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# THROUGH THE DECADES:

## Black History Month at UWG

Sierra Lemelle

Contributing Writer

For the second time, Black History Month Eve kicked off the Black Project series of events. This event, on Jan. 31, marked the beginning of a month long celebration of black history, achievements, and culture. Other events in the series include, The Black Excellence and Talent Exposition (The B.E.A.T Expo) with a 1990s theme (Feb. 7), Family Tree on the yard (Feb. 8), Showtime at the Apollo with a 2000s theme (Feb. 22), and the Black Excellence Leadership Awards (The B.E.L.A.'s) with a present theme (Feb. 26). All events, except the Family Tree, will take place in the UWG Campus Center Ballroom.

Black History month is about celebrating, educating, and highlighting the contributions African Americans have made. The Black Project brings this and more to UWG through the events they will host throughout the month. At

Black History Month Eve, students were able to enjoy a live museum, entertainment, and food while counting down into February. The Live Museum consisted of volunteers from organizations that acted as specific figures from the 1980s to educate students as they entered. The Live Museum also highlighted the lives of African Americans during that decade with displays and videos of popular shows and films. The entertainment for the night, after the live museum, consisted of students showcasing their talents through song, dance, and spoken word. However, this year there were not as many attendees as last year. "Our goal is to increase attendance across the whole entire population as far as the faculty and staff to come out to events

and actually see how much hard work the students on campus have put into creating this month that celebrates black history achievement and culture," said Matthew Echols, BSA president and head of the Black Project council. UWG student organizations such as Black Student Alliance (BSA), College girls Rock, Women of Diversity, Inc., Models and Business (MAB), Ambi girls, The Collective, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Students of Caribbean Ancestry, and the African Student Association came together to create the Black Project council in October. This year's theme, "Dear Black People: Through the Decades," is to honor the African Americans who influenced our culture during each decade represented.

"We would like to keep this an annual thing during black history month, impact our young scholars and leaders [to join] organizations, [provide] Networking opportunities, and to educate, celebrate, and showcase the talent and leaders we have here at UWG," said Echols. Former BSA president, Tia Tuggle, former Ambi girl president, Sade Lewis, and former MAB president, Keith Crawford, pioneered the Black Project. Though there are others who have contributed to the establishment of the Black Project, these recent UWG graduates, along with advisors Mrs. Rouse and Dr. Hester, have heavily contributed to making sure the Black Project remains a continuous event by laying out the foundation for others to recreate this series of events.



Photo Credits: Sierra Lemelle



# Living West

## Impact West Georgia Tackles Homelessness

**Erin Grady**  
Contributing Writer



Tiffany Parsons and her organization, Impact West Georgia, constantly fights to help the homeless problem in Georgia. Impact West Georgia is a non-profit organization that aids the homeless and other underprivileged communities. Since the organization opened its doors in 2004, Impact West Georgia has helped transition numerous homeless people into homes. They have helped people ranging from the West Georgia area all the way to the Central Georgia area.

Parsons began teaching sociology at the University of West Georgia in 2009. During her years of teaching, Parsons has taught a variety of courses including American Class Systems, Housing and Homelessness, and Intro to Sociology. When she is not teaching at UWG she helps run Impact West Georgia. Impact West Georgia is a non-profit organization and its purpose is to improve the quality of life of the homeless, veterans, immigrants and children. Impact West Georgia does this with its three divisions: the Hope Center, Deserve, and the Adult & Community Education Center (ACE).

The Hope Center is a homeless shelter for men that provides a home-like environment and other necessities while it works toward returning the men to their own homes and independent living. Deserve provides transportation to the VA clinic for veterans. The third division, ACE, provides various educational opportunities such as English as a second language, writing, tutoring and job training skills.

When Impact West Georgia first began, it was a much smaller organization and only had a few members. "We were just teaching some classes and giving away food to the homeless. We were not a big organization," said Parsons. Impact West Georgia started off only teaching a few classes such as English as

a second language(ESL) in Carrollton. This attracted the attention of the city and they provided her with an apartment to teach the class. Along with this, Parsons and her church were donating supplies to the homeless.

"The city noticed that there was an overrepresentation of homeless men in the Carroll County area and they asked us if we could help out with that," said Parsons.

The Hope Center was the only homeless shelter for men within a ten-county radius. "We focus on homeless men because there is nothing for them. There are battered women shelters, there are foster homes for kids, but the men had nothing," said Parsons.

The Hope Center helps to transition homeless people to their own apartments or houses. The transition program was created by Parsons and it is the only known successful transition program for homeless people that live in the suburban area.

"On average it takes up to 90 days to transition someone out of the shelter. It depends on the economy and the amount of affordable housing," said Parsons.

Working with the homeless can be a difficult job, but the hardest thing about it is funding. "Everyone agrees that donating to the homeless is a good cause, but if they are choosing where to put their money, they are putting it in puppies and children. Not single men," said Parsons. "Even the government does not like to fund homeless men."

Though there are many hardships of working with the homeless, it ultimately pays off at the end. "The

most rewarding part of running a shelter is when they get the keys to their new homes," said Parsons. "After all the hard work, heartbreak, and barriers that they've faced, seeing their reactions is simply the best," she continued.

Parsons and the people of Impact West Georgia have many plans for the future. "I see Hope expanding in such a way that we can have affordable housing that they can move in to," said Parsons. "We would charge them a small percent of their income, and once they pay for that house, we can build a new house for another person in need," she continued.

Parsons wants to debunk the harmful stereotypical image of the homeless person. No one is safe from being homeless and all homeless people do not fit a certain image. "One thing that I want people to know is I have a UWG student in my shelter right now. We think of homeless people to be in their fifties and they are maybe alcoholics. It's the person that could be sitting next to you in class," she said. "The myths and the stereotypes are not always true. You know them, you pass them, they serve you, and they are deserving and worthy of your help."



## A fight to regain the Gold

**Jordan Herron**  
Contributing Writer

The National champion cheerleading team is back from the ESPN Wide World of Sports and has brought home more gold. The UWG cheerleading team now has 22 national titles from the Universal Cheerleading Association College Nationals. Every year the Cheerleading team heads to Orlando, Fla. and competes in the

Universal Cheerleading Association National Championship. The competition is held at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Park.

The University of West Georgia cheerleading team has two separate teams that compete in Orlando. The Coed team has nine boys and seven girls who are chosen to take the mat and compete. While the other cheer team, all-girl, has 20 girls that are picked to compete at nationals. The two teams practice year-round in hopes to hit a perfect routine at nationals and bring home a

nationals title. The UWG cheer team has been a power house bringing home gold and silver since 2002.

In 2017 both teams brought home the gold making those the 21st title held by UWG cheer. One year later the coed and all-girl teams went back down in hopes to regain their national titles. The coed team coached by Brian Nichols and Nicole Nichols have now won the UCA Nationals five times in a row. The all-girl team coached by Nicole Nichols and Brionna Lannom, coming off a huge win against their rival team Morehead State

team had four stunt groups compete in a separate competition that was held in Orlando. The school had two coed stunts compete and two all-girl groups compete. Spencer Collier and Vicky Jones placed 11th, Dominick DiPrenda and Savannah Gibson placing fifth in the coed division. Second place in the all-girl division Haley Marr, Brittany Castona, Faith Joseph and Asia Chatman. And for the first time in school history to win the partner stunt competition Catie Callan, Mckenzie Guiher, Mikayla Ward and Taylor Jordan.

University fought extremely hard to keep their spot as number one but did not reclaim their title and placed second. Teammate Faith Joseph says, "Our motivation is not just national titles because you can do the best you can and still not get first. But the feeling you get after you hit your routine and you know you did the best you can."

The University of West Georgia cheerleading

To prepare for UCA College Nationals the cheerleading teams practice three times a week during the fall school semester with morning workouts two days a week. As well as football games on weekends. The most important part of the cheerleading season is over the Christmas break allowing the athletes to get five days for a Christmas break compared to the month the rest of the UWG students get. Head coach Nicole Nichols says "As soon as finals end that's when we'll really start digging in and we'll do everyday practices. Sometimes two a day practices." The UWG cheer teams then competed twice in one day on Jan. 13 at the Universal Cheerleading Association College Nationals. The teams go through the same process every year hoping to bring home more national titles to the city of dreams each year.



Photo Credits: Dominick DiPrenda

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# Living West

## Commuter Lounge Comeback

**Kristian Flinn**

*Contributing Writer*

UWG has many lounges and lounge areas where students can often be found studying, relaxing between classes, and working on assignments. Places like the upper floors of the library, Campus Center Game Room, and areas in the TLC are all frequented by students looking for a quiet place for themselves and friends. No lounge is more recently underutilized than the Commuter Lounge located in the basement of Strozier Hall. The lounge, once located in the University Community Center (UCC,) was moved to the basement of Strozier hall in August 2014. It has seen a considerable drop in both staffing and student traffic.

The move was meant to accommodate other space needed in the UCC and to create a space that would facilitate relationships between on-campus and commuter students. The move to Strozier Hall has provided commuters new access to things like laundry services and a kitchenette. However UWG was not able to give it proper attention until Emily Teitelbaum, Associate Director of Student Involvement and supervisor of the Coordinator of Volunteer Programs, was able to take it over.

“We wanted to create a better on-campus home for commuter students,” said Teitelbaum, “But the traffic does seem less than what it used to be in the UCC, but we are actively working to change that and get the word out more about the Commuter Lounge.” However, those efforts have been mostly fruitless.

“I didn’t even know we had a lounge for commuters until I got this job,” said Michelle Hay, a student assistant working in the commuter lounge. “It is always really quiet. People usually just come in to eat lunch or nap. I don’t think I’ve seen more than three people in here at once this semester.”

At its new location, the commuter lounge is seeing little over seven visitors a day. Compared to the access to printing, game systems and television that the last location offered, the new location of the commuter lounge seems to have made it a shell of its former self. However, there are now plans in place to help the lounge make a comeback.

Along with the plans to fix the lounge’s broken television and microwave, Teitelbaum hopes to spice up the lounge space as a while to attract students. She also

plans to add programming, more equipment and a printer to help students.

“I would love to see more students take advantage of this space. It is such a great tucked away nook for students to hang out at. Some commuter students have called it their home away from home,” said Teitelbaum. “We also hope that with more programming and awareness of the location, will add even more traffic and usage. We are excited to offer new and exciting aspects to the Commuter Lounge and hope that people will stop by and check it out.”

Despite the decline in traffic, the Commuter Lounge still remains a prime lounge at UWG as a place for students to rest, study, play games and possibly even do laundry if needed. Though a bit unknown, it seems that it might not remain that way forever.

## Studying Abroad: *Just Do It*

**Sierra Lemelle**

*Contributing Writer*

UWG has many opportunities for students to study abroad and there are many advantages of doing so. Yet, many students are afraid to take that first step because of many concerns. Money and safety are immediately a major deal breaker for most parents and students. Nevertheless, students from all backgrounds have made it possible to study abroad.

There are scholarships through each department; and the office of Education Abroad offers three direct scholarships. The General Scholarship is awarded to students who are accepted into their programs and complete the scholarship application. Secondly, the Wolves Abroad Grant is given to students who have never traveled outside of the country. Lastly, the Wasdin International Scholarship is given to a student accepted into a program in Europe, Central America, or South America. This is a newer scholarship that has additional specific criteria. About 200 students at UWG study abroad a year. Approximately 20 of those students do exchange programs and the remainder participate in short term faculty led programs.

A safe location for students is a top priority. If something happens while a student is studying abroad, there

are many safety procedures in place. All programs require travel insurance that includes immediate evacuation, if needed. Students have asked if the study abroad program in London is still available because of the incidents that have occurred. The political relations between the U.S. and Cuba led to the cancellation of the study abroad program to Cuba. Our political relations between countries do affect study abroad programs. If a country is deemed as a threat level by the state, then the idea of running a program at that location will be revisited. Faculty is trained to be able to help students if something happens.

“Right now, all our programs are in areas that we’re comfortable with. Bear in mind that no place is 100 percent safe, but we do everything we can to make sure that our programs are prepared if there are any issues. Most students go and have a wonderful time,” said Doyle.

As an undergraduate, Doyle, studied abroad in Germany. Before studying abroad in Germany, she had never been on a plane before. Her experience sparked her to become a part of faculty led programs by teaching. She eventually became the director of several programs. From there she moved to the Director position of the office of Education Abroad. She has continued her intertwine her passion for traveling and helping students by traveling to several

countries as the liaison for programs and students.

“It’s an experience that I still keep coming back too, something that’s shaped my perspective and shaped my sense that there is a much bigger world out there,” said Doyle.

The benefits of studying abroad are undeniable, such as personal growth and career opportunities. It provides a chance to learn and understand new systems, recognize cultural relations, and appreciate things that many take for granted. Studying abroad shows to an employer, adaptability, the ability to navigate and solve problems, and understanding other people.

“One of the things I love about this job is being able to help students who don’t think they can take that first step to do it, to help them see that this is something that is an option for you and there are resources that can help you do this. You don’t have to do it all on your own, we can help you find a place and get there if you’re willing to put in the effort to get there,” said Doyle.

Studying abroad is a possibility for all students. As the number of programs available at UWG has already expanded, Dr. Doyle is continuously working on adding programs that could be a perfect fit for any student. For more information about studying abroad, visit [www.westga.edu/educationabroad](http://www.westga.edu/educationabroad).



Photo Credit: Sierra Lemelle



# News

## Former UWG Student Chases His Dream of becoming a Rapper

**Kyzia Wint**

*Contributing Writer*

In 2009 you may have seen him hanging out in dining hall Z6 in a step team sponsored by his residence hall, going by the name “Prod.” Rapper Alostone is a former UWG student who is all about chasing his dreams.

Born in Long Island, NY, Alostone was raised by Jamaican parents and says that has had a huge influence and impact on his music.

“I remember on Saturday mornings my dad used to play that old school reggae, that Beres Hammond, not none of these new reggae artist, that’s what I grew up on.”

Alostone moved to Douglasville, Ga in 2007 and that is when his love of creating music actually began.

“When I moved to Georgia my best friends were into music and that’s when my passion for producing and making beats began, it wasn’t until recently that I started rapping.”

Growing up Jamaican not only influenced his music, but his work ethic. When he graduated high school in 2009 Alostone was accepted into Valdosta State University and St.John’s University but chose to go west! After attending West Georgia for about a year he eventually decided to focus on his music full-time.

Alostone would consider his style of rap “conscious rap,” and his

music sound could be comparable to artist like Kendrick Lamar. One of his songs “Grave Robbers”, which you can find on soundcloud, Alostone talks about the prison system and how it enslaves African American men. In a lot of his music he talks a lot about growing up as a black man in this country and his various life experiences.

Alostone is also no a stranger to performing live. One of his very first performances was his senior year of high school when he performed at his school’s talent show with one of his best friends.

In 2017, Alostone went on tour with one of Grammy Award winning R&B artist and close friend Miguel, where he performed at various venues across the Southeast. He plans on going on tour again sometime this year. Currently he plans on performing more in the Atlanta area and building connections with more local artists and producers.

At the beginning of this year Alostone performed at Exposure Open Mic Night at the Apache Cafe in Atlanta and received a welcoming response from the audience when he performed his song called “Oh Dear.” This year Alostone is focusing more on releasing more music. He recently dropped an

EP called Samson and is currently working on a collaborative mixtape with one of his best friends, who goes by the rap name Red Charles. They plan to drop this project in

early April. The EP Samson is on soundcloud under Alostone’s profile and to stay connected with him, his Instagram is Alostone09.



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# Arts & Entertainment

## Black Lightning Sparks the Ratings

**Erin Grady**

*Contributing Writer*

It is almost impossible in this day in age to avoid shows or movies from the superhero genre. With shows like Daredevil, Luke Cage, The Flash, and Arrow becoming so popular, there is a reason why there seems to be a premiere for a superhero show or movie every month. One new superhero show that breaks the mold of the genre is Black Lightning. Black Lightning premiered on The CW on Jan. 16 and tackles sensitive subjects and gained electrifying reviews.

Black Lightning is unlike the rest of its neighboring superhero shows on The CW. The show strays away from the other shows because it does not focus on a superhero



Photo Courtesy of The CW

and the origin of his powers, it focuses on a man and his family. The lead role of Jefferson Pierce is played by Cress Williams. Pierce is a middle-aged high school principal who hung up his superhero tights and his electric based powers in order to preserve his family. In the pilot episode, Pierce is forced to wear the superhero tights once again when his two daughters, Anissa and Jennifer, are kidnapped by a member of the city's gang, the 100.

Black Lightning deals with many relevant and complex subjects

that African-Americans face in the real world. Some of these include gang violence, police brutality and racism. One of the most shocking scenes in the pilot episode is when Pierce was pulled over by cops. He was forcefully yanked from his car and cuffed while guns were being pointed towards his face. All of this had happened because there had been a crime committed nearby and the only description of the criminal was "black male." The show has shown that it is not afraid to tackle these sensitive subjects and did so accurately.

Black Lightning also does not shy away from diversity with Pierce's daughter, Anissa. Anissa, who is played by Nafessa Williams, is an open lesbian who is also an activist that participates in protests. She has also shown signs that she has superpowers and wants to actively pursue the vigilante lifestyle unlike her father.

The pilot episode premiered on Jan. 16 and it received 2.3 million viewers. Black Lightning has gained positive reviews from television show critics. Black Lightning's pilot episode is the highest rated original series premiere episode in two years. The show is on par with the premiere of Riverdale which is one of The CW's most popular series, gaining the same number of viewers. The show also almost gained as many viewers as the most popular show on the network, The Flash, which gained 2.5 million views.

Critics agree that the main reason why they are so captivated by the show is the Pierce family dynamics. The show balances its superhero antics and heavy subject matter with a family centered story and humor, which comes from banter within the family. Without the inclusion of superpowers, the show is about a boring man trying to fix things with his ex-wife and provide a stable life for his family. Black Lightning brings a new perspective to the heavily oversaturated superhero drama and raises the bar for the genre.



## Grown-ish Review

**Thomas Thrasher**

*Contributing Writer*

17-year-old actress, Yara Shahidi, stars in her own show that can be helpful for college students. *Grown-ish*, a spin-off of the hit ABC show *Black-ish*, follows the oldest daughter (Zoey) of the Johnson's family as she heads to college. Drawing comparisons to the popular 90's series, *A Different World*, it was also an outgrowth with the same plot. *A Different World* was a by-product of the *Cosby Show* where their oldest daughter goes off to college and begins to learn more about the world. The show tackled the dilemmas of a college student and dealt with the social issues of the 1990s. The *Grown-ish* sitcom is comical and modern for today's youth culture, allowing Freeform (formerly known as ABC Family) to draw in younger viewers. Appealing to those viewers getting ready or already attending college, *Grown-ish* has a way of creating a youthful and valuable message out of each episode.

The sitcom flows beautifully from *Black-ish* where the family is dropping Zoey off at college. She is immediately missed by her father (Anthony Anderson) but goes into the phase where she gets used to not being under the roof of her parents. With going to parties, she gets exposed to the antics and culture of modern shenanigans. While in school, Zoey develops relationships with six people that she never thought she would

become friends with. The six friends are a lot like the diverse people you would meet in college. Every friend has their own problems and backgrounds. During the first two episodes, the friends become closer over an emotional talk in a night class that lead to an understanding of each person's differences. They shared stories about their reasoning for being in the night class which thematically sparked a mutual bond: Accepting people's differences is a way to better the world.

Viewers are steering away from traditional television and are shifting to the Internet for series. Freeform has aired *Grown-ish* solely

online through its website, app, and the online streaming service Hulu. The content is very honest and straight forward by displaying some of what really goes on at college campuses. The sitcom covers the social activities, school pressures, and even the problems that millennials deal with in the social media world. This show could create an understanding from the older generation while teaching the younger generation how to handle these problems that they will encounter.

Skeptics were worried about the show airing considering that it is a byproduct of *Black-ish*. Also, some

people didn't think that Shahidi was established enough to be a main character. Although she played the role of the oldest daughter and was a co-star, there was still hesitation as to having her own show. The fact that Shahidi is doing well with her first season is phenomenal as it received a 91% on Rotten Tomatoes. With the high ratings and the number of viewers, the show has recently been approved to continue for a Season 2. *Grown-ish* has the potential to become a great series for the future as it exhibits the transformation of Zoey from a young lady to a woman while expounding upon the complexity of college.



Courtesy of FreeForm.go.com

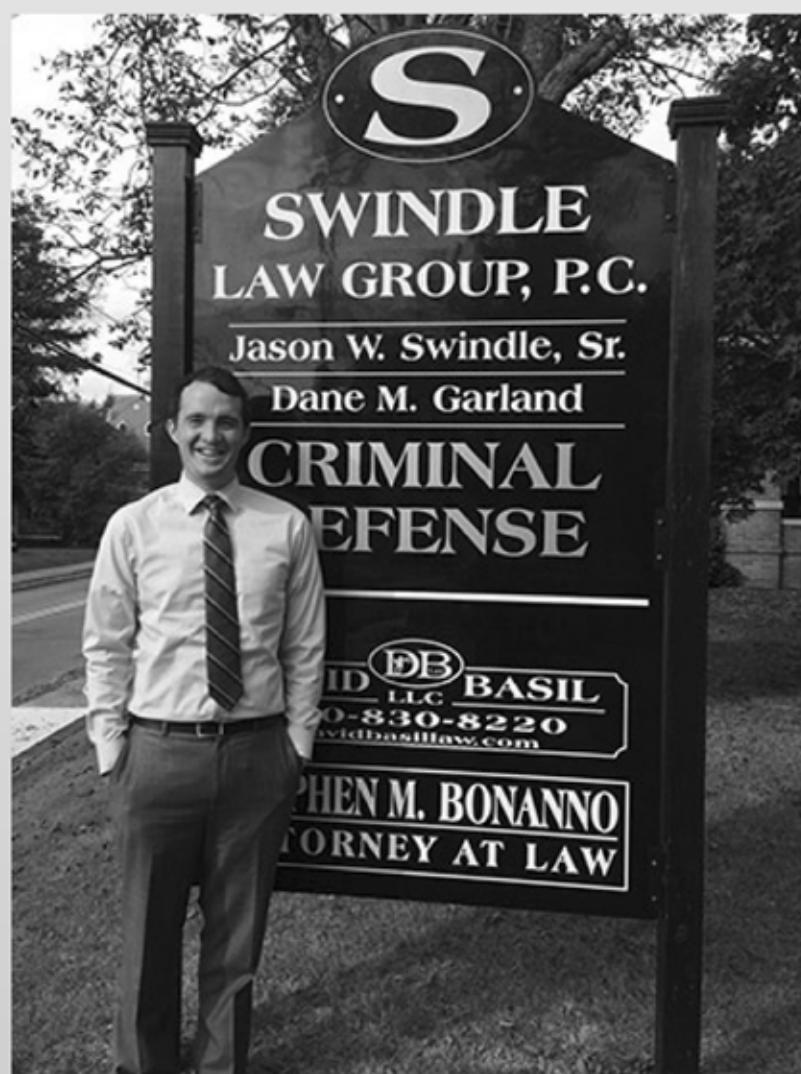




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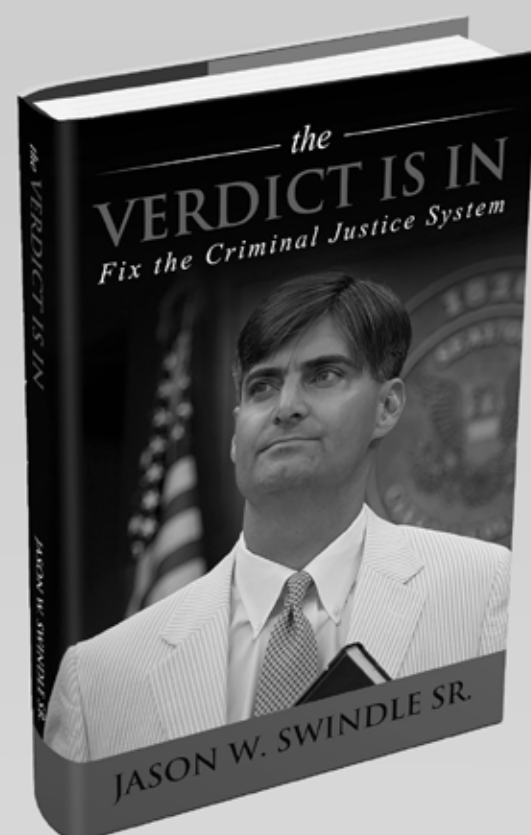
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# Sports

## From kickoff to tipoff Intramural Sports is taking off

**Triston Armour**

*Contributing Writer*

UWG's new additions to the competitive sports program staff has helped the intramural sports program grow and prosper. One of the additions acquired this year is Brandon Barnes, the Graduate Assistant of Competitive Sports. This year he and the staff have increased participation from students this year. Increasing the number of people signing up is not the only thing the program has done. Barnes and the staff have also added more sports for students to partake in. The plans for the program is to keep increasing student involvement by giving the students more options that interest them.

Barnes got his start in intramural sports while working as an official for the University of Akron. While looking for somewhere to continue his journey through intramural sports while being a Graduate Assistant, he visited West Georgia

and fell in love with the campus.

"I knew this was a place to continue my education and get to work with some of the best, young professionals in the field," said Barnes. It is not simply Barnes as the staff around him does a wonderful job day in and day out helping students that work for the department as well as participate in the sports. "I like being able to work with great people and helping students reach their fullest potential," said Barnes.

As the student body continues to grow at the university, the competitive sports department is making the necessary adjustments. The department has looked into the growth and the participation of the study body and made rule changes that they feel gives a fair chance.

"We wanted to make the program all-encompassing for everyone and equal opportunities for all," said Barnes. They have also began building connections with the Newnan campus in hopes of expanding. The department has also used the employees they already have to promote intramural sports on the West

Georgia campus by distributing intramural sports calendars that have all the sports offered that season as well as video game tournaments.

The addition of new sports has been a contributor to the success of the program. This year they have added Futsal, or indoor soccer to the sports listing. The sport has had an incredible turnout in its inaugural season and has proven that it is a sport the UWG community enjoys. They also introduced a tournament called the Alpha Challenges which help them try out new sports and see which ones the student body enjoys. This helps the Intramural sports department figure out which sports they should make a league for in the future.

The future seems to be very bright for the program with the staff members having high expectations. "I believe the program will only get better and with all the research and evaluation going on in the field the programming will evolve," said Barnes. "Our goal is to not only have the best program around but also be the most comprehensive university in the nation."

## Olympic swimmer's sex abuse allegations mark latest scandal

**Phuong Le**

*Associated Press*

World champion swimmer Ariana Kukors has accused an U.S. Olympic team coach of sexually abusing her starting when she was 16, the latest misconduct allegations against those charged with caring for young athletes.

It's another scandal for the U.S. governing body of swimming and for the sports world, which was rocked by a litany of sexual misconduct by former USA Gymnastics sports doctor Larry Nassar. For its part, USA Swimming revealed in 2010 that sex abuse allegations were mostly to blame for lifetime bans of 46 members and said it set up training and enhanced screening for all coaches, officials and volunteers.

That same year, coach Sean Hutchison faced an investigation over his ties to Kukors, but it was closed with no misconduct found. USA Swimming said Thursday that it learned of the underage abuse allegations this week.

Kukors, now 28, told authorities that Hutchison took thousands of sexually explicit photographs of her, according to a search warrant document filed by a federal agent.

She told officers that he kissed and touched her when she was 16 and engaged in sexual activity with her when she was 17 at the Pan Pacific Swimming Championships in Victoria, British Columbia, the document said.

Hutchison denies abusing Kukors and has not been charged with a crime. U.S. and local authorities seized electronic devices from his Seattle apartment this week

that they say may contain evidence, the Seattle PI reported .

Kukors, the 2009 world champion in the 200-meter individual medley who placed fifth in that event in the 2012 Olympics, accused Hutchison of "grooming" her for sexual abuse when she was 13 and he was her coach at a Seattle-area swim club.

"I never thought I would share my story because I was able to leave a horrible monster and build a life I could have never imagined for myself," she said in a statement released through her attorneys Wednesday. "But in time, I've realized that stories like my own are too important to go unwritten."

Hutchison, 46, who was an assistant coach on the 2008 U.S. Olympic team, said the two were in a relationship after the 2012 Olympics and that she lived in his Seattle home for more than a year.

"At no time did I ever abuse Ariana Kukors or do anything with her that was not consensual," he said in a statement released by his attorney. "I absolutely deny having any sexual or romantic relationship with her before she was old enough to legally make those decisions for herself. Prior to that time, I did nothing to 'groom' her."

The investigation comes amid scrutiny over the supervision of people who work with young athletes. Nassar was recently sentenced to decades in prison in a case that led to a reckoning for the gymnastics governing body, with top executives resigning and the entire board of directors planning to step down as requested by the U.S. Olympic Committee.

Kukors' attorney in California, Robert Allard, compared his client's case to the one against Nassar.

"Much like the USOC knew about Larry Nassar years before his arrest and did nothing, USA

Swimming had notice in 2010 that Sean Hutchison was involved in an inappropriate coach-athlete relationship with Ariana and took no actions to protect her or other swimmers," he said in a statement.

Mike Saltzstein, a former vice president of USA Swimming who previously complained about the organization's handling of sexual abuse cases, questioned the thoroughness of the 2010 investigation.

"I was astounded that it was closed so quickly," he said in a telephone interview from San Diego, adding that a thorough investigation may have uncovered other problems, including allegations of underage abuse.

"Now with the benefit of hindsight and time, one would have to question whether there was any integrity to the first time they did this investigation," he said.

USA Swimming said Thursday that Kukors' statement was the first time it learned of the allegations and that "our hearts go out to Ariana and the difficulty she has gone through to reach this point of disclosure." It said it was notified in January of a case against Hutchison filed with the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

USA Swimming said it hired a private investigator in 2010 after learning of a rumored relationship between Kukors, then 21, and Hutchison, then 39. It said both parties denied a romantic or sexual relationship and the investigation was closed without any violations.

Hutchison left coaching afterward but remains a member of USA Swimming as the owner of member club King Aquatic near Seattle, the organization said.

Club head coach Michael Brooks said Hutchison has stepped down as an executive and has not directly interacted with swimmers for a long time.

Olympic medalist Margaret Hoelzer, Kukors' former teammate, said she never heard of Hutchison sexually abusing anyone but rumors were rampant that he and Kukors, then 21, were in a relationship.

"Naively, I should have probably realized it could have started earlier and could have been abuse. I wish I had," she said, adding that dating is common among coaches and their athletes in the sport.

However, Hoelzer said Hutchison was partly why she retired in 2010.

"He was very emotionally and verbally abusive person. He was a very controlling individual, but he was that way to everyone," she said.

The investigation began Jan. 23 when police in the Seattle suburb of Des Moines got a report about sex crimes at its city pool. They were alleged to have occurred between 2002 and 2007.

Authorities, who notified the U.S. Department of Homeland Security because of potential crimes outside the state, say detectives are working to determine what crimes are within the statute of limitations, where else they may have occurred and whether other potential victims or witnesses exist.

Kukors said she came forward to empower other victims.

"Not for the sake of you knowing my story, but for the little girls and boys whose lives and future hangs in the grasp of a horribly powerful and manipulative person," she said.

"That they may not have to go through the same pain, trauma, horror and abuse. That their parents, mentors and guardians are better able to spot the signs of grooming and realize its tragic consequences before it's too late," she said.



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