify in court as expert witnesses over voting rights, the University of Florida is violating these professors' constitutional rights in the place where their truthful views are needed most: a United States Courthouse," said the statement from attorneys David O'Neil and Paul Donnelly. "They have sworn an oath to work on behalf of the people of Florida,

not political interests."

The 10 Democratic members of Florida's congressional delegation on Tuesday condemned the decision in a letter to Fuchs.

"We urge you to reconsider this 'prior restraint' on speech that violates the First Amendment as well as the deeply rooted principles of academic freedom that we know you and the University of Florida community hold so dear," said the letter issued by the office of U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

As part of the accrediting body's investigation into whether the university violated the "academic freedom" and "undue political influence" standards, officials will be asked to provide more details about the decision to deny the professors' request, the Miami Herald reported.

Wheelan said findings are expected no later than June 2022, and the university could face no action, a warning, be further monitored, placed on probation or lose its accreditation.

UF's president answers to its Board of Trustees, which has six members appointed by the governor and five appointed by the state university system's Board of Governors. The Board of Governors, in turn, has 17 members, 14 of whom are appointed

by the Florida governor and confirmed by the state Senate. These offices have been in Republican hands for many years.

DeSantis' office, in a statement released Monday, denied being behind the decision to block the faculty members' testimony.

"The fact remains that all public universities, including UF, have policies around situations where conflicts of interest may arise, including paid testimony in a lawsuit," DeSantis' press secretary Christina Pushaw said in a statement.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rhode Island to Help Businesses Find Enough Workers

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Rhode Island plans to offer businesses struggling to find enough workers up to \$5,000 to help them fill positions left vacant by the coronavirus pandemic, Gov. Daniel McKee said Tuesday.

The Back to Business initiative will be funded with up to \$4.5 million in federal coronavirus relief money, the Democratic governor said. Businesses can use the grant money for sign-on bonuses for new hires, incentive payments for employees who recommend a successful new hire, and for other recruitment activities including job fairs and promotional materials.

"Our administration has worked closely with the business community throughout the pandemic. We have listened to concerns from employers who are having trouble finding workers and

believe the Back to Business initiative is an innovative approach to get Rhode Island back to work," McKee said in a statement.

The grants will be available to Rhode Island-based businesses with fewer than 200 employees, which have suffered job losses during the pandemic and are struggling to find enough help.

Applications will be accepted starting Thursday until Nov. 12. "We've added thousands of jobs to the labor force over the past several months and this program will ensure our progress continues," said Matthew Weldon, director of the state Department of Labor and Training.

Also Tuesday, McKee and state Education Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green announced a program to help schools in communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

Under the Learning, Equity, and Accelerated Pathways District Support Program, districts will be eligible for matching funds,

ranging from \$1.4 million to \$4 million, from a pool of more than \$20 million to invest in programs that will accelerate student learning.

"As we emerge from the pandemic, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build a more prosperous, equitable and resilient Rhode Island, especially when it comes to our students and their education," McKee said.

Eligible districts include Central Falls, East Providence, Johnston, Newport, North Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, Warwick, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

The results of the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System test results released last week showed students' proficiency in math and English language arts dropped significantly during the pandemic.

Economy, COVID, schools top issues in Virginia

By SARA BURNETT and HANNAH FINGERHUT
Associated Press

The economy ranked as the top issue facing the state of Virginia as voters cast their ballots in the tight race for governor, with the coronavirus pandemic and education trailing.

In the race between Democrat Terry McAuliffe and Republican Glenn Youngkin, 34% of Virginia voters say the economy and jobs was the most important issue facing the state. Seventeen percent name COVID-19 and 14% choose education, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of voters.

Health care (7%), climate change (7%), racism (5%), immigration (5%), abortion (5%) and law enforcement (4%) were all lower-tier issues.

Yesterday's election is the most closely watched and competitive contest since President Joe Biden defeated Donald Trump last year, and is widely seen as a gauge of how voters are feeling ahead of next year's midterm elections.

Here's a snapshot of who voted and what matters to them, based on preliminary results from AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 2,500 voters in Virginia conducted for The Associated Press by NORC at the University of Chicago.

IS VIRGINIA'S ECONOMY SOARING OR SINKING?

Youngkin, a former private equity executive, often asserted during the campaign that Virginia's economy was "in the ditch," but a majority of voters disagreed. Fifty-six percent said the state's economy is in good shape, compared with 44% saying economic conditions are poor.

Youngkin argued Virginia's record budget surplus was the result of overtaxation as he campaigned on a promise to enact substantial tax cuts.

McAuliffe countered that the surplus was due to strong economic growth under Democratic leadership and argued that Youngkin's opposition to abortion rights and conservative position on LGBTQ issues would hamper efforts to recruit new businesses to the commonwealth.

As the costs of goods rises, about two-thirds of Virginia voters in this year's election say their family's financial situation is holding steady. That's a similar percentage compared with voters in last year's presidential race.

Another 16% say they are getting ahead financially, while about as many — 18% — say they are falling behind.

SCHOOL DEBATE DECISIVE FOR MANY

Schools became a major focus of the governor's race for Youngkin, who localized a debate happening nationwide after McAuliffe said during a debate that parents shouldn't "be telling schools what they should teach."

A quarter of Virginia voters say the debate over teaching critical race theory in schools was the single most important factor in their vote for governor, but a similar percentage identified the debate over handling COVID-19 in schools as most important.

More voters said the public school system in Virginia is focusing too much, not too little, on racism in the U.S., 43% vs. 32%. Another 24% said the focus on racism is about right.

Most voters say they think racism in the U.S. is a serious problem, but fewer than half (44%) call it "very serious."

About 6 in 10 Virginia voters support both mask mandates for teachers and students in K-12 schools and vaccine mandates for teachers.

MORE INDECISION THAN 2020

About 6 in 10 voters say they've known all along whom they would be backing the governor's race. In the presidential race last year, three-quarters of Virginia voters said they knew all along whom they would back, though about as many decided in the last few days.

About 3 in 10 voters now say they decided over the course of the campaign. Roughly 1 in 10 said they were still deciding in the last few days.

MCAULIFFE GETS MORE BLAME FOR ATTACKS

Most voters think the gubernatorial campaign featured unfair attacks from at least one candidate, but voters are somewhat more likely to say only McAuliffe attacked Youngkin unfairly than the other way around. Close to 2 in 10 voters say both attacked the other unfairly.

CONTINUED SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE VOTE COUNT

Although Virginia experienced no major issues with its vote count in 2020, only about half of voters in Virginia are "very confident" that the votes in the election for governor will be counted accurately. Another 3 in 10 voters are "somewhat confident."

Still, confidence is stronger among voters now compared with voters in last year's presidential election: Just 25% then said they were very confident votes would be counted accurately.

MAJORITY BACK ABORTION RIGHTS

A majority of Virginia's voters — about 6 in 10 — say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, while 4 in 10 say it should be illegal in all or most cases.

Even so, a majority of voters fall into the middle, supporting abortion in some instances but not all — a third of voters say abortion should be legal in most cases and about that many say abortion should be illegal in most cases.



AP Photo/Alex Brandon

VOTERS ARRIVE TO CAST THEIR BALLOTS ON ELECTION DAY AT CITY HALL, TUESDAY, NOV. 2, 2021 IN ALEXANDRIA, VA. VOTERS ARE DECIDING BETWEEN DEMOCRAT TERRY MCAULIFFE AND REPUBLICAN GLENN YOUNGKIN FOR GOVERNOR.

Marshall Joins Sun Belt, C-USA Dwindles

By TYLER KENNETT
SPORTS EDITOR

As Marshall defeated the FIU Panthers by a whopping 38 points, Herd fans were traveling down the streets to Hoops Family Field at Veterans Memorial Soccer Complex. The men's soccer team, nationally ranked as the top team in the NCAA coaches' poll this week, was setting to take the pitch on the same night. In the Cam Henderson Center, while a Marshall squirrel made Sports Center, Herd basketball prepared to take on Davis & Elkins in an exhibition game. Over 2,500 fans entered the Cam on Sunday for that exhibition contest: a game that doesn't matter for the Herd's overall season. Over 22,000 fans were in attendance between three games, in three different sports, happening on a holiday weekend. When you think about it, it's no wonder that the Herd was a hot commodity when it came to conference relocation. Herd fans travel.

A collection of meetings amongst the Board of Governors allowed Marshall officials, including Brad Smith and current President Jerome

Gilbert, to select from the following reported options: independence, a reunion with the MAC, staying withing C-USA, and the move to the Sun Belt. Of course, the option selected landed Marshall within the Sun Belt prior to the 2022-23 season. Marshall has been a member of Conference USA since 2005.

"Marshall's football tradition and passionate fans bring a strong presence to the Sun Belt," said Sun Belt commissioner Keith Gill in a statement. "Their natural rivals are in our footprint and make our East division even more competitive."

With the move, the Sun Belt expects to reach 16 schools and 14 football programs. Marshall will be projected to join the East division which currently includes Coastal Carolina, a team ranked in the Top 25. Other schools within the East division include Appalachian State, a team that Marshall has played in the past two seasons, developing an intense rivalry that resulted in national coverage this year.

Marshall will pay the Sun Belt \$80,000 in annual dues to the Sun Belt Conference, less than the amount currently paid to

Conference USA. The earliest leave that Marshall can make would come after a 14-month notice. Exit fees, according to President Gilbert, total at roughly \$3 million.

"Once you give notice, you cannot receive distributions, but you are also required to give that 14-month notice, so if you get out before that, it is going to require some negotiations," said Interim Athletic Director Jeff O'Malley.

Along with Marshall, Southern Miss and Old Dominion intend to join the Sun Belt, expanding the Conference USA lineage within the conference. Nine teams have announced their leave from Conference USA since October. Presuming no changes take form, and that no other teams leave, Conference USA would be left with only five teams: WKU, Middle Tennessee, FIU, UTEP, and Louisiana Tech. Conference USA commissioner Judy Macleod announced that the conference is considering the addition of FCS schools that are looking to move up to FBS.

Within those FCS schools sits James Madison, a school with

national notoriety as an FCS powerhouse. JMU announced that they also intend to join the Sun Belt, giving Marshall another school within Virginia, along with Old Dominion, to help build regional rivalries. The team has made three national title appearances within the last six years, giving the conference a fresh opponent that has yet to face an FBS school in conference play.

Marshall fans should expect the Herd to join the conference no later than July 1, 2023.

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Map of the Sun Belt's expansion following Marshall's Induction
Courtesy of Sun Belt Conference

Marshall Football Shuts Out FIU 38-0

By ANDREW ROGERS
REPORTER

Marshall football used a complete effort to defeat the Florida International Panthers 38-0 on a soggy Saturday afternoon at Joan C. Edwards Stadium.

Coming off the bye week, first year head coach Charles Huff stressed to his team that it needed to clean up things in all phases of the game, as it prepares for its final stretch of the regular season in November. This was a game in which the team had zero fumbles, zero interceptions and just two penalties.

"I thought tonight, the players did a phenomenal job of taking it from the practice field to the game field, executing

consistently," Huff said. "We're starting to play a lot more consistent, which is good."

After the first quarter, the Herd led just 3-0. A special teams play would help ignite the Herd offense. FIU punter Tommy Heatherly booted a punt 63 yards that senior Willie Johnson returned a career long 38 yards, setting up a short field for the Marshall offense.

After the first three drives ended on a punt, field goal and punt, the Herd offense rattled off three straight touchdown drives, each capped by a rushing touchdown by a different player.

Quarterback Grant Wells scored from two yards out after Johnson's punt return to give Marshall the 10-0 lead. Running back Sheldon Evans scored a 41-yard touchdown run to end just a

quick two-play drive and Marshall was up 17-0. The Herd would complete the dominate second quarter with a Rasheen Ali touchdown run to put MU up 24-0 at halftime. The 21 second quarter points came in a span of 5 minutes and 44 seconds.

Ali, the nation's leader in rushing touchdowns, scored again late in the third quarter, capping off a 16 play 80-yard drive that ate up 6 minutes and 56 seconds of game time. That drive effectively put the game out of reach for FIU.

Marshall's offensive line dominated the contest, allowing four different players to score a rushing touchdown and as a team rush for 246 yards.

"I feel like our offensive line, as the year has gone on, we've had people play

in different sports and we're starting to get some real chemistry up front," Marshall senior offensive lineman Will Ulmer said. "The way we've practiced and the way we prepare really showed out there tonight."

On the other side of the ball, Marshall followed up strong defensive performances in wins against Old Dominion and North Texas by shutting out its first FBS opponent since UTSA in November of 2018. FIU only had two trips to the red zone, with the first coming in the third quarter.

"It's hard to get a shutout in college football," Huff said. "Hats off to (Defensive Coordinator Lance Guidry) Coach Guidry, the defensive staff and defensive players."

Linebacker Eli Neal led the Herd defense with eight tackles. Defense

lineman Koby Cumberlander added a sack with two tackles and cornerback Steven Gilmore intercepted his third pass of the season.

Wells was consistent, finishing 20-for-25 passing for 184 yards. Ali carried the ball 26 times for 133 yards and two touchdowns.

Marshall football wins its third game in a row, improving to 5-3 overall and 3-1 in conference play. FIU loses its seventh straight game to fall to 1-7 and 0-4 in conference play.

Marshall now has its eyes set toward a big Conference USA matchup at Florida Atlantic on Saturday in Boca Raton, Florida.

Andrew Rogers,
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Marshall Men's Soccer Thumps South Carolina on Senior Night



Courtesy of @HerdMSoccer

By NOAH HICKMAN
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

After honoring 10 seniors, now No. 1 ranked Marshall earned a decisive 4-0 victory over the South Carolina Gamecocks.

The 10 players in the 2021 senior class who got honored are Davi Edwards, Vitor Dias, Ryan Sirk, Noah Raphael, Ibrahima Diop, Vinicius Fernandes, Pedro Dolabella, Oliver Semmler, Jan-Erik Leinhos and Nathan Dossantos.

Graduate Student Pedro Dolabella said that his career at Marshall is what dreams are all about.

"Getting to lift Marshall to a National Championship with all of my teammates and all of these wonderful people, it's like a movie you know," Dolabella said. Probably the best memory of my life being able to accomplish that. But most importantly for sure is the journey and the people you meet along the way and the memories you make."

On a night where the field stayed wet and the rain was pouring down in the early stages of the game, Marshall was riding through a roller coaster of emotions.

At the 11:01 mark, Dias picked up a red card ending his night early.

Not even a minute later, at the 11:56 mark, junior midfielder Joao Souza scored the first goal of the game as he finished with the touch off an assist from redshirt junior forward Milo Yosef, who kicked the ball from the far side of the 18-yard box.

The fast start from the Herd resulted in a 1-0 halftime lead.

To start the second half, there was no precipitation falling and the Herd was looking to put the game out of reach.

Dolabella was the dynamic force that helped guide Marshall to a landslide victory as he scored two goals and assisted on one in the second half.

First, a centering pass that led to an assist by Yosef and a goal by Dolabella at the 64:01 mark.

Then, Dolabella found his Pennington High School teammate, Ibrahima Diop, who scored the third goal of the game at the 66:04 mark.

After that, Dolabella scored his second goal of the game off an assist from junior forward Alexander Adjetey to extend the lead to 4-0.

After the game, Grassie praised Dolabella for how he has matured throughout the years.

"One of my proudest coaching relationships has been with Pedro because he has grown so much," Grassie said. "He's grown from a temperamental young man. He has always had so much talent, but it is the 17-year old Pedro versus the 22-year old Pedro. He has all that maturity."

The Herd will play its final regular season game against No. 17 Florida International Panthers in Miami, Fla. on Friday at 7 p.m.

With a spot already clinched in the Conference USA Tournament, Marshall needs to win in order to clinch the one seed; FIU clinches with a win or a draw.

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THE PARTHENON

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OPINION

Brad Smith Will Be Just Fine

By TYLER SPENCE
MANAGING EDITOR

After the official announcement that Brad D. Smith is bringing in high expectations and big goals - as valuable as it is to have big goals, higher education struggles to achieve even modest goals. This is often not higher education's fault, especially in a state like West Virginia with a declining population and an ever-decreasing amount of state funding. One of the biggest disappointments of Gilbert's time as President is the failure to reach the goals set for enrollment. This is not an easy challenge in West Virginia. Smith has repeatedly mentioned his desire for Marshall to grow through online offerings, which is possible. But I believe the larger opportunity to be based on tapping into the larger metro areas near Huntington like Columbus, Lexington, and Cincinnati. WVU has used its location and affordable out-of-state tuition in comparison to many of its surrounding states to recruit out-of-state students in Pennsylvania and New York. Marshall should be a top destination for those nearby metros who would like to leave home. To grow enrollment, Marshall has the leverage to work with the state to create a performance-based funding system that ensures higher education is properly motivated, and institutions can receive the funding they need. Smith's relationship with the state and local leaders will be objectively strong and is a benefit not many others can offer in this role. Achieving both goals would be a tremendous foundation as Marshall continues.

One of the biggest accusations around Smith being considered for university president surrounds his \$25 million gift to Marshall just a few years ago. The only way this gift could be considered improper however is if Smith knew President Gilbert would step down, which it seems not even Gilbert himself knew he would step down when Smith's donation was made. Smith also gave a gift of the same amount to West Virginia University just last year. Could it be that Smith simply cares about higher education and the future of his home state to donate to the state's two largest learning institutions?

Accusations have also been thrown at the Board of Governors as if the months-long process that considered over 100 candidates was just a farce. This would also mean President Gilbert has lied when he ensured the process had been the most ethical and transparent he has seen in his time in higher education. The BOG has three members that represent students, faculty, and staff. If there were suspicious happenings within the BOG, it would not be easily concealed. Just because one may disagree with the decision the board made does not mean that Smith brings energy, optimism, and passion into the role as president. His willingness to learn from President Gilbert to understand the complexities of the role speaks volumes about his character. Most importantly, Smith will be a good decision maker and someone who will model the practices he preaches - attributes essential to a good leader. He may not be the most traditionally qualified, but his passion for the university and experience as an effective leader will more than make up for it.

The Parthenon is committed to publishing a wide variety of opinions and perspectives. If you wish to send a letter to the editor for publication, email parthenon@marshall.edu.

Facebook has a misinformation problem and is blocking access to data about how much there is and who is affected

OPINION

By ETHAN ZUCKERMAN
University of Massachusetts Amherst

(THE CONVERSATION) Leaked internal documents suggest Facebook – which recently renamed itself Meta – is doing far worse than it claims at minimizing COVID-19 vaccine misinformation on the Facebook social media platform.

Online misinformation about the virus and vaccines is a major concern. In one study, survey respondents who got some or all of their news from Facebook were significantly more likely to resist the COVID-19 vaccine than those who got their news from mainstream media sources.

As a researcher who studies social and civic media, I believe it's critically important to understand how misinformation spreads online. But this is easier said than done. Simply counting instances of misinformation found on a social media platform leaves two key questions unanswered: How likely are users to encounter misinformation, and are certain users especially likely to be affected by misinformation? These questions are the denominator problem and the distribution problem.

The COVID-19 misinformation study, "Facebook's Algorithm: a Major Threat to Public Health", published by public interest advocacy group Avaaz in August 2020, reported that sources that frequently shared health misinformation — 82 websites and 42 Facebook pages — had an estimated total reach of 3.8 billion views in a year.

At first glance, that's a stunningly large number. But it's important to remember that this is the numerator. To understand what 3.8 billion views in a year means, you also have to calculate the denominator. The numerator is the part of a fraction above the line, which is divided by the part of the fraction below the line, the denominator.

Getting some perspective

One possible denominator is 2.9 billion monthly active Facebook users, in which case, on average, every Facebook user has been exposed to at least one piece of information from these health misinformation sources. But these are 3.8 billion content views, not discrete users. How many pieces of information does the average Facebook user encounter in a year? Facebook does not disclose that information.

Market researchers estimate that Facebook users spend from

19 minutes a day to 38 minutes a day on the platform. If the 1.93 billion daily active users of Facebook see an average of 10 posts in their daily sessions – a very conservative estimate – the denominator for that 3.8 billion pieces of information per year is 7.044 trillion (1.93 billion daily users times 10 daily posts times 365 days in a year). This means roughly 0.05% of content on Facebook is posts by these suspect Facebook pages.

The 3.8 billion views figure encompasses all content published on these pages, including innocuous health content, so the proportion of Facebook posts that are health misinformation is smaller than one-twentieth of a percent.

Is it worrying that there's enough misinformation on Facebook that everyone has likely encountered at least one instance? Or is it reassuring that 99.95% of what's shared on Facebook is not from the sites Avaaz warns about? Neither.

Misinformation distribution

In addition to estimating a denominator, it's also important to consider the distribution of this information. Is everyone on Facebook equally likely to encounter health misinformation? Or are people who identify as anti-vaccine or who seek out "alternative health" information more likely to encounter this type of misinformation?

Another social media study focusing on extremist content on YouTube offers a method for understanding the distribution of misinformation. Using browser data from 915 web users, an Anti-Defamation League team recruited a large, demographically diverse sample of U.S. web users and oversampled two groups: heavy users of YouTube, and individuals who showed strong negative racial or gender biases in a set of questions asked by the investigators. Oversampling is surveying a small subset of a population more than its proportion of the population to better record data about the subset.

The researchers found that 9.2% of participants viewed at least one video from an extremist channel, and 22.1% viewed at least one video from an alternative channel, during the months covered by the study. An important piece of context to note: A small group of people were responsible for most views of these videos. And more than 90% of views of extremist or "alternative" videos were

by people who reported a high level of racial or gender resentment on the pre-study survey.

While roughly 1 in 10 people found extremist content on YouTube and 2 in 10 found content from right-wing provocateurs, most people who encountered such content "bounced off" it and went elsewhere. The group that found extremist content and sought more of it were people who presumably had an interest: people with strong racist and sexist attitudes.

The authors concluded that "consumption of this potentially harmful content is instead concentrated among Americans who are already high in racial resentment," and that YouTube's algorithms may reinforce this pattern. In other words, just knowing the fraction of users who encounter extreme content doesn't tell you how many people are consuming it. For that, you need to know the distribution as well.

Superspreaders or whack-a-mole?

A widely publicized study from the anti-hate speech advocacy group Center for Countering Digital Hate titled Pandemic Profiteers showed that of 30 anti-vaccine Facebook groups examined, 12 anti-vaccine celebrities were responsible for 70% of the content circulated in these groups, and the three most prominent were responsible for nearly half. But again, it's critical to ask about denominators: How many anti-vaccine groups are hosted on Facebook? And what percent of Facebook users encounter the sort of information shared in these groups?

Without information about denominators and distribution, the study reveals something interesting about these 30 anti-vaccine Facebook groups, but nothing about medical misinformation on Facebook as a whole.

These types of studies raise the question, "If researchers can find this content, why can't the social media platforms identify it and remove it?" The Pandemic Profiteers study, which implies that Facebook could solve 70% of the medical misinformation problem by deleting only a dozen accounts, explicitly advocates for the deplatforming of these dealers of disinformation. However, I found that 10 of the 12 anti-vaccine influencers featured in the study have already been removed by Facebook.

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CDC panel debates: Should all school kids get COVID vaccine?

By LAURAN NEERGAARD
and MIKE STOBBE
AP Medical Writers

Should all school-age kids get Pfizer's pediatric COVID-19 vaccine? That's the question before an influential government advisory panel Tuesday. The Food and Drug Administration has authorized emergency use of kid-size doses for children ages 5 to 11. But the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also must sign off before widespread vaccinations begin in that age group.

CDC's advisers are weighing who will get the most benefit as they deliberate whether to recommend the shots for up to 28 million more children, or perhaps only for those most vulnerable to serious illness. Their recommendation goes to the CDC's director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, for the final say.

"Today is a monumental day in the course of this pandemic," Walensky told the advisory panel Tuesday. She said while the risk of severe disease and death is lower in young children than adults, it is real — and that COVID-19 has had a profound social, mental health and educational impact on youngsters, including widening disparities in learning.

"There are children in the second grade who have never experienced a normal school year," Walensky said. "Pediatric vaccination has the power to help us change all of that."

Shots into little arms could begin this week, as Pfizer already is packing and shipping the first orders, millions of doses, to states and pharmacies to be ready. Doctors who've cared for hospitalized youngsters hope parents embrace Pfizer's kid shots, saying they're safe and far better than gambling that a child will escape a coronavirus infection.

"I've seen plenty of children in this age group that have been seriously ill," said Dr. Matthew Linam, an infectious disease specialist at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. "The risk of significant infection is still very real in this population."

There have been more than 8,300 hospitalizations of kids ages 5 to 11, about a third requiring intensive care, according to government data. The CDC has recorded at least 94 deaths in that age group. And while the U.S. has seen a recent downturn in



COVID-19 cases, experts are worried about another uptick with holiday travel and as winter sends more activity indoors where it's easier for the coronavirus to spread.

Pfizer's kid shots contain a third of the vaccine dose that's already been used to vaccinate millions of people 12 and older. The 5- to 11-year-olds will receive two shots, three weeks apart, the same schedule as everyone else -- but a smaller amount in each shot, using a smaller needle.

A study of 2,268 youngsters found the kid-size vaccine is nearly 91% effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 -- based on 16 diagnoses among kids given dummy shots compared to just three who got the real vaccination.

The FDA examined more children, a total of 3,100 who were vaccinated, in concluding the shots are safe. The younger children experienced similar or fewer reactions -- such as sore arms, fever or achiness -- than teens or young adults get after larger doses.

That study wasn't large enough to detect any extremely rare side effects, such as the heart inflammation that occasionally occurs after the second full-strength dose, mostly in young men and teen boys. The FDA ultimately decided the benefits from vaccination outweigh the potential that younger kids getting a smaller dose also might experience that rare risk.

The FDA's decision came after its own advisers struggled with whether every young child needed a vaccine -- a key question in Tuesday's deliberations, too. Youngsters hospitalized with COVID-19 are more likely to have high-risk conditions such as obesity or diabetes -- but otherwise healthy children can get seriously ill, too.

And many pediatricians and parents have clamored for protection for youngsters so they can resume normal childhood activities without risking their own health -- or the fear of bringing the virus home to a more vulnerable family member.

Teacher on Hunger Strike to Put Light on Climate Change

KALAMAZOO, Mich. (AP) — A teacher in southwestern Michigan said he's on a one-week hunger strike outside his school to draw attention to climate change.

Josh Gottlieb said he took a week off without pay to sit outside Kalamazoo Central High School this week. Some students and other teachers have dropped by to support him.

"It's all of our problem," said freshman Giuliana Bush. She held a sign that said, "We are called Gen Z because we are the LAST generation!!!"

Gottlieb told MLive.com that he will continue his hunger strike and protest through Sunday, when the UN's climate summit begins in Scotland.

He said political conflict in the U.S. means President Joe Biden isn't bringing much to the conference.

"We need the U.S. to be in a position of leadership and strength to contribute to this thing, and instead we're going in on our knees with our tail between our legs," Gottlieb said.

Taul Clements, a professor at Western Michigan University, visited Gottlieb. He's teaching a class with a climate change theme.

"The fundamental issue here is if the advanced countries — particularly like the United States — don't take that responsibility, there's no way that the Chinas and Indias and other countries of the world are going to get on board," Clements said.



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Consider Del Bigtree, one of the three most prominent spreaders of vaccination disinformation on Facebook. The problem is not that Bigtree is recruiting new anti-vaccine followers on Facebook; it's that Facebook users follow Bigtree on other websites and bring his content into their Facebook communities. It's not 12 individuals and groups posting health misinformation online – it's likely thousands of individual Facebook users sharing misinformation found elsewhere on the web, featuring these dozen people. It's much harder to ban thousands of Facebook users than it is to ban 12 anti-vaccine celebrities.

This is why questions of denominator and distribution are critical to understanding misinformation online. Denominator and distribution allow researchers to ask how common or rare behaviors are online, and who engages in those behaviors. If millions of users are each encountering occasional bits of medical misinformation, warning labels might be an effective intervention. But if medical misinformation is consumed mostly by a smaller group that's actively seeking out and sharing this content, those warning labels are most likely useless.

Getting the right data

Trying to understand misinformation by counting it, without considering denominators or distribution, is what happens when good intentions collide with poor tools. No social

media platform makes it possible for researchers to accurately calculate how prominent a particular piece of content is across its platform.

Facebook restricts most researchers to its Crowdtangle tool, which shares information about content engagement, but this is not the same as content views. Twitter explicitly prohibits researchers from calculating a denominator, either the number of Twitter users or the number of tweets shared in a day. YouTube makes it so difficult to find out how many videos are hosted on their service that Google routinely asks interview candidates to estimate the number of YouTube videos hosted to evaluate their quantitative skills.

The leaders of social media platforms have argued that their tools, despite their problems, are good for society, but this argument would be more convincing if researchers could independently verify that claim.

As the societal impacts of social media become more prominent, pressure on the big tech platforms to release more data about their users and their content is likely to increase. If those companies respond by increasing the amount of information that researchers can access, look very closely: Will they let researchers study the denominator and the distribution of content online? And if not, are they afraid of what researchers will find?

OPINION



Worship Directory

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Pastor: Msgr. Dean Borgmeyer

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12:00 Noon, 5:30 pm

Confessions
Saturday 8:25 am
Saturday 3:30 pm-4:25 pm
or by appointment

Play of the Game: Squirrel Goes the Distance

By XENA BUNTON
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Half-way through the second quarter, the crowd at the FIU-Marshall game were on their feet when a squirrel ran 65-yards to cross the goal line near the student section.

Marshall University students and Faculty have shared a love for squirrels on campus for years and have created communities like the Facebook group The Squirrels at Marshall University that was created in January 2010.

Coach Huff was also asked during the press conference if the squirrel was a walk-on or if there would be a scholarship available.

“Actually right now we don’t know if he will be playing offense or defense. He’s got cat-like quickness, really good body control, good change in direction. . . but we’ve got to continue to evaluate,” Huff explained.

Although the run did not count on as a touchdown on the scoreboard, the run ended with a Marshall touchdown airhorn, a fight song, and a loud crowd.

Members of the Marshall University Marching Thunder also joined the fun, including tuba player Jalen Porter.

“I was definitely unprepared to play Sons of Marshall for a squirrel,” Porter said.

“I’m not too much of a football fan. At the games, I’m just there to play for the team and have some fun. When I saw that squirrel make a touchdown, I instantly became a crazy football fan.”

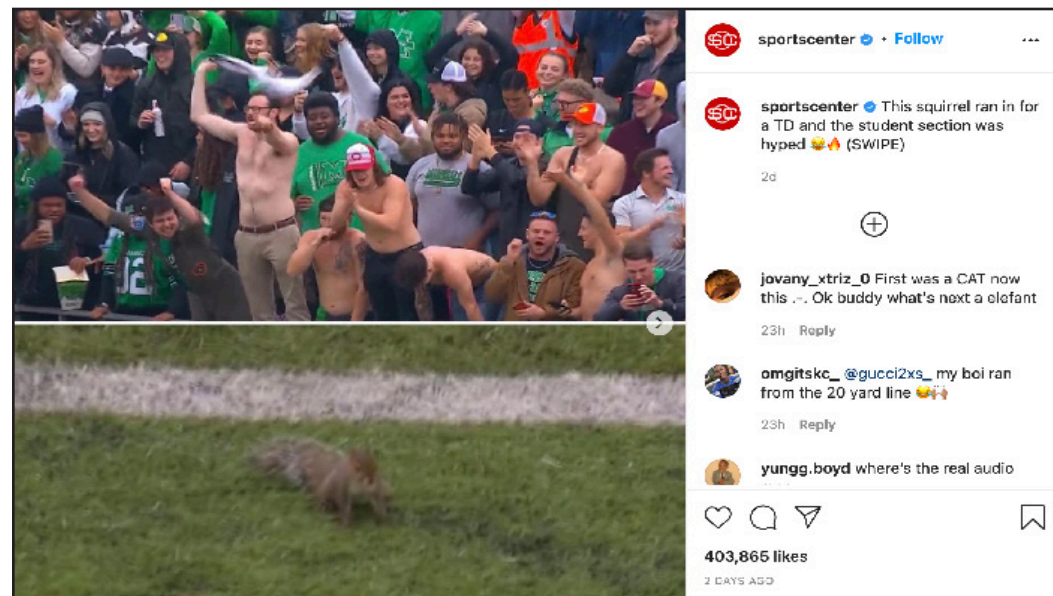
The touchdown clip of the small rodent reached a national audience on social media platforms like Sports Center. The Instagram post has received over 400,000 likes.

The post features the student section, including senior Zach Bollinger who took his shirt off and waved the shirt over his head.

“Honestly it was just a really fun moment that happened out of nowhere. It’s not every day you see a squirrel running to the endzone with an entire stadium cheering it on,” Bollinger said. “It started raining a little bit and a bunch of us decided to make the most of it so we all took off our shirts and started trying to get people hyped up.”



Photo by Zachary Hiser



The touchdown clip of the small animal reached a national audience on social media platforms like Sports Center. | Screenshot/@sportscenter

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