



Photo courtesy of Anna Tumlin

UWG Alumna Goes International

By Brittany Shadix
Contributing Writer

Adulting—a verb used to describe the sometimes fulfilling and sometimes miserable obligation of doing adult like things. Those tasks might include life-sustaining responsibilities like going to work and paying the bills, or they may be the redundant acts of grocery shopping, meal preparation or even folding laundry. No matter what the act might be, it can be agreed upon that learning to be a sensible adult is quite stressful and daunting. Now consider undertaking this life change while in a foreign country.

UWG alumna, Anna Tumlin, packed her life into eight suitcases and traveled overseas to Guatemala to be a full-time missionary and English schoolteacher early this year. The 22-year-old graduate, having never lived outside of her parent's home, has spent the last month growing accustomed to living on her own and adapting to a new culture.

"I have only been here for five weeks, so culture shock really has not set in yet," said Anna. "But it is definitely overwhelming. Cooking and cleaning are really not that different from what they would have been if I had moved out in the states but learning how to navigate the grocery store and learning all the different brands in another language is difficult. I have to have my phone for basically everything because I know pretty decent Spanish, but I do not know all of the words."

"I am also working in a school where their primary lan-

guage is Spanish," continued Anna. "There are times when I have the help of the English director, who speaks very minimal English, but there are times when she cannot explain things to me. So I am sometimes just sitting in faculty and staff meetings as a first-year teacher trying to muddle through things in ways I know how. By the end of the day, I just want to be alone."

Having previously served as a missionary in Guatemala for four summers before her move to Guatemala City, Anna was very familiar with the customary practices of the country. However, like most educators, the pandemic dramatically altered her first-year teaching experience.

"Teaching virtually has made it a bit more difficult to connect with students and complicates communication in general," said Anna. "I was trained for in-person teaching during student teaching at UWG, so it has definitely been a 'learn as I go' experience. But with COVID-19 and knowing I would have had to wear a mask had classes begun in-person, I do see part of it as a positive since my students are able to see my entire face and gain a sense of trust in the North American teaching them English."

Anna teaches roughly 130 elementary and middle school-aged children for less than an hour once a week. Her online lessons are organized and administered similar to those in the United States and include the English basics like parts of speech and sentence structure.

"Since it is all virtual, I either teach through their platform or sometimes Google Meets," said Anna. "I teach on Monday

WHAT'S INSIDE

NEWS

PAGES 1-3

UWG Alumna Goes International

By Brittany Shadix

UWG Peer Education Promotes Healthy Relationships and Safe Sex

By Kayla Henderson

Provost Committed to Enriching Students' Lives

By Brittany Shivers

Serve, Set and Return to the Season

By Abigail Cummings

Dr. Hazel Cole Committed to Excellence

By Abby Grizzard

ENTERTAINMENT

PAGES 4-5

'Malcolm and Marie': An Exploration of Relationship Dynamics

By Abby Grizzard

"To All the Boys: Always and Forever": The End of a Trilogy

By Samara Marshall

and Tuesday and spend Wednesday planning the next week's lessons. On Friday, the teachers go to the school and the parents pick up a schedule for the kids to follow the next week, so they know when to log onto the platform and complete support material and practice activities. They also have to turn in their homework physically each Friday since it cannot be uploaded online."

Although she knew she was destined to pursue a career in English, Anna had not always envisioned doing so in another country—especially not during a global pandemic. After she was called for overseas mission work, she second-guessed the big move, but ultimately followed through with her calling.

"I cannot tell you how many times I tried to dig myself out of this situation," said Anna. "I kept telling myself I could go to grad school or wait until I got married to postpone moving but not necessarily not do it all. So of course, there were times when I had those doubts because it was terrifying. There were times when I questioned if I really was supposed to do this or if I really even wanted to."

"But the opportunity I have had to spend time with these adults and children is what God was calling me to do," continued Anna. "To really just live life with them and form relationships, and then share the Gospel out of those relationships. Even though it is virtual at the moment, the opportunity to do that has been rewarding enough."

NEWS

UWG Peer Education Promotes Healthy Relationships and Safe Sex

By Kayla Henderson
Contributing Writer

There are some conversations that are hard to have, for many college students those conversations revolve around relationships and sex. While both can be hard to talk about, the University of West Georgia’s Peer Education program is working to create healthy discussions on campus about health education. Established in 2002 as a stem of Health Education at UWG, Peer Education trains students, known as Peer Educators, on topics such as Alcohol, Other Drugs, Sexual Assault Response and Prevention, Sexual Health and Nutrition and Wellness. Peer Educators then work directly with fellow students to form healthy conversations around otherwise taboo topics through tabling, on-campus events and social media posts. During the month of February, Peer Education focused on healthy relationships teaching students to understand what a healthy versus an unhealthy relationship looks like. It also informed students on ways to have a healthy relationship, as well as how to help someone who is in an unhealthy relationship. Peer Education also focuses on safer sex, covering sexual intercourse as well as how to prevent risk, including safer sex tips, condoms, sexually transmitted infections and diseases. Jacquelyn Stubenraugh, who goes by Jacqui, is the current Health Education Graduate Assistant, who oversees Peer Education and the work the program is doing. “It has been shown that students learn better from their peers,” says Jacqui. “Most of the time the Peers talk to me about their interactions with students and a lot of the time the students let the peers know how much they helped. “The Peer Educators help ensure students they are getting up to date and correct information about

many different wellness topics,” continues Jacqui. “We also have a team of three professionals that are always willing to talk with students. We want to help our students adopt healthy behaviors throughout their lives.” Aside from informing students, Peer Education actively works to implement easier access to health resources around the UWG Campus. At the Health Center students can receive free STI testing, as well as yearly exams. Once a semester, Peer Education offers free HIV Testing on campus, which will be returning to campus in the coming weeks. “A lot of the time parents do not talk to their children about safer sex or healthy relationships,” says Jacqui. “We have heard multiple times from students that we are the first group to educate them on these topics. “It is important for us to get the information to them so they can make conscious healthy decisions in their life,” Jacqui continues. “Healthy relationships are important to have conversations around because it helps students understand each other. They also learn how they should be treated and how they should treat others in any relationship. We help students identify their boundaries and how to have hard conversations with other people they are in relationships with (romantic, platonic, coworker, professor).” In the future, Peer Education hopes to create a wider spread impact on campus by providing students with dispense machines in order for students to have better access to what they need such as condoms. Peer Education also hopes to partner with more departments on campus to provide greater outreach to students. **Photo courtesy of UWG Peer Education**



Provost Committed to Enriching Students’ Lives

By Brittany Shivers
Editor-in-Chief

“Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile.”
-Albert Einstein

UWG’s new provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, Dr. Jon Preston, started in his position on Dec. 1, 2020 and is committed to serving both UWG students and the Carrollton community. As a resident of Carroll County for over 20 years, Preston has enjoyed the cultural community of the West Georgia region and has seen firsthand how UWG greatly contributes to the area. “I believe that higher education is a great way to serve others and really increase and improve the lives of the community,” said Preston. UWG is currently implementing its new strategic plan called “Becoming UWG,” which is focused on making UWG a first-choice university that provides an enriching experience for students. Preston plays a large role in this plan as it focuses on improving the student experience, which is one of his main goals as acting provost. “What I’m looking forward to in serving as provost is being as impactful as I can to help more students be more successful,” said Preston. Preston has held positions at other University System of Georgia (USG) institutions including Kennesaw State University, Clayton State University and Georgia Tech. In his previous role at KSU, he served as the dean of the College of Computing and Software Engineering and also served as Faculty Executive Assistant to the President and Department Chair in Computing. “West Georgia is not an institution in isolation,” said Preston. “I can work with the other institutions across the state, and I have great colleagues and can bring some of the innovations from those colleagues to the University of West Georgia.” One challenge for Preston in his role is the decline of face-to-face conversations with students and faculty because of COVID-19. The pandemic has caused many social interactions, both personal and professional, to shift online.

“We’re all missing out on that face-to-face interaction,” said Preston. “That in-person experience is fantastic. “My heart goes out to folks that are suffering through this time,” continued Preston. “The toughest challenge we have is maintaining that balance of safety as well as that enriched campus experience that students are looking for.” Despite this challenge, Preston has been able to speak with some students and faculty via online platforms to gain an understanding of what UWG needs most. Some educational and experiential improvements are already underway. With Affordable Learning Georgia Grants from USG, the university will be able to create online textbooks free to students. There are also new momentum initiatives that USG has for focusing on students’ success. The Momentum Center on campus provides convenient services for students all in one building such as Career Services, Center for Student Success, the registrar and more. These are just a few improvements that are happening under the direction of USG and Preston. “Removing barriers and improving access is core to what I am trying to do here as provost,” said Preston. All of this ties back to Preston’s belief that serving others is what humans were put on earth for. His favorite quote from Einstein embodies the idea that a life serving others is a life worth living. “We are here to serve each other, and the best thing we can do in life is to put others first and to consider them as really important,” said Preston. **Photo courtesy of University of Communications and Marketing**



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NEWS

Serve, Set and Return to the Season

By Abigail Cummings

Contributing Writer

College life changed drastically in March of 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, but most students hoped life would return to normal come the fall semester. College athletes have had some of the hardest times because their seasons have either been restricted or non-existent to comply with COVID-19 guidelines. Senior year was certainly different for volleyball player Hannah Flack, but she is getting another chance to play this spring and looking forward to the season.

Hannah has played volleyball at the University of West Georgia for three seasons since the fall of 2018 as primarily a right-side hitter. Prior to playing for UWG, she played at Shorter University in Rome, Georgia and all throughout high school. Her decision to play at UWG was not difficult to say the least.

“I have always enjoyed playing sports and getting the opportunity to play in college has been a gift,” said Hannah. “I decided to play volleyball in college because I would get to continue playing volleyball while getting my college education paid for.”

What Hannah couldn’t anticipate was that her senior season would be delayed due to a pandemic. Because of this, the season was pushed back until this spring and has been shortened compared to the regular length of previous seasons. This shortening is to allow for some game time for the athletes instead of none at all. Though Hannah still misses how long the seasons were prior to the pandemic.

“It has been extremely strange [not playing],” said Hannah. “I have missed the comradery with my team and being able to release stress and exercise by playing volleyball every day.”

UWG has made it a top priority to take care of their athletes, implementing many new procedures. Athletes are now required to wear masks at all times, even when weightlifting. Also, there is mandatory surveillance testing and covid testing that occur three times a week for all volleyball players due to the rapidly approaching season. With the precau-

tions, Hannah feels her safety is of the greatest importance.

“I feel safe with the precautions in place to play volleyball,” said Hannah. “Our coaches and athletic training staff are very proactive and cautious involving COVID safety measures.”

The shortened season starts at the end of February and only has seven games on the books compared to the season before the pandemic which consisted of 33 games. Many other universities have chosen to opt out of the season entirely, so any season at all is something Hannah is glad for.

“I’m thankful that we are able to still play some semblance of a season this year,” said Hannah. “Having the season moved back a semester has allowed for more preparation and I’d rather have a reduced game schedule than no schedule at all.” Even with the shortened season, the team has been practicing in order to get the most out their time competing. With only seven games, Hannah wants to enjoy what she can since this will be her last season. Her hopes are that the team is successful and able to play the entirety of the season without anyone contracting COVID-19. “It is definitely going to be different from past seasons I have participated in, but I believe that it will be a successful and enjoyable season despite all the hurdles,” said Hannah.

Photo courtesy of Hannah Flack



Dr. Hazel Cole Committed to Excellence

By Abby Grizzard

Contributing Writer

Dr. Hazel J. Cole is an Associate Professor and Public Relations Concentration Head in the Department of Mass Communications at the University of West Georgia. Dr. Cole has had many achievements throughout her career in Public Relations both within the university and within her independent career.

She has co-developed the Public Relations curriculum as well as the experiential learning lab Bluestone at UWG. In addition to these accomplishments she has received various awards which include the Visionary Leadership Award for Curriculum Development, UWG Best of the West Values Recognition Award and was a nominee for the Outstanding Mentor Award.

Cole has been an active member in university academic activities. She is a prominent member of the Mass Communications department and holds positions within the department itself.

“I serve an administrative role as Public Relations Concentration Head, one of the top concentrations in the department,” said Cole. “In addition, I serve on various committees informing strategic planning and program development, accreditation, curriculum development, Media Day executive and planning committees, championing mentorship of students and junior faculty, executing strategy focusing on internal and external audiences and community engagement, as well as leading various initiatives through service to build a comprehensive brand.”

Cole has contributed greatly to the university through her communications courses, but has also had many opportunities of working and interacting within Public Relations.

“I’ve been blessed to have had more than one career and leadership opportunities,” said Cole. “My teaching experience is vast and includes a stint at an institution in Louisiana prior to joining UWG in 2012, as well as serving as adjunct professor at a couple institutions in Mississippi.

“In addition, the depth of my professional experience in the industry ranges from entrepreneurship to working in senior management at one of the largest PR and Advertising Agencies in the southeast,” continued Cole.

Cole is currently working on various projects to continue her professional growth and development. One of these current projects is her co-authored journal article titled “A Case Study of BBQ Becky-Themed Memes.”

“In 2018, Jenifer Schulte was captured on video after calling the police on a Black family for having a barbecue by a lake,” said Cole. “Within days after the video went viral, the incident developed into a meme and she became known as ‘BBQ

Becky,’ a series of photoshopped images of a woman in sunglasses calling the police on a group of Black people for anything ranging from having a cook-out, to playing golf, to living in the White House.

“Thus, this important study proposes to fill this void in the growing body of research on memes, and employs CRT to study the public conversations that emerged following the incident in the park,” continued Cole. “Specifically, through qualitative content analysis this study examines user-generated content such as memes and social media posts on Black Twitter and reflects how understandings of race were shared through the articulation of different memes during the 2018 incident. The most salient themes characterized the BBQ Becky incident as using narratives related to ‘the Black experience’ and ‘history repeats itself.’”

Cole, also acts as a mentor for students and is able to offer insight for students pursuing mass communications. She encourages students to begin their professional development as early as possible in order to become a successful, respected member of the communications community.

“Students must focus and imagine themselves in decision-making positions,” said Cole. “Then they should begin to build and cultivate relationships with professors and business leaders; gain experience through volunteering and internships; and sharpen soft and hard skills.

“In addition, students should develop a success plan by finding a mentor, working at a high level in and outside the classroom, engage in properly developing networks and develop the art of networking, be willing to step outside a comfort zone to learn something new or experience a new approach to problem solving,” continued Cole. “Finally, students should become business, media, and social media savvy, practice professionalism daily, in their appearance and in all forms of their written and spoken communication, as well as images posted online. There’s a lot of work involved, but it begins with respect for self and others.”

Cole’s contributions to mass communications and public relations have made great impacts on students and faculty at both the university and professional level. She has been granted many awards and academic achievements and will continue to do so as she pursues future endeavors.

Photo courtesy of Hazel Cole



ENTERTAINMENT

‘Malcolm and Marie’: An Exploration of Relationship Dynamics

By Abby Grizzard
Contributing Writer

Malcolm and Marie is a black and white romantic drama directed by Sam Levinson, starring Zendaya and John David Washington. This film in itself is revolutionary because it was the first film to be written, produced, filmed and released during the COVID-19 pandemic. The film was allowed a total of 12 people on set at a time and was shot in a 14-day time span. The two stars were responsible for their own make-up and hair and only filmed within and closely outside of the house the movie takes place in.

This film spotlights Malcolm, a filmmaker, and Marie, the actress who is Malcolm’s girlfriend. The movie takes place after the release of Malcolm’s new movie depicting the heart-wrenching story of a 20-year-old drug addict and the misery that comes along with addiction. Marie was also a 20-year-old addict when her and Malcolm’s relationship started, and the fact that the main character of the movie, Imani, was stolen from Marie’s identity becomes a central conflict in this film.

The movie features shots within the house of the couple arguing and continues to follow them as they begin a cycle of emotional exploration through the pain, beauty, desperation, reliance and toxicity that is their relationship. Zendaya and Washington breathe pure authenticity and devotion into their characters. The interactions between the two bring out deep-seated emotions of pure hatred and unadulterated love. The simplicity of the black and white color and minimal-

istic setting allow the richness of each character to seep through the script and onto the screen.

However, the capability and mastery of these two actors becomes completely lost in the exhausting and redundant dialogue that the writers provide. The pure talent of the actors creates an atmosphere of a cinematic masterpiece but in reality, once one has seen the first 20 minutes of the film, they have seen it all. The couples become stuck for the entirety of the movie in a destructive cycle of disagreement and then infatuation. Each argument unfolds personal, emotionally-packed verbal weapons that belittle and minimize the other. These arguments are then swiftly shifted to displays of their toxic love and sexual chemistry.

Besides these densely-packed personal stories of each character and the utter shock of their verbal exchanges, there is little to no other substance within the film. There is no real introduction, climax or resolution. This could be the appeal of the film to some—that the focus of the film was not about the plot but the characters themselves. But the manner in which this was done became quite boring and incited the feeling of wanting the film to be over. This film and its beautiful incorporations of wonderfully timed musical background and orchestral interjections leave the audience with just a taste of the density and history of such dynamic, emotional characters. Whether the lack of plot and dialogue is its downfall or success is entirely determined by each viewer, perhaps that’s the beauty hidden inside *Malcolm and Marie*.

Photo courtesy of Netflix



ENTERTAINMENT

“To All the Boys: Always and Forever”: The End of a Trilogy

By Samara Marshall

Contributing Writer

To All of The Boys: Always and Forever is a beautiful movie to wrap up the To All the Boys I've Loved Before trilogy. This movie provides the final chapter to the beloved relationship between Lara Jean Covey and Peter Kavinsky, as it presents the strengths and weaknesses of their relationship as they prepare for college.

To All the Boys is a movie trilogy that centers around the main characters Lara Jean and Peter Kavinsky who fall in love after Lara Jean's love letter to Peter is accidentally mailed to him. Their relationship goes through different trials and tribulations but they always come out strong.

Within the third movie, Peter and Lara Jean are in their senior year of high school and at this point have been in a relationship for a while now. They both have plans to go to school at Stanford University but Peter is accepted and Lara Jean is not. Lara Jean then evaluates how she can manage to keep her relationship with Peter while attending a different school.

The theme of high school lovers figuring out how they can maintain their relationship after high school has been used in many different rom-coms such as the High School Musical movies and The Kissing Booth movies. Many times the only outcome for this situation is the couple staying together or separating. While watching Peter and Lara Jean's relationship unfold, I was interested to see what they were going to do, but with only two possible solutions it isn't too exciting.

Lara Jean is accepted to UC Berkeley where she thinks she can continue to manage her relationship with Peter. However, during the senior trip

Photo courtesy of Netflix

to New York City Lara Jean starts to realize she might be better suited to go to New York University. After telling Peter her decision, it causes friction within their relationship because Peter does not understand why they can't go to Stanford together.

On the night of prom, Lara Jean feels quite lonely as she sees that her relationship with Peter could come to an end. Peter reassures her that they are closer than ever, but once Lara confirms that she is feeling rather insecure, in what seems like an avalanche of things waiting to happen, the couple then breaks up. Lara Jean and Peter have now gone from having an epic highschool love story to a tragic breakup in a matter of weeks over the small issue of whether or not they attend the same university.

The break up seems rather odd because they have broken up or stopped talking to each other a few times in the past two films and have gotten through the same struggles. After their breakup, Lara Jean directs her focus towards her father's wedding. At the end of the wedding Peter shows up and reveals how he did not want to hold Lara Jean back from achieving her dreams and that they can make their relationship work even from a long distance. The movie ends with each of them moving into their respected schools.

Even though this movie is the last in the trilogy and provided closure to many To All The Boys fans, it showed an example of how even the strongest of love are worth fighting for. To All The Boys: Always and Forever is a perfect end to an amazing movie series. It holds everything a classic rom-com lover needs—relationships, drama and a sweet ending. However, the last movie can never compare to the first, as we are introduced to the wonderful couple that captivated our attention for three long and amazing films.

