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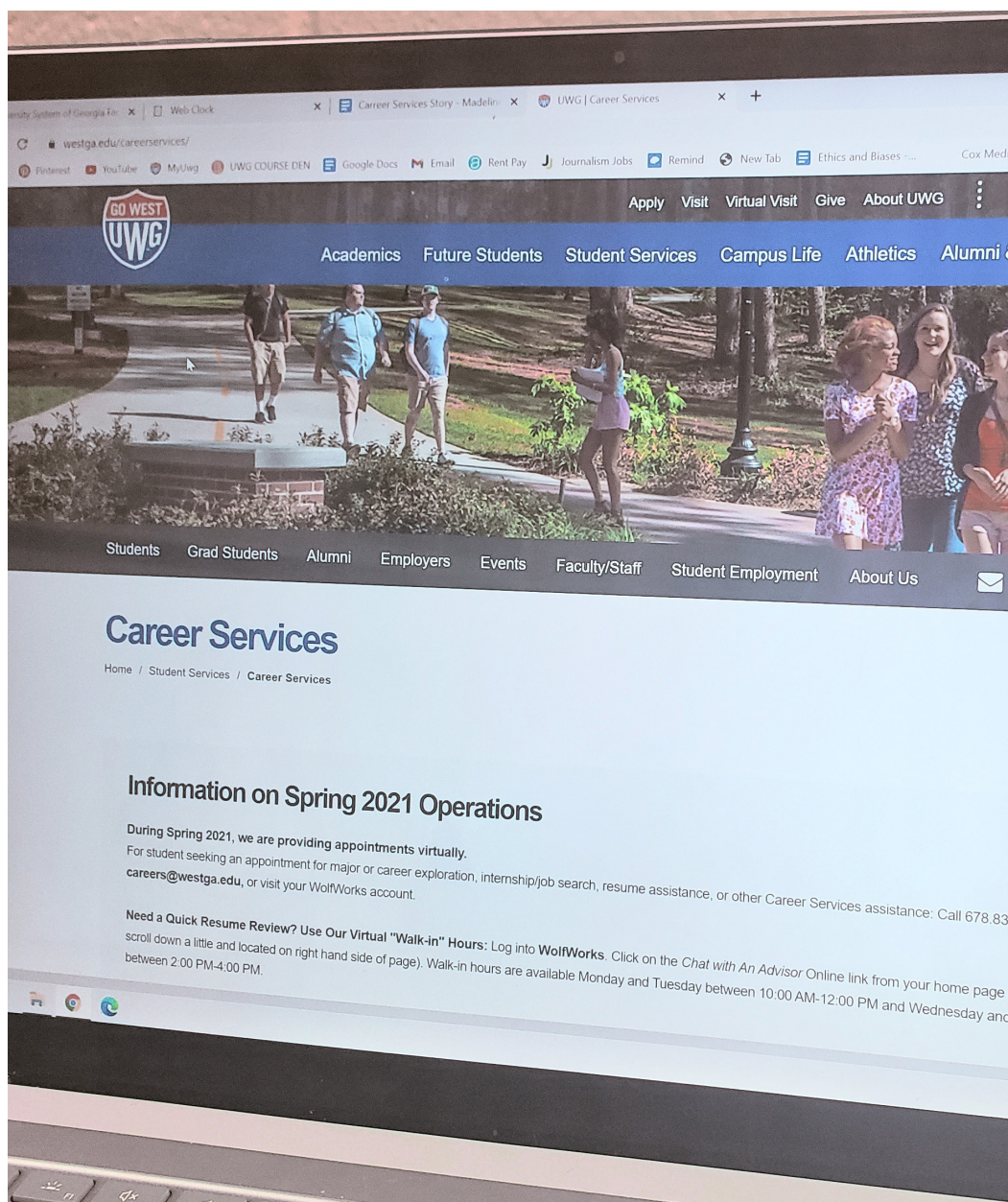


Photo: Madeline Wilbanks, *The West Georgian*

Career Services Give Students a Jumpstart

By Madeline Wilbanks

Copy Editor

Seniors graduating in spring of 2021 have a little less than three months before graduation hits on May 12. Many seniors, while taking classes, have focused on preparing themselves for the workforce by searching for jobs, preparing their resume, filling out applications and preparing their reference letters. UWG Career Services is one of the many useful tools that students at UWG can utilize to help prepare them for the workforce and obtain internships.

“At career services we help students all the way from their freshman year, where it is beginning to look at career major exploration,” said Assistant Director of Student Employment, Kara Clark. “So if they are not 100% sure what major they want to do, we help direct them into that exploration piece. Then going up through your sophomore, junior year really looking at internships—building that resume up so that when you get close to graduation you have that experience on your resume to help you find that career after graduation.”

One of the main focuses of Career Services is to encourage students to gain experience while they are in college, and allow for help and guidance when looking for opportunities to earn experience. This is especially important for students who are nearing graduation.

“It’s very important,” said Clark. “A lot of students think just because they get their degree that they’re set for their future. But actually, it’s what you do leading

up to graduation that is more important than what happens after. So that is building up that experience and knowing that you are indeed in the right major for what career you are wanting in the future.

“The biggest challenge is not having the experience for what employers are looking out for in the world,” continued Clark. “A lot of students think that since they are graduating with a management degree, that they are going to be able to go and be this automatic manager. Where they had zero experience in leadership or anything like that. We make sure that they are building up that experience prior to graduation.”

Although Career Services is provided at UWG to help them throughout their college career. Many students are unaware of just how beneficial it can be. Clark says that students who utilize their services have a higher rate of finding a job after graduation compared to those who do not.

“When you graduate we ask you to fill out what’s called a first destination survey,” said Clark. “That first destination survey is asking questions of ‘Do you have a job plan after graduation?, Do you have a job that you are going straight into after graduation? If you do, where is it? Is it full-time? What is your estimated salary that you will be making?.’ We actually see a pretty good high return rate of the students that use our services, and are able to fill that out. They are not just going blindly, searching for a job after graduation, a lot of them have secure jobs prior to graduation.”

Career Services also offers students the opportunity to be connected with employers for a chance at an internship. Career Services has connections within the community to allow students easy access to internships and skill building opportunities both on and off campus.

“We actually have what’s called an exponential learning specialist in our department,” said Clark. “Students can set up an appointment with them and they actually can walk you through different internship opportunities that we have available from our partners around the community. That department specialist sees about four or five appointments a day regarding internship searches.

“Even if your program does not require an internship, taking that step out and getting that internship is important,” continued Clark. “It’s getting involved in clubs and organizations on campus. If you are holding a leadership position in an organization that is showing leadership skills. It’s getting those soft and transferable skills that you can only get when you get experience.”

Clark encourages students to still take advantage of career services even if they are about to graduate. Especially when it comes to gaining feedback on resumes, job searching and interview practice.

“Our career coach, Ian Houston is amazing,” said Clark. “So even if you feel like you’re a little behind the eight ball he can at least kinda help you get going in the right direction. It’s always better late than never.”

NEWS

Becoming UWG: A Five-Year Plan For Future Success

By Taylor Jackson
News Editor

UWG has now started the strategic plan of “Becoming UWG” led by President Brendan Kelly in hopes of transforming the institution into a first-choice university. It is a five-year plan consisting of three types of priorities that will help strengthen the core value of the school, which are relevance, competitiveness and placemaking.

UWG had a wide variety of leaders go out, engage with people and host over a hundred different discovery sessions based around what the school needs to become in order to best serve its students. In accordance with a study led by Gallup and Perdue, many college graduates can affirm to the fact their school did not help them on both a personal and educational level.

According to the new plan on the UWG website, the primary goal of the university is making sure to “offer high quality education, student development and continuing education; to conduct research and creative activities and to provide services that enhance the intellectual, cultural, environmental and economic development of the metropolitan region.”

As a result of the study conducted by the UWG community, updates to existing programs will be taking place. These updates are aimed specifically to engage the 21st century stu-

dents as they will become the future of UWG. “I have been involved in this type of process with strategic plans in multiple organizations, but never has it been executed as well as what I believe we have accomplished at West Georgia,” said Kelly.

Over the past few semesters UWG has lacked the feeling of connectedness and belonging since times have felt uncertain and unsafe with COVID-19. Therefore, Kelly along with other team members have been working hard to restore a unified front for the students at this school.

“It is important to make sure to provide our students with first class opportunities,” said Kelly. “We lost community since students have been locked away in their dorms.”

Support is one of the biggest factors when it comes to building the foundation of a successful college experience and future career. It benefits in many ways such as to help reduce stress and outline strengths and weaknesses. A Gallup and Perdue study has shown the importance of support.

“Gallup and Perdue University may have done the most intensive research,” said Kelly. “Almost all of 30,000 college graduates arrived at the same conclusion that support, and experience were everything.”

UWG will be implementing all of this information in its plan to become a first-choice university within the next five years.

An Inside Look: Sorority Recruitment During a Pandemic

By Madison Creech
Contributing Writer

The Panhellenic Council at UWG is allowing sorority chapters to hold in-person events when it comes to Spring Recruitment. Despite COVID-19 challenges, chapters are still getting a chance to have events for potential new members during the spring semester.

The Panhellenic Council and UWG have been hard at work to come up with ways that allow their student organizations to plan events, while still following COVID-19 guidelines that ensure students safety. The Panhellenic Council is an umbrella organization of different women’s fraternities throughout the United States and Canada. Each group is a social, philanthropic, greek-letter society of college women and alumni.

“As far as COVID-19 goes, mainly we’re focusing on what the university’s guidelines are which directly come from the state,” said the Panhellenic Council President, Halee Hembree. “We’re working hard to make sure that we are complying with those guidelines, as well as giving all the sororities and potential students wanting to join the chapters the best experience possible.”

Each sorority is required to wear masks when around each other and potential members that could join their chapter. Also, every person involved with spring recruitment is encouraged to socially distance themselves from one another. One of the main concerns of many po-

tential members and members of the Panhellenic community is allowing Bid Day to be in person. Bid Day is the day where potential members are formally invited to join certain chapters. The Panhellenic Council has encouraged chapters to offer a virtual Bid Day option for those who are not comfortable attending in-person. The in-person Bid Day however, is required to adhere to COVID-19 guidelines and precautions required by the Panhellenic Council and UWG. This allows chapter members of sororities at UWG, as well as the new members just invited to join the chapters on campus to have a Bid Day experience that is considered as normal as possible even during a pandemic.

“Even during such a weird time, you still get a sense of family, familiarity, and home by joining a sorority,” said the Vice President of Recruitment for the Panhellenic Council, Alyssa Pearce. “You still make those connections with the girls in your sorority by seeing a familiar face in a class and even hanging out with each other on your own time. Being in a sorority, regardless of if we’re in the middle of a pandemic or if we aren’t, I believe it is one of the best opportunities that colleges offer students to be a part of.”

The main concern for new students joining a sorority or participating in an organization is if they will be able to have a good experience and also be safe. UWG has prepared guidelines in order for students to be comfortable experiencing not only greek life but any other organization on campus.

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NEWS

UWG’s Momentum Center is in Motion

By Brittany Hall
Contributing Writer

The University System of Georgia (USG) established the Momentum Year and Momentum Approach as a suite of strategies designed to guide students in their career paths and achieve on-time degree completion. As a result, the Momentum Center was established to become a physical representation of the Momentum Approach at UWG. The Momentum Center is located in the same building as the old health center near the UCC. Therefore, it is easily accessible for students. If any student has a question regarding UWG, graduation, or any of the student services, they can stop by the Momentum Center for an answer.

“The Momentum Center is a one-stop location for any student questions,” said Associate Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Jennifer Jordan. “It is the resource on our campus to help students navigate our complex system, discover how their interests intersect with UWG majors, remain enrolled and reach graduation.”

Because UWG provides many different forms of services, confusion for students has been an issue in the past. The Momentum Center was designed to alleviate this stress and confusion.

“This is different from other one-stop shops at other institutions,” said Jordan. “The Momentum Center takes on the burden of the student issue or problem and links back to the student with possible answers and solutions rather than send the student to the different offices on campus. There are multiple offices in one building so the students do not have to go to several buildings on campus because many of the key departments have a representative in one convenient

building.”
The Momentum Center was not only built for students who are currently enrolled at UWG. It was also built to assist those who are interested in attending UWG as well. Anyone who is interested in attending UWG can call or visit the Momentum Center to get their questions answered about the school and campus life.

“There is a knowledgeable staff ready to provide individual attention to current and prospective students,” said Jordan. “Perspective students can work with the Momentum Center to answer questions about financial aid, housing and residence life, enrollment and connect to resources focused on life outside the classroom.”

UWG says it is elated to finally open the Momentum Center on campus and believes it will be an excellent service to the students. UWG cannot wait to watch the Momentum Center grow to help current and future students.

“Our fear is missing someone who we could have helped graduate,” continued Jordan. “The Momentum Center was designed so that it can grow, and change based on our students’ needs. We need all of our Pack to know about this helpful resource on campus.”

Photo: Brittany Hall, *The West Georgian*



Life on the Frontlines: A Look at a Graduate Clinician

By Abigail Cummings
Contributing Writer

The coronavirus pandemic has affected everyone in some way or another. One student has seen these obstacles firsthand while in graduate school. Mary Ellen Masters is a graduate student clinician at the Comprehensive Community Clinic at the UWG.

The clinic provides services for communication disorders, counseling, mathematics, literacy and special education. Mary Ellen specializes in Speech Language Pathology at the clinic where she works on articulation, expressive and receptive language. In working at the clinic, Mary Ellen has seen how the pandemic has altered its operations.

“Not only do we have to wear masks, we also have to wipe down every material that we use after each client and parents aren’t allowed past the waiting room,” said Mary Ellen. “As well as we can’t have any food items, like candy for rewards for the kids. We now offer teletherapy for the clients who don’t want to risk possible exposure.”

Teletherapy is the act of providing therapy services through technological means, such as video calling. Teletherapy was not used as much before the pandemic because it was easier for the clients to come in for evaluations and sessions. Now it has become common for many people that use the clinic as it offers an alternative to leaving their houses.

“Since the pandemic, teletherapy services are being offered more and that’s different to adjust to when you’re used to in person therapy sessions,” said Mary Ellen. “In un-

dergrad we didn’t learn much about teletherapy so it’s a new concept and an addition to learn, but it’s an opportunity too. It’s just harder to provide services over the internet because you can’t be hands-on, it’s all on the computer screen.”

The implementation of masks at the clinic has also made for another obstacle to overcome. When working in the speech field, important areas of care are being able to model how to say words and build a relationship with the clients. The implementation of masks has made this harder to achieve.

“Having to wear masks is extremely difficult,” said Mary Ellen. “We offer clear masks, but they aren’t as useful because they fog up and that defeats the purpose. Kids like to see facial expressions and a smile. To not be able to build the connection as quickly because of the masks makes it that much harder to do.”

The pandemic has affected all aspects of our lives and those that attend the clinic have had to adapt to the changes that have been made to ensure their safety. Many attendees of the clinic are children and these changes can be difficult and foreign for them.

“I think it’s been especially hard for the children that attend the clinic because they have had to adjust to the mask wearing and the protocols,” said Mary Ellen. “It feels different for them because they don’t quite understand what exactly is going on.”

Regardless of the pandemic, Mary Ellen says that it hasn’t changed her outlook on her chosen profession. She feels that this is just another opportunity to learn, grow and overcome. She believes that the work she does at the clinic is important and that it is worthwhile.

“I chose this field because I saw the positive impact that it had upon my family’s lives and, pandemic or not, I want to help others as much as I can,” said Mary Ellen.



Photo: Abigail Cummings, *The West Georgian*

NEWS

Timberwolf Axe Throwing Opens in Carrollton

By Brittany Shadix
Contributing Writer

Carrollton's newest recreational attraction Timberwolf Axe Throwing officially opened its doors to the public Monday, Feb. 1, despite the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Opening day welcomed individuals ages 10 and older to take the leisurely activity of dart throwing to the next level. During its one-hour time slots, customers attempted to hit the wooden bullseye with none other than an axe. Co-owner of Timberwolf Axe Throwing, Nathan Kistler, said business was rather slow the first few weekdays but was expected to pick up over the weekend with pre-booked reservations and walk-ins.

"We had probably 10 to 12 people come in each day," said Kistler. "The middle of the week is not a normal busy time, and we knew that. We have decent groups booked ahead of time for the upcoming weekends, so we're expected to be pretty busy as additional slots are booked."

Many would think introducing a new business to an area, let alone during a global pandemic, would yield plenty of obstacles to overcome. However, Kistler noted that it was easy to bring his favorite hobby to the college town even with additional COVID-19 safety regulations.

"In theory, it should have been a difficult process," said Kistler. "But honestly, it has been a pretty easy one. We're definitely doing everything we can to be careful and keep people socially distanced by keeping them in every other lane. We're not forcing customers to wear a mask though because that's their right to choose."

Each station is set up to accommodate up to six people per lane, and each group is expected to rotate out of the building after their hour of throwing. Customers

should also be aware that after each rotation the station's table along with all of the axes are sanitized. In addition to COVID-19 health precautions, the safety of those handling axes is of utmost importance to Timberwolf Axe Throwing. Before each session participants are given a demonstration of proper throwing and standing techniques, and a staff member watches the duration of the session.

Despite having just opened the owners are excited for new activities to be opened that allow customers to enjoy a different experience each time they visit. In addition to the wooden bullseye, more axe throwing games such as the tic-tac-toe are soon to be introduced.

"We are adding things every week," said Kistler. "We have drinks and snacks, and we're also working on putting in some arcade games in one part of the building for people to enjoy while they are waiting to throw."

Although many businesses continue to close because of the impact of COVID-19, Kistler and his wife Amber, alongside their business partners, are eager to bring a sense of normalcy back to the community with safe, family-friendly entertainment after a year of hardship.

"For my wife and I, we're Christians," said Kistler. "Before we started this thing, we asked God to open doors if this is what he wanted us to do and to close them if not. All through that, he just opened every single door and made the path really easy."

"We hope this business provides a place where people can come with their family," continued Kistler. "We wanted to bring something to the community that was very family-oriented. We wanted families and church groups to have a place where they can go on outings and grow together—a place where they can build great relationships and friendships."

Photo: Brittany Shadix, *The West Georgian*

