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ECU professor takes to roof for fundraiser

East Carolina University associate professor Tracy Donohue was spotted on the top of the School of Theatre and Dance's Messick Theater Monday from 8-10 a.m. and 3-5 p.m. tossing candy and flowers to those below.

Donohue offered to perform this stunt as part of a fundraiser for the ECU Musical Theatre Association. Descriptions of what each professor would do was attached to a box. Students and faculty voted on who they wanted to see perform their outrageous stunt.

Donohue won — or lost — depending on your perspective.
Wes Moore cuts down the net down after leading Tennessee-Chattanooga to the Southern Conference Championship on March 10 in Charleston, S.C.
The Associated Press

Wes Moore gestures during Tennessee-Chattanooga's NCAA tournament game in March.
The Associated Press

Moore makes move east
By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector
Monday, April 26, 2010
Wes Moore will bring a track record of unquestioned success with him when he arrives in Greenville to take charge of East Carolina women’s basketball. The former Tennessee-Chattanooga coach who won 11 straight Southern Conference women’s crowns is bringing a proven strategy of success to ECU. The ECU Board of Trustees and director of athletics Terry Holland met Monday afternoon to finalize the business of a six-year contract for Moore, and the new coach will be introduced at a 4 p.m. press conference today.
It wasn’t necessarily a comforting feeling to be forced to replace coach Sharon Baldwin-Tener, who made the Pirates a perennial contender in Conference USA. Baldwin-Tener left ECU earlier this month to take the head coaching job at Georgia State.

“It’s a little traumatic because you’re losing a good person in Sharon and someone who will be hard to replace,” Holland said Monday following the meeting of the trustees. “We tried to look at it as an opportunity, and I think we have an outstanding candidate. Wes Moore is truly a very special coach.”

Moore did quite a bit of winning while in charge of the Mocs. His record was impeccable — 11 regular season titles in the SoCon and 11 straight 20-win years in 12 seasons with Chattanooga. His overall record with the Mocs was 290-85.

Holland said he examined Moore’s entire body of work and saw similar success. After getting his start as a head coach at Maryville in Tennessee, Moore spent time at N.C. State on the staff of late coach Kay Yow, and then plied his trade as a winning head coach again at Frances Marion in South Carolina.

“He’s done some phenomenal things,” Holland said of Moore, noting that there were very few Division I candidates on the market, and only a handful of former head coaches now serving as assistants. He also said he considered what he called “high-profile assistants” or even candidates with WNBA coaching and playing experience.

In addition to Moore’s lopsided winning record, Holland said he was impressed with the coach’s loyalty in the past.

“The question on him is always, ‘Can you move him?’” Holland said of Moore. “He gets very attached to where he is, and we like that part of him, but we’ve got to get him here and attach him like an oyster to the oyster bed.”

For Holland, Monday’s hire marks another big day in what has been his busiest spring since coming to ECU in 2004.

In addition to overseeing a massive field and stadium renovation project, the hire of Moore was the third coaching hire of 2010 for the ECU AD.

“We’re starting to get this down pat,” said Holland, who hired Ruffin McNeill as ECU’s new football coach in January and Jeff Lebo as the new men’s basketball coach in March.

Baldwin-Tener became the winningest coach in ECU women’s history, running up a record of 126-115 in eight seasons. That included a Conference USA tournament championship and corresponding NCAA tournament appearance in 2007 and a WNIT berth last season.

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UNCW grads get creative to find jobs in tough economy

By Chelsea Kellett
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Published: Sunday, April 25, 2010 at 3:30 a.m.

After his Wilmington job search hit a dead end, University of North Carolina Wilmington senior Rob Nowicki found himself applying for positions in Oregon and Wyoming.

Instead of working as an art teacher, UNCW alumna Katelyn Bostic is a part-time English tutor who sells handmade jewelry online.

When a glut of applications from alumni filled graduate school positions before he could apply, UNCW senior Alex Squadrito set his sights on a new goal — riding a skateboard from Virginia Beach to the California coast for charity. He'll reapply for grad school next fall.

A tough job market means new graduates have to get creative if they want to find work in their chosen field — and cultivate patience when the skyrocketing career path of their dreams takes a while to ignite.

"It's unfortunate that we're graduating at a time like this, but I'd rather it be now than 10 years down the road," Nowicki said. "This way, we're developing the skills we need really early to be competitive and get what we want."

Job figures inched upward in recent months, but it's still tough out there for new grads. They're competing against more experienced workers leveled by layoffs, as well as last year's graduates still trying to break into their fields of choice.

Even for lower-paying jobs outside of their fields, recent grads sometimes don't make it because employers fear they will move on to a more glamorous position as soon as the economy improves.

"It's frustrating and difficult — you get your resume in, get the interview, get your hopes up, and then you just don't hear anything," Bostic said.

Career centers at local colleges and universities are ramping up efforts to help students find employment.

At CFCC, the annual job fair is now preceded by an intensive day of instruction on how to polish a resume and perk up a cover letter, as well as a fashion show to teach aspiring professionals how to dress the part.

At UNCW, the career center held a Job Search Boot Camp earlier this month, and stepped up search efforts for jobs to post in the center's online database. Director Thom Rakes advises students to be flexible in both the jobs they're willing to apply for and the areas they're willing to live.
"It's always a frustrating process, but it's even more so now," Rakes said. "The competition climbs each semester, and will as long as the job market is slow."

Still, students hold out hope the economy will improve and their dreams will come true. In the meantime, students like Nowicki say they're willing to work and wait – and that there might even be hidden benefits in doing so.

"If we can learn how to get what we need in this economy, we will be able to get what we want in the future," Nowicki said.

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Some protest, but Tancredo speaks

CHAPEL HILL -- At least 100 protesters walked out on former congressman Tom Tancredo as he spoke Monday night on the values of Western culture at UNC-Chapel Hill.

The group stood in unison, yelling, "No human is illegal," before moving outside the Student Union and into the Pit, a concrete courtyard at the center of campus activity.

Kevin Deanna, founder of Youth for Civilization, the national group that sponsored Tancredo's speech, laughed loudly at the group's statement.

As the demonstrators filed out of the union auditorium, Tancredo said fear of debate was driving them away.

"No one here is afraid of you," one yelled.

But most were silent.

"They're welcome [to leave], but there's nothing democratic about this," Tancredo said. "Believe me, this is a lot better than last time."

Of the fewer than 100 left behind, most shared Tancredo's pro-Western perspective. But when he suggested that conservative student activists never behave as badly as those who broke a window and disrupted his speech last spring, another protester shouted, "No, you lynched people."

"I'm glad that they showed what they really do believe in, and that's censorship," Tancredo went on.

Thirty-six UNC public safety and Chapel Hill Police officers guarded the auditorium, four times as many officers as those who forced about 30 protesters out of Bingham Hall last spring.

Last year, officers threatened demonstrators with a Taser weapon and dispersed them with pepper spray.

After the protesters left, Tancredo continued his speech and answered questions from a supportive audience.

"I kind of wish some of the opposers would have stayed around and had some ideas exchanged with him," said Daryl Ann Dunigan, YWC's campus leader.

The event was co-sponsored by the Patrick Henry Center for Individual Liberty and the Leadership Institute.

"There is a reason why America remains the destination of choice of people who are trying to escape oppressive governments everywhere," Tancredo said. "We are the last best hope for mankind."

Meanwhile, in the Pit, student groups held a pro-immigrant rally and accused Tancredo of racism.
"Hateful discourse amplified by money and access to media create the foundation upon which Minutemen and the KKK operate," wrote Feminist Students United in a statement.

Raleigh resident Ed Patterson asked Tancredo how the U.S. could continue to permit legal immigration when the 9/11 terrorists had exploited the system and so many Americans are unemployed.

"Why do we continue to allow immigration from Muslim countries?" he asked.

"It's the cult of multiculturalism," Tancredo said, adding that 180,000 legal immigrants per month were competing with Americans for jobs.

He said Democrats view immigrants as potential votes and Republicans view them as cheap labor, sapping any political will to tighten borders.

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For CEOs, beauty is a boon, Duke study says

Becoming a corporate CEO is supposed to involve hard work, long hours and business acumen.

It also often requires a solid jaw line and small, piercing eyes, according to a new research study from three finance professors at Duke University.

Titled "A Corporate Beauty Contest," the study asked nearly 2,000 people, mostly college and graduate school students, to rate the facial traits of corporate CEOs alongside non-CEOs and the heads of smaller companies. The results suggest that looks do indeed matter in corporate board rooms.

"Our results suggest that CEOs who look competent have higher pay, but their companies do not necessarily do better," said Manju Puri, who wrote the study along with fellow Fuqua School of Business finance professors Campbell Harvey and John Graham. "So that should be a matter of concern."

Those deemed less competent tended to be baby-faced with large round eyes, high eyebrows and a small chin.

"People tend to rate such people as being more likable, more warm, more trustworthy, but less competent," Puri said.

The study was conducted online and included only photos of white males who were taken from a 2004 database of CEOs. The participants did not know who the men in the photos were. All the photos were of men in business dress in conventional poses in front of bland backgrounds.

"If we have someone skiing, we can't really use that as a picture," Puri said.

In one part of the study, participants were presented with 87 pairs of photos - one CEO and one non-CEO - and asked to note which person was more competent, trustworthy, likable and attractive.

The professors got the idea from a 2005 study that showed that elections were often won by the better-looking politician. Harvey said that while the corporate world doesn't appear to be as shallow as the political arena, the results were still surprising.

"For an election, people don't have that much information, they look at a face and make some sort of judgment. That makes sense to me," Harvey said. "For a CEO it's a totally different story. People are highly informed. It's a rigorous selection and there's years of track record. This stuff should not be important."

The 'beauty premium'

Economists have documented what they refer to as a "beauty premium," a tendency of better-looking people to make more money throughout their career.
Puri said what their study shows is something slightly different. "We're not finding a beauty premium in terms of attractiveness," she said. "But we are finding a competent-looks premium."

The photos included several former CEOs whose competence has been questioned by Congress over the past year.

Richard Fuld Jr. (balding, high forehead, deep-set eyes) was CEO of investment bank Lehman Brothers when it went bankrupt in the fall of 2008 and send the world economy into a tailspin.

Charles Prince (arched eyebrows, coiffed hair) was CEO of Citigroup, which required $45 billion in government aid to stay afloat.

And Kerry Killinger (twinkly eyes, helmet hair, crows feet) was CEO of Washington Mutual, which became the largest bank failure in U.S. history when it went belly up in 2008.

Those surveyed gave Fuld, Prince and Killinger marks above the median average for competence.

Scot Wingo, CEO of Morrisville-based ChannelAdvisor, which makes software to help retailers sell on the Web, is one CEO who doesn't buy into the idea that looks are a key factor in becoming a chief executive.

"I don't think you have to be George Clooney to be successful," Wingo said. "I mean, look at Bill Gates. He's not amazingly handsome."

Wingo said he's judged by how he interacts with clients, employees and partners and by the company's performance.

"Thank God for that because I'm not the most handsome CEO," he said.

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Back to living again for gritty teenager

DURHAM -- The stop at Duke Medical Center was supposed to be a quick checkup, a side trip as the Burbach family headed from their home in Georgia to Myrtle Beach for vacation.

But when doctors saw 15-year-old Laura Margaret Burbach toting oxygen and appearing wan - scary on a 4-foot, 5-inch teenager who weighed less than 60 pounds - they suggested the family instead check her into the hospital.

Laura Margaret's lungs were shot. A casualty of repeated infections her faulty immune system failed to vanquish, her lungs were no longer capable of keeping her alive.

And that meant her needs were far greater than doctors envisioned, pushing medical science beyond anything ever tried.

Arriving at Duke in June, the Burbachs - David, Sarah and Laura Margaret - were supposed to initiate the process of getting Laura Margaret a bone marrow or cord blood transplant. Either was a risky but fairly common procedure to replace her deficient immune-fighting blood cells with those from a healthy donor.

With her respiratory system in such sorry shape, however, Laura Margaret also needed new lungs.

That sort of double transplant had never been undertaken, or at least never chronicled in medical literature. But without both transplants, Laura Margaret would die.

"I really think it was her only chance," said Dr. David Zaas, the pulmonologist who coordinated her care.

With no playbook to guide them, the Duke team began to plan. They needed approvals from federal authorities and their own institutional watchdog, and faced long statistical odds to find organs that both fit and matched Laura Margaret's own failing body.

But as each new specialist and caregiver joined the team to save Laura Margaret, the will to succeed only grew. A peppy, pink-loving high school cheerleader, Laura Margaret was 48 pounds of determination and grit.

"She's maybe the most inspiring patient I've ever had," said Dr. Paul Szabolcs, a pediatric bone marrow specialist.

Eager to save Laura Margaret, they might inch medicine ahead by setting the foundation for a new approach that could help many others.

'She has it, too'

Before she was 2, Laura Margaret lost her big brother.
Michael Burbach was continually sick, born with an immune deficiency disease. Commonly known as "bubble boy disease," the condition was made famous in a 1970s TV movie about a Texas boy who grew up in a plastic bubble to prevent exposure to infections.

Often inherited, immune deficiency disorders are actually an array of diseases in which the immune system lacks two key weapons - T cells and B cells - causing children to fall prey to opportunistic infections. Before immune cell transplants, most babies with severe forms of the disease died as toddlers.

Michael's diagnosis was made just as Laura Margaret was born, on Oct.13, 1993. Sarah Burbach said the diagnosis came with the hope that Laura Margaret might one day be able to donate bone marrow and save her brother.

Her blood test six months later, however, brought horrible news: "They called to say, 'No, she's not a match, and Sarah, she has it, too.' I still remember that day vividly."

But David Burbach was a sufficient match for his son. So the family pursued bone marrow transplants at Duke, which has become one of the world's top treatment centers for immune deficiency diseases, curing more than 100 children with transplants.

Michael had two transplants at Duke, but neither worked. He died just shy of his 4th birthday.

Heartbroken, the Burbachs kept a close watch on Laura Margaret's health, keeping her home if they knew some bug was going around. But they also strived to create a normal childhood for their little girl.

"We didn't choose for her to live that kind of a life - in a bubble," Sarah Burbach said.

A way of life

Laura Margaret thrived. Growing up in Madison, Ga. - a small town east of Atlanta - she took piano and voice lessons, and acted in local theater productions.

At Morgan County High School, she was a member of the student council and became a cheerleader - one of the featherweight girls at the top of pyramids who gets somersaulted into the air. She had sleepovers, got her learner's permit to drive, excelled in school with challenging Advanced Placement classes.

"Even if I wasn't going to have a long life, I was going to have a real life," Laura Margaret said.

But her achievements were made in spite of endless infections that took a huge toll. Her lungs, in particular, bore the brunt.

"It was just another facet of our lives," Laura Margaret said. "Most people wake up and take a shower and go to school. I would wake up and run IVs, and do my breathing treatment, and then shower and go to school."

Her high school principal, Mark Wilson, said Laura Margaret has long inspired her classmates, and the entire community. Last fall for the homecoming football game, the crowd released pink balloons in her honor, sharing the scene via her ever-present computer link.
"There are people in the world who seem like they have extra time - they can get more done than anyone else. Laura Margaret is one of those people," Wilson said, ticking off a list of the teenager's accomplishments. "It's amazing all she does, and she has these challenges."

Her health declined sharply last spring, when she began needing oxygen to breathe. Even still, the family never considered that Laura Margaret's lungs had deteriorated so badly. Still gearing up for a bone marrow or cord blood transplant at Duke, the family planned a quick visit in June to meet doctors and lay the groundwork before vacationing in Myrtle Beach.

Their travel plans abruptly changed.

Avoiding rejection

Doctors quickly determined Laura Margaret could never survive the toxic preparation for a bone marrow or cord blood transplant. The procedures, while life-saving, require annihilation of the immune system to allow the donated cells to establish themselves.

But doctors had another idea: transplant new lungs to solve her immediate problems, and new marrow to correct the underlying flaws of her immune system.

The combination would protect Laura Margaret against the main reason transplants fail: rejection, which occurs when the recipient's immune system attacks the new organ as a foreign invader. If Laura Margaret's new immune system came from the same donor as the lungs, it would have no cause to attack. And she wouldn't need toxic anti-rejection drugs.

"The idea that we might be able to essentially create an immune system that wouldn't react against the organ is something of the holy grail that we all hope to achieve," said Dr. R. Duane Davis, her lung transplant surgeon.

Surgeons in Boston have reported good results in kidney recipients who have received small infusions of marrow from living donors, and Davis is aware also of a case involving a living donor who gave part of a lung that coincided with a limited marrow infusion. But no one had proposed anything on the scale of what Duke doctors had in mind for Laura Margaret.

They wanted to use the lungs and marrow of an unrelated deceased donor, and do two full transplants weeks apart.

If the strategy worked, it might pave the way for similar procedures for others who need lung transplants - people such as Laura Margaret with immune disorders as well as cystic fibrosis patients - possibly extending the life of transplanted lungs that often wear out in less than 10 years.

"We thought, Why not try?" Zaas said. "Why not see what we can do?"

Moving forward, however, required both government and institutional approval. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Duke administrators demanded detailed plans, so the doctors met regularly to talk strategy and draft proposals.

Job one was getting Laura Margaret in shape for a lung transplant. Too frail even to qualify for a spot on the transplant list, Laura Margaret began a regimen to gain weight and strength.
Living with her mom in an apartment near Duke - her dad remained in Madison to work, driving up when he could on weekends - Laura Margaret exercised every day at the Center for Living.

On Dec. 6, she won a spot on the transplant list. But doctors doubted that a matching donor would be found quickly.

Lung donors must match recipients for blood type and be roughly the same size. Bone marrow transplants require an even finer match, based on a protein called human leukocyte antigen. The immune system uses HLA markers to identify the body's cells, so HLA must match as closely as possible to avoid sparking an immune attack.

Typically, doctors aim to match six HLA markers between donors and recipients, but the FDA approved Laura Margaret's procedure using a match of just two. Szabolcs, her bone marrow specialist, said the lower match was possible because the marrow was to undergo a special process to deplete some of the attack cells.

Even with the more generous match criteria, however, Laura Margaret had only about a 10 percent probability of landing a suitable donor.

"It was the needle in the haystack," Zaas said.

A donor appears

Incredibly, the needle appeared. Laura Margaret had been on the transplant list less than one week when the call came that she was a match for lungs and marrow from a deceased donor. And the match was even better than expected - hitting three HLA markers instead of two.

Davis and his group performed the lung transplant Dec. 16. Twenty-four hours later, Laura Margaret was out of bed and walking.

"Almost immediately I noticed a difference," she said.

On Dec. 23, she was discharged and began preparing for her bone marrow transplant. As the day approached, she was given chemotherapy and a shot of radiation to wipe out her deficient immune cells. Then on April 2, the healthy bone marrow cells of a person who died in December began flowing from an IV line into Laura Margaret's veins.

"This is your second birthday," nurse Lauren Harris said.

In the best of circumstances, the transplant cells naturally migrate to the bone marrow and begin replicating as if they had always lived there, churning out red and white blood cells in their own image. The engraftment process can take as long as a month, and on Wednesday, Szabolcs read Laura Margaret's lab results.

"Outstanding news!" he said. "Her cells are almost all donor cells."

For Laura Margaret, that means the immune deficiency syndrome she was born with may well be gone. But the next few weeks will be critical. As her new immune system takes hold, she is vulnerable to infections, since her defenses are only now building. She is also at risk of developing a condition in which the donor cells attack her body as a foreign threat. So far, however, she shows no sign of
problems.

Szabolcs called her recovery remarkable, and on Thursday, he offered a gift she had dreamed of for months.

Wearing a festive top hat and a surgical mask that revealed only her eyes, Laura Margaret emerged from her hospital room into the hall of the bone marrow transplant unit where she had lived for nearly a month. Nurses, doctors, technicians, fellow patients and their families lined the hall and showered her with pink confetti to celebrate her discharge.

As the other young patients watched, some bald from chemotherapy and guarded behind paper masks, Laura Margaret fought sobs.

"I can't believe this is happening," she cried. "I was diagnosed when I was 6 months old, and I'm now 16, and I don't have immune deficiency syndrome anymore!"

And then she walked out of the hospital, trailing confetti and a legacy of hope, to resume a real life.

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Back to living again for gritty teenager

Laura Margaret Burbach is discharged amid a confetti parade. Her new lungs and bone marrow came from the same donor, and this is the first time this transplant combination has been attempted. It should spare Laura Margaret the need to take anti-rejection drugs for her body to accept her new lungs.
April 26, 2010

Reed College’s President Is Told to Crack Down on Campus Drug Use

By TAMAR LEWIN

After the heroin overdose death of a Reed College student last month, law enforcement authorities in Portland, Ore., told Reed’s president, Colin Diver, to rein in drug use at his campus.

At a meeting at the federal courthouse Thursday, a United States attorney and the county district attorney told Mr. Diver that they planned to send undercover agents this weekend to the Renn Fayre festival, which started as a Renaissance Fair but now has a different theme each year.

“They said Renn Fayre has a reputation in Portland that draws people from outside the college who are users and dealers and distributors of drugs,” Mr. Diver said. “They suggested undercover agents because they said we wouldn’t be able deal with large, well-organized criminal networks on our own.”

Most campuses have students who abuse alcohol and drugs, and the spring festivals at many colleges are known for their excesses.

But Reed, a small liberal arts college in southeast Portland, has long been known almost as much for its unusually permissive atmosphere as for its impressively rigorous academics. Two years ago, after the heroin-overdose death of a freshman, Alejandro Lluch, at the campus, Mr. Diver said as much in a cover story in the newspaper Willamette Week.

“When you say Reed, two words often come to mind,” Mr. Diver said. “One is brains. One is drugs.”

After Sam Tepper, a senior physics major, was found dead at his off-campus apartment on March 23, local law enforcement officials summoned Mr. Diver.
“It’s a complicated issue, but two drug deaths in two years on a campus of 1,300 students, something has to change,” said Dwight C. Holton, the United States attorney for Oregon.

Law enforcement officials raised an unusual theory of liability. Under a federal law intended to close crack houses, anyone who knowingly operates premises where drugs are used may be subject to serious criminal and civil penalties.

Education lawyers, however, said they were unaware of that law’s ever being contemplated, let alone used, in the context of higher education.

On Friday, Mr. Diver sent out a campuswide e-mail message, describing the meeting and telling students to expect undercover agents at Renn Fayre, and warning them not to use illegal drugs, like “marijuana, hallucinogens, designer drugs, cocaine, amphetamines, opiates or other illegal substances.”

“The well-being of the college depends on how everyone behaves next weekend and beyond,” the message said. “So does the future of Renn Fayre.”

On Saturday, students got another e-mail message, from Mr. Holton and the Multnomah County district attorney, Michael D. Schrunk.

“Your world has been shaken by the deaths of Sam Tepper and Alejandro Lluch,” it began. “We are deeply sorry for your loss. For such talent and promise to be abruptly cut off by pointless death is an unspeakable tragedy.”

The drug trade, they warned, has changed since the days when poets like Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder roamed the campus.

“The big-businessification of the illegal drug trade has transformed drug use, bringing new and volatile dangers,” the message added.

Drug dealers are now “targeting middle class and wealthier kids: It’s an unexploited market with more cash and less guns,” it said. “To be perfectly clear: the new market which drug dealers are targeting is you.”

Some Reed students thought the law enforcement e-mail message was threatening and overly sensational.

“A lot of people are anxious now,” said Daire MacFadden, a junior.

Mr. MacFadden said that while drugs were spoken about openly at Reed, they might not be more widely used than on other campuses. And at Renn Fayre, he said, alumni volunteers and
student groups — Karma Patrol, White Bird and Boundary Patrol — help head off problems.

Sam Biddle, a senior political science major, worried that the presence of undercover agents might make it less likely that students who had consumed too much come forward for help. But talk of tougher drug enforcement, Mr. Biddle said, is unlikely to dampen Renn Fayre.

"The majority of Reed students recognize that we’re not an exception to federal and state law," he said, "and I think everyone’s primary concern is that this be a safe and wonderful celebration.

“When we gather in front of the library for the Thesis Parade, and there’s music and dancing and confetti and flower petals, and we burn the first draft of our theses, it’s a collective display of joy that I don’t think I’ll ever top.”