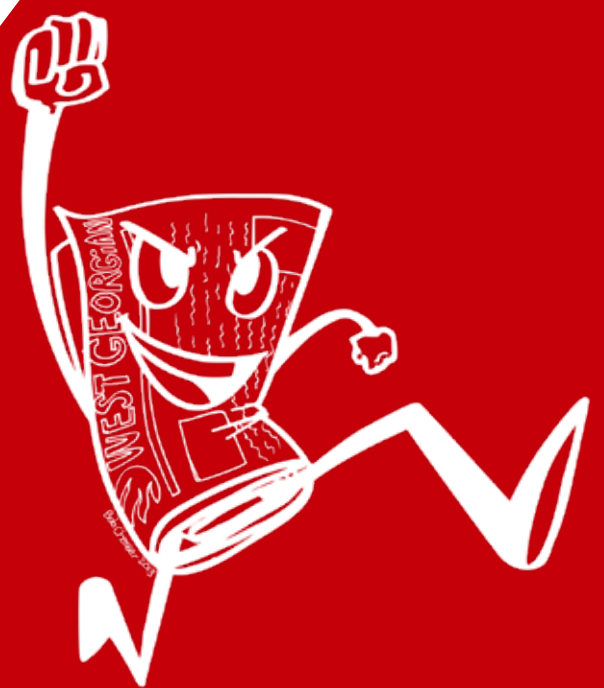


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In this
edition...

WHY WEST:
The Hoop Hoop.
// **PAGE 2**

GRAND OPENING:
UWG celebrates renovated
Biology Building.
// **PAGE 6**

STUDENT ATHLETE:
The dark reality of college
athletics.
// **PAGE 7**

WHY WEST: THE HOOP HOOP

Matthew Harvey
News Editor

Freshman basketball player Tommaso Gini, an Italian native, moved across the globe in 2016 to achieve his dream of playing basketball at a collegiate level and chose to do so at UWG.

Gini was born in Rome, Italy and lived there until two years ago he decided to move to America to chase his dream as a basketball player.

“I love my city (Rome),” said Gini. “It was hard for me to get out of there and start a new life here, but I made this decision because I wanted to hoop and I would not be able to do it back home.”

IMG Academy, a preparatory boarding school and sports training destination in Bradenton, Florida, offered Gini a partial scholarship to come and play basketball for his final year of high school. While there Gini was able to bring his test scores to the necessary requirements needed to attend college and to improve his game at the highest level.

“I decided to go to IMG because they are the best sports academy in the world,” said Gini. “It was a crazy experience. I hooped with guys who have gone to the league and high major D1 schools. It was great to compete at the highest level with great athletes.”

During his recruitment Gini visited four schools before visiting West Georgia. At the time Gini did not want to commit anywhere as he did not know if playing college basketball was the life for him. He was set to go back home to Rome just a week after his tour at UWG.

“I came to West Georgia a week before

departing home,” said Gini. “I did not have any ideas coming in. I thought it was going to be like the other schools, but West Georgia was nice. It stood out.”

The biggest selling point for Gini to come to UWG was head basketball coach Dave Moore.

“One of the main reasons I came here is because of my head coach,” Said Gini. “Dave Moore is the man. He is the guy that believes in me. He is the guy that said he wanted me on his team. Other coach’s did it, but not like Moore did. I am so far from home and I have to count on people. He is my head coach and I know that I can count on him.”

Gini was also impressed with the athletic facilities that UWG had to offer him. After seeing

The Coliseum, the weight room and the UWG football stadium Gini decided that UWG was where he was going.

“I think if you have great facilities you can improve as a player a lot,” said Gini. “The facilities here are mid major, even high major division one facilities. I found this crazy and that is what made West Georgia stand out athletically”

Gini was also impressed with the campus and the nature that was all around it. Not only did he like how all of the buildings were close but also felt that it was an environment that he could excel as a student, but more importantly, as a player.

“The hoop hoop is the reason I am here.”



Photo Credits: IMG Academy

Becoming an Ally

Ashley Dorsey
Contributing Writer

The Center for Student Involvement will be providing an opportunity for UWG students to receive Safe Zone training on Sept. 25.

UWG provides a variety of opportunities to develop and become informed about the abundance of diversity that is present on campus. Safe Zone training has been one of the primary tools that the university has used for this purpose since 2004.

This training will be presented at an event called, “Safe Zone Leadership Track: Safe Zone To Go,” on Sept. 25. The event will include a series of workshops and trainings about Safe Zone, and will help students to further understand sexual identity and also explore ways that they can help students by being an ally to the LGBTQ community.

“Safe Zone is a space where you can feel supported and celebrated with who you are, and as an ally it is important to create those spaces for students to be genuinely who they are” said Lo Denmon, Inclusion Resource Specialist for the Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

Denmon also explained how it is important for UWG to incorporate and have Safe Zone available on campus.

“It is important to have Safe Zone on campus because it allows students to feel genuine and to bring their authentic self into a space,” said Denmon. “This time in a students life is very critical in developing who they are, and it is also that first experience that most people have living away from home.”

Although it is not required to be Safe Zone trained, Denmon noted that there are over 230 faculty and staff members that are Safe Zone trained on campus. She also expressed her

thoughts on why Safe Zone training should not be a requirement.

“It is necessary that we not require it, that way when people go through the training they are doing it for their own personal benefit and not because they are required to do it, it is genuine,” said Denmon.

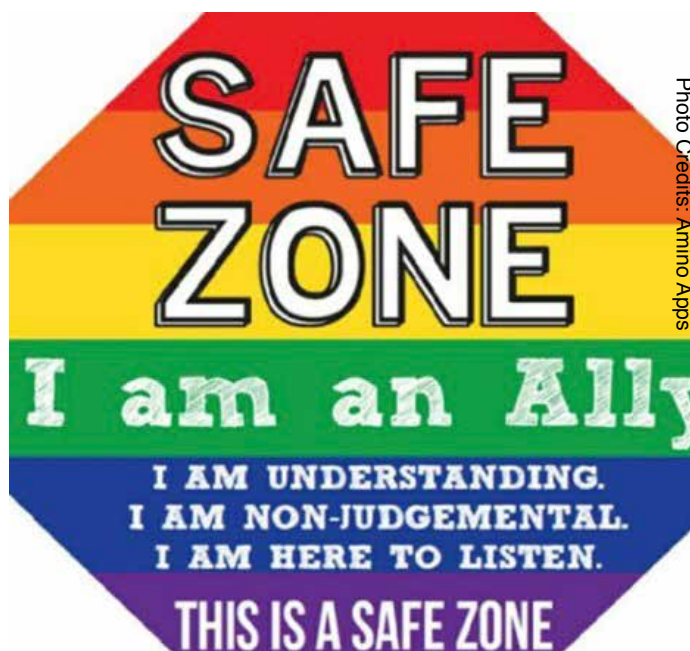
UWG offers trainings for faculty and staff throughout the semester. Once becoming Safe Zone trained, faculty members and staff become “Allies” for this particular group of students.

An ally is someone who actively engages with LGBTQ students and tries to understand the issues that affect them while also advocating on their behalf.

As an ally they become someone who can explain to LGBTQ students that there is nothing wrong with them as a person and reassure them that they are valid as a human.

“Participating in Safe Zone training is great for the UWG campus as a whole to become more inclusive,” said Denmon. “It is important for us to step outside of our comfort zone and initially start talking to people who we don’t know much about, because this will help change a lot.”

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DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Anne Holmes

Contributing Writer

UWG Career Services has introduced Wolfie's Wardrobe to provide free professional and casual business attire to UWG students.

Wolfie's Wardrobe is the rebranding of the concept known as the "career closet" that Career Services offered in previous years.

A career closet is a collection of professional clothing such as suits, ties, dress pants, dresses, blazers and jackets available for students to take home free of charge. The clothes are donated by the community with the intention of providing students with the ability to dress for the job they want.

"Many students think Career Services is just resumes, cover letters and jobs on campus," said Asia Anderson, a Career Counselor on staff at Career Services. "Along with these things, we also assist with interview prep through mock interviews, interview skills and now we can assist with interview attire. Professional dress is an integral piece in career readiness."

The department housed a similar program to Wolfie's Wardrobe in years past, but when Career Services moved locations on campus they had to retire the closet due to conflicts such as lack of space. Now, the department wants to bring the program back to life.

"Any student preparing for interviews, career fair or networking event and may not have all the items to complete their professional look," said Anderson. "These students now have a resource to assist with completing it."

Staff, students and faculty can donate clothes to the drive located in the Career Services

office at Row Hall.

"Our wardrobe is donation-based," said Anderson. "Sizes vary. Our goal is to receive donations that accommodate all shapes and sizes. Anyone can feel free to donate professional dress clothes. We are asking that the donations be new or gently-used, neutral colored clothes."

The donation drive for Wolfie's Wardrobe began in February, one month after Anderson joined the Career Services staff and months before it was officially announced at an event on Sept. 6. Career Services also provided popcorn, games and interview advice at the event.

"The Grand Opening was a huge success," said Anderson. "We were able to reach over 100 students and most students were able to walk away with an item of clothing."

Wolfie's Wardrobe will act as an important resource on campus because many students need professional clothing in both their scholarly lives and in their future careers.

"Dress can influence confidence. I have had many students tell me that they don't feel prepared and want to feel better about their interviewing experience," said Anderson. "Dress can be a way to assist in increasing confidence for the students. During interviews,

career fairs and experiential learning opportunities, students are being evaluated on their skills and appearance to see if they fit with the company. Career Services now offers assistance with both skills and appearance."

Students can access Wolfie's Wardrobe in the Career Services office during office hours, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Photo Credits: Jacalyn Butts

ECO LEADERS THRIVE

Kelli Holloway-Billison

Contributing Writer

Eco Leaders is a student led organization dedicated to sustainability and going green on campus.

As climate changes, the idea of going green and environmental awareness has become as prominent as ever. Eco Leaders teaches students ways to combat environmental issues that will impact and connect them to communities nationwide.

UWG Eco Leaders is a member of The National Wildlife Federation Eco-Leaders'. The NWF dedicate themselves to working with colleges nationwide to create greener and more sustainable campuses and communities.

The UWG chapter provides hands on experience that encourages others to take a stand to make a difference. These hands on experiences teach students how to recycle and increase ecological security.

"As an Eco Leader you will understand what it means to go green instead of just wearing the shirt or saying the motto," said Ashley Dycus, faculty advisor for the UWG Eco Leaders.

Dycus oversees the planning of the organization and is very open to students giving feedback to help her create new ideas that will further improve Eco Leaders. This is her second year advising the organization.

In the last two years, membership for the club has more than double and shows that the work that the Eco Leaders is doing is starting to pay off.

"I am very excited and hopeful for this year," said Dycus. "This year we have money from SAFA and we've already done two outreach activities so far and we're just in the first of September."

The organization is also planning a trip with U-Rec called "No Trace Left Behind" that will teach students how to be in nature without leaving a harmful mark behind them.

The university also has a garden that the organization is looking forward to working in at least once a month. Working the garden will give students hands-on experience and a closer connection to the environment.

Students interested in making West Georgia's campus and community greener, can become members on Orgsync.com and can attend the Eco Leaders monthly meeting.

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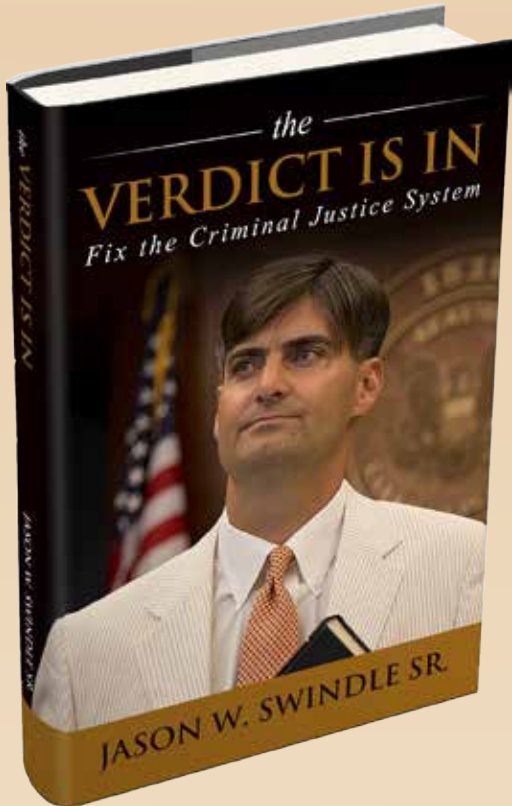
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Latino Culture is For Everyone

Rebekah Brinkley
Contributing Writer

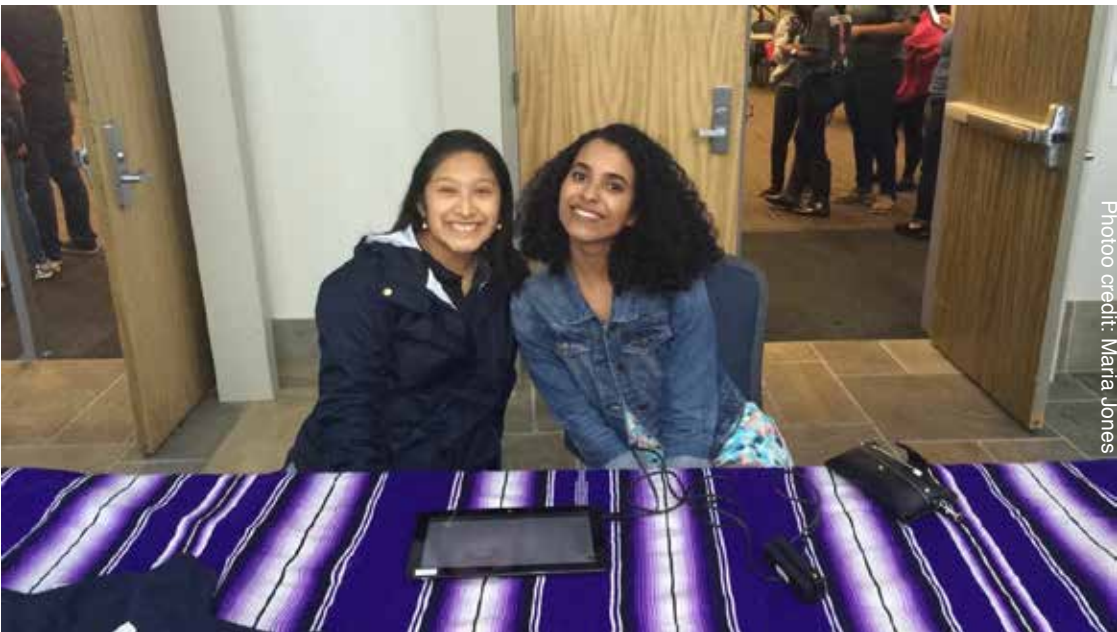
The Latino Cultural Society (LCS) at UWG is working to expand the student body’s understanding of all cultural backgrounds on campus including Latino and Hispanic.

LCS is bringing cultures together by promoting its diverse organization and acceptance of all backgrounds on the UWG campus. To accomplish this, LCS is partnering with other organizations and allowing for any student to participate in its events.

“A big part of promoting culture on campus comes from partnering with different organizations that have similar goals,” said Leslie Soriano, President of LCS. “Last year, LCS partnered with SGA, Black Student Alliance, Lambda Theta Phi, and UPD to host a cook-off. That was a cool experience that allowed cultures to come together and make some delicious food for the students.”

LCS enjoys participating in events that draw in the student body and allows them to experience different cultures. They participate in events all across campus: from bake sales to the large, campus-wide World Festival. The World Festival is an annual event at UWG and it is put on by several organizations and departments which highlight cultures from across the world.

“We love sharing the Latin culture with the campus, but we also love sharing culture in general,” said Soriano. “I really like participating in the annual World Festival because so many cultures are represented there. Students freely come and go through the event trying food from



around the world and seeing different cultures perform.”

Aside from partnering with organizations, LCS focuses on sharing cultural awareness through their own events on campus. LCS has found many ways to express the importance of their culture to the community through activities such as dance lessons and cookouts.

“Any event that we participate in, we hope brings some type of awareness to culture,” said Soriano. “When we host fiestas or dance lessons we hope that it will allow students to feel like they can ask questions about the culture and learn something. You don’t have to be from a Latinx background to enjoy some food with us.”

Soriano referred to the LCS mission statement which focuses on embracing Latino/ Hispanic culture through important conversations. The members of LCS are hoping that by hosting engaging cultural events, they will be able to start discussions with students across campus from all different backgrounds.

“The biggest thing we hope for is that people will want to talk about their culture,” said Soriano. “It’s so special to have someone genuinely come up to me and ask questions about my culture. I love to turn around and ask them about theirs as well. You can learn so much about a person and what is important to them just from a simple conversation.”

By starting simple conversations with students, LCS hopes that other students will want to learn more about the different cultures on campus. Even if a student is not part of the Latinx culture, they can still ask questions and get to know that culture. LCS is also open to continuing to work with other student organizations that raise awareness for cultures on campus.

UWG Provides Free Speech through Spontaneous Expression for Students

Chelsea Newton
Contributing Writer

UWG has promoted a campus community that is active and educated regarding their rights to free speech. This has created a community of held wellness where students are valued in their actions toward free speech.

“UWG has not been an activist campus since the late 60’s.” said Dr. Scot Lingrell, Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment, “that means that we are not compared to college campuses like Berkley, where students are actively protesting about affairs that happen on or off campus. However, we did have some students who reacted to the Trayvon Martin incident that happened in 2012.”

Incidents like this one have inspired UWG students to speak out and to take action whether rallying together as a body of students, protesting outside on campus, honoring someone’s life with a memorial or a freely given speech.

Due to the inevitability of events striking controversy the UWG has taken a stand for students to have the available resources to be able to speak out and talk about these issues when they do occur.

“When Trump became president, we had an instance where a student placed a sign on campus that read, ‘Build that wall.’ Because of this, we did not have any intentions on taking action against the sign, because this was that anonymous student’s way of expressing his or her beliefs about the President’s views,” said Lingrell. “This is the ultimate example of free spontaneous expression that we encourage students to take here at the University. But it also didn’t take long for another group

of anonymous students to come alongside this free speech movement to surround the sign with love letters.”

Instead of trying to get rid of free speech, the UWG Department of Student Affairs encourages that more speech be given toward an issue of contention.

“More speech is the perfect antidote to free speech. And the response of the love letters from the students was the perfect way to express that. Students here at UWG are good at handling these cases. As the Department of Student Affairs, we have seen it time and time again,” said Lingrell, “We have hope in our students to handle these situations with grace.”

UWG and its student affairs leaders have adopted the mentality that one cannot suppress someone else’s right to speak just because they disagree with them. Offensive free speech is going to occur, but it appears that some UWG students would rather take the high road.

“We don’t want to limit free speech if we don’t have to because a college campus should be the exact place where you should be able to have free speech,” said Lingrell. “The last place where you really can speak without retribution in the form of a consequence because the University supports the very act of free speech itself.”

The held wellness and inclusion community that UWG has created for students to use free speech is an opportunity that does not need to be missed.

ONLINE
EXCLUSIVES

CAREER SERVICES
// ALYSSA MARTINEZ

SPOOKY THEATER
// TAYLOR BARTON



Center for Sustainability: BREAKING NEW GROUND

Andy Hendricks

Contributing Writer

The UWG Center for Sustainability is looking to the future with new plans for the campus garden, solar energy on campus and student-led green initiatives.

The campus garden has been in existence for several years, but it has been used sporadically by students and student groups. It was not maintained regularly and there was limited guidance. In the future, it will serve as more of an educational resource rather than a loose community project.

“There was a brief idea of making it into a productive garden that would supply food to the cafeterias, but that’s not going to happen anymore,” said Hannes Gerhardt, Director of the UWG Center for Sustainability. “The garden is being used more now by faculty as part of their coursework. So, there are a couple of courses that take their students out to the campus garden as part of a learning component of the class.”

UWG students will still support the campus garden, but will take the responsibility of the garden into their own hands.

“We’re trying to work through a system where we can have regular maintenance of the garden by the students,” said Gerhardt. “We would also like to pick a particular day when grounds workers can be there to guide students, and then the students can come back on their own and keep working on the garden.”

This semester UWG will also be utilizing renewable energy for the first time.

“We are getting a solar array over the balcony of the TLC building,” said Gerhardt. “It should be built this fall. It’s going to be nice to show off that we’ve made our first investment in renewable energy.”

The Center for Sustainability also hopes on empowering students to take up campus-wide environmental initiatives on their own.

“I would like to see a larger commitment to renewable energy in the future,” said Gerhardt. “I’m gauging the interest of students having a ‘green fee,’ which would probably be between \$3 to \$5 per semester, that students would pay as part of their university fees and tuition. The idea behind the green fee is that it would be a student initiative. So, the students would vote on it to see if they want the fee. The fee won’t be forced on them. If the students were to pass the fee, then there would be a student committee responsible for deciding where that money is invested.”

In the future, this hypothetical budget may also be increased if it is proved that the investments in environmental infrastructure made by the green fee committee leads to savings. So, for example, if an investment by the green fee led to energy savings, then those savings could be given directly back to the green fee budget to use for other projects. These other projects could include, larger investments in solar energy or improvements for the campus garden.

NEWS

Biology Building *Grand Opening*

Tiffany Maynard

Contributing Writer

The long-awaited Grand Opening of the newly renovated Biology building was held on Sept. 14.

The UWG Biology Building first opened in 1972. Much of the building and its technology went untouched, as far as updates go, for more than 40 years. In early 2017, ground was broken on the new additions to the building that have been in the works for more than a decade.

“When we first started planning this construction and renovation of the building, the biology program was the university’s largest and fastest growing academic program with over 800 students,” said UWG President, Dr. Kyle Marrero, in his commencement of the Grand Opening event. “... I can tell you today, that the program has grown even further to 914 students.”

With the growth of the Biology program, as well as the student body as a whole, more space was needed for UWG students. One of the features many students have found exciting about the new facility is the open spaces for students to meet for study groups,

collaborate on projects or socialize.

“It’s very spacious,” said Aramide Olorunfem, senior biology student and TriBeta (Biology Club) member. “We can all come in here as majors and have space to study and talk. It feels like a community now.”

UWG students are not the only ones excited about the available space in the new building. Dr. Maurusi Mitra, Associate Professor at UWG, said that she is excited about all the research space and resources available for her students’ research, as well as her own. She is able to design a new course based off of new technology and labs that are now available.

“The University not only renovated the space for us, but we also have a pot of money that was given to the department to purchase any equipment the faculty may want in their research labs,” said Mitra.

“Everyone is talking about the building, but it’s what’s going to be in the building that makes up the building. It’s not just walls and chairs that make up a building, but the people living in it and the work they do. That’s what gives the life to the building.”

The Biology Building has been full of life since its opening in the summer. With the open social spaces and quiet study corners the building has been useful for all students. Dr. Christopher Tabit, Biology Department Chair at UWG, also spoke of the new building with pride and sentiment as he has worked closely with the team to make the building happen.

“Sometimes I thought this day would never come ... but, as they say, if you build it, they will come. And, you’re here,” said Tabit while addressing the crowd at the grand opening.

Faculty took turns nostalgically calling

the old building their “bunker”, remembering smells and discolored ceiling tiles, and reminiscing on their inside jokes such as the “creepy jar room”. However special the building was to the faculty and students that spent so much time there, they are just as grateful and excited for the new one.



HOLLYWOOD LEBRON: STUDENT ATHLETE SHOWS DARK REALITY OF COLLEGE ATHLETICS

Justin Hodges

Sports Editor

In 1964 Walter Byers, the Executive Producer of the NCAA at the time, fabricated the term “student-athlete”, as part of a piteous plot to prevent college athletes from being considered professionals; and not have to pay them. Within HBO’s *Student Athlete*, a king-worthy documentation produced by the likes of Steve Toute, LeBron James’ business manager Maverick Carter, and also LeBron James himself unveils a heart-wrenching struggle for those who the NCAA has undermined.

Student Athlete is directed by Oscar winner Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy and Trish Dalton. Together they collect five somber tales from the likes of: former NFL coach John Shoop, Kentucky basketball starting center Nick Richards, former division one basketball player Mike Shaw, former Rutgers wide receiver Shamar Graves, and Silas Nacita, the victim of perhaps the most infamous NCAA blunder ever.

The execution of *Student Athlete* on the part of its outstandingly-cultured staff is breathtaking. They exhibit a collection of depressing anecdotes that all connect to the same quintessence;

people whose livelihoods depend on their respective sport, and do not have the option of turning away from it.

“This is literally all I have and if I don’t do it then I don’t have anything, so I’m gonna do it,” said Silas Nacita, a once-homeless football walk-on for Baylor University football.

Nacita’s story is somber beyond relief. A man who slept on couches and in cars in order to afford to go play football was banned from ever playing a collegiate game again by the NCAA in 2014. A somewhat similar tale comes from former University of Illinois and Bradley University basketball player Mike Shaw.

“So many kids get a sugarcoat of what playing in college is really gonna be like,” said Shaw. “Everybody is telling them they’re the best in the world right now. I thought I was gonna be playing professionally right now, I never thought that I’d be where I’m at now.”

Shaw is a prime example of how the NCAA’s negligence to its former players can be demoralizing to how they live the rest of their lives. Life after sports for them essentially does not exist. *Student Athlete* is a chilling

slap of dark realism to the face of those oblivious to how cruel the world can be to people.

“I think it is encumbered upon by a multimillion dollar industry to help with those kind of situations,” said Robert Turner, Ph.D professor, author and former football player.

“That tension that a former athlete has, how do they keep it from turning to depression. If they get depressed, where in any of their experiences prior to that has shown that it’s okay to express what they’re feeling?”

Of course, what ties this all together is what *Student Athlete* is exemplifying, that college players should be getting paid. That the NCAA is making unlimited amounts of cash from the suffering of what is even referenced to as “slavery”.

“If it’s a business or a job, you should pay them,” said Shamar Graves. “Don’t come in and tell me that it’s a brotherhood. It’s a business.”

Those mentioned, but not personally included in the documentary, include the players eternally affected by the University of North Carolina’s fake classes scandal. Former NFL coach John Shoop provided a

chilling monologue on just how deep a simple wrongdoing can hurt those involved with it.

“Some of them were banned for life, guys I made promises to,” said Shoop. “I sat in their living room and said if you come to UNC, I’ll take care of you.

“I think the players that I’ve recruited and loved should have due process, and enough food to eat,” continued Shoop.

With Space Jam 2 officially announced and several more documentaries set to be made, LeBron James’ film empire is beginning to erupt in Los Angeles. *Student Athlete* is pure, raw and powerful. It sheds light on the true horror of how a countless loop of retired athletes have to live their lives. Thinking about everything you have, then thinking about not having it, is terrifying. Now imagine living exactly like that, with nothing. HBO is breaking barriers with *Student Athlete* in how everyday life is depicted in film. To not mistake realism for pessimism is the key to understanding how real this documentary is.

Student Athlete will premiere on HBO on Oct. 2 from 10:00-11:30 p.m. ET



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