



Photo courtesy of Miranda Daniel/UCM

UWG to Host In-Person Commencement Ceremonies

By **Brittany Shadix**
Contributing Writer

UWG announced that it will have two in-person commencement ceremonies Saturday, May 15, at the University Stadium for spring graduates. Graduating seniors will have the opportunity to walk across the stage at the end of the spring semester and be recognized for their achievements through a traditional commencement ceremony. Although not the same as previous graduation ceremonies due to COVID-19, students can expect to receive much of the same experience as previous graduates. “The Commencement Planning Committee has made every effort to protect the excitement surrounding the commencement ceremony in a safe, responsible way given the circumstances,” said Elizabeth Smith, Director for Auxiliary Enterprises and Chair of the Commencement Planning Committee at UWG. “We received positive feedback following the fall commencement ceremonies that students enjoyed the event and did not feel it was significantly altered from previous ceremonies. “The current number of students who plan to participate in the spring ceremonies is lower than the number of students we hosted in December,” continued Smith. “At those ceremonies, we celebrated gradu-

ates from the spring, summer and fall 2020 semesters.” Following similar protocol as previous commencement events, students have been assigned a ceremony time based on their college. Graduates from the College of Arts, Culture and Scientific Inquiry, the Richards College of Business and the Tanner Health System School of Nursing will take their seats in the stadium field at 9 a.m. The second ceremony will begin promptly at 12:30 p.m. for graduates in the College of Education and the University College. Approximately 1,100 graduates plan to participate in the two ceremonies scheduled for the end of this semester. Because of COVID-19 concerns, hosting multiple ceremony times is even more important than before. “The University will follow the same health and safety precautions for the spring 2021 ceremonies as were followed for the fall 2020 ceremonies,” said Smith. “We have followed the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Georgia Department of Public Health and the University System of Georgia throughout our response to the COVID-19 pandemic including the planning of large events like commencement.” The University Stadium was determined to be the safest venue to host such an event considering the large number of guests expected to attend and the need for physical distancing. To ensure physical distancing is maintained throughout the duration of the ceremonies, attendees are expected to follow a number of protocols. “All students and guests will be required to wear face coverings and sit in predetermined, physically distanced seating,” said Smith. “Additionally, there will be no student processional, as they will be seated on the field upon their arrival. All graduates will be individually recognized, but there will not be a traditional handshake with the president.” In addition to the socially distanced seating for students on the field, guests will be seated in family groups throughout the stadium bleachers. Graduates are allowed to have up to four guests attend the in-person ceremony, and each guest will be required to have a ticket to enter the stadium. It is requested that students do not exchange tickets, so distance can be maintained between groups. Students will receive more information regarding ticket pick-up in April. For those who are unable to attend, the ceremonies will be live-streamed and available for viewing and download afterward. “The ceremonies will look different than their pre-2020 predecessors, but students will still be able to celebrate their accomplishments in a safe, responsible way,” said Smith.

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House Passes \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 Relief Package

While the bill was passed in the House of Representatives, there was not bipartisan support of the bill within the House. There was minimal Democratic opposition, however, the bill was largely opposed by Republican House members. “The House was divided mostly along party lines on the bill. It passed without any republican votes,” said Kassis. “Some of the arguments against the bill include that the stimulus is poorly targeted, that a lot of the spending in the bill is not really COVID-19 relief, that the size of the bill is too big given the decline in COVID-19 cases and the current vaccination rate, that it will in-

Health Education hosts UWG'S 2021 Healthy & Safe Spring Break Week

Health Education brought excitement back to UWG's campus by hosting the 2021 Healthy and Safe Spring Break Week. Every year UWG has a Healthy and Safe Spring Break Week to give students tips on how to stay safe during their time away from campus.

"We plan to target specific healthy behaviors that will be prevalent during spring break," said Health Education Graduate Assistant, Jacquelyn Stubenraugh. "We collaborate with the Office of Community Standards to ensure we are giving the students all the information they need to stay safe and responsible during spring break."


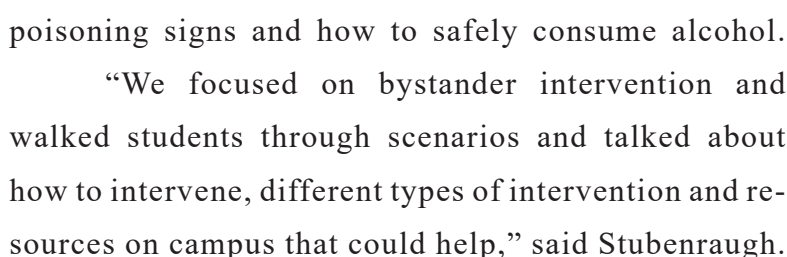
For the first four days of March, Health Education and the Office of Community Standards hosted different events that promote health and safety. On Monday, March 1, Health Education and OSC hosted a social media campaign called Caught Red Handed. The purpose of this event was to recognize the students they saw practicing and following healthy behavior.

“Our peer educators went around campus with a big red foam hand and found students who were engaging in healthy behaviors for the social media campaign,” said Stubenraugh. “We posted each student to shout them out for following through on healthy behavior.”

On Tuesday, March 2, Health Education and OSC set up a table in the Campus Center Lobby that focused on alcohol awareness. The purpose of the event was to show students what constitutes a drink, alcohol

“The most immediate impact for Americans will be that most individuals will receive a \$1,400 stimulus check,” said Kassis. “People who are receiving unemployment will continue to receive enhanced benefits through the summer, although the amount of the additional benefits is yet to be determined. The House bill called for the extra benefits to increase from the current \$300 to \$400 but the version passed by the Senate calls for the benefit to remain at \$300.”

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Americans have received several financial aid packages and financial support from the government. As the timeline of the pandemic continues, this support will begin to waver as the United States increases vaccinations and cases continue to dwindle. “This is the third stimulus bill in the past year. Given the decline in COVID-19 cases and the plan to make vaccines available to all Americans by summer, it does not seem likely that a fourth COVID-19 relief bill will be needed,” said Kassiss. Photo courtesy of Associated Press

A photograph of Joe Biden, President of the United States, sitting at a desk and speaking. He is wearing a dark blue suit, a white shirt, and a striped tie. He has his hands clasped in front of him. The background is slightly blurred, showing an American flag and other office decor.

Health Education and OSC had a table in the TLC lobby about spring break safety on Wednesday, March 3. It focused on COVID-19's practices, sun safety and alcohol awareness.

“OSC discussed the student code of conduct and how that may affect you even if you are not on campus,” said Stubenraugh. “They will also be talking about safety precautions students can take while on spring break.”

Image courtesy of Health Education and Office of Community Standards



NEWS

3:16 Family Medicine Serving Carroll County

By Madeline Wilbanks
News Editor

Proper healthcare is hard to find while living on a low budget. Without the ability to access insurance through their jobs, many low-income individuals are left to pay for doctor, dentist, or eye appointments completely out of pocket. Cost for both the appointment and treatment needed after visiting a doctor can become a burden for many families. 3:16 Family Medicine is eager to combat this challenge by providing a free community health clinic for Carroll County residents.

“We have been offering a free community health clinic every quarter since we opened our doors in September of 2017,” said Family Physician and Owner of 3:16 Family Medicine and Spa 3:16, Allison Key.

The mission of the clinic is to provide a payment free option for members of the community who need to access a doctor. The goal is to eliminate the barrier of money or cost and allow for the Carroll County community access to free healthcare.

“Our mission is to love others and serve our community,” said Key. “We want to meet people right where they are. Everyone deserves access to health care and as primary care providers, we believe in the power of prevention and early diagnosis. Our goal is to offer just another opportunity for people without insurance or access to care to not only be seen and treated for free by one of our providers, but to get information about resources in our community to help long term.

“The visit is free as well as any necessary lab work,” continued Key. “We do offer minor procedures and in house testing for free as well as medications from our small in-house dispensary. We have several patients who come each quarter for follow up, and it is always free.”

Alongside opening their services to the Carroll County community, 3:16 Family Medicine also tries their best to reach out to the homeless community in the area. Working alongside Be the Light Medical Missions, Key says they provide needed services for homeless individuals such as transportation to and from the clinic.

“We do reach out and try to make sure that all centers, church-

es and other places of access for the homeless know that we offer these services, and we hope to continue to expand on those as well,” said Key. “We have a non-profit arm called Be the Light Medical Missions.”

“One of our primary goals there is to offer a medical transport van so that people who need to see a doctor or make it to an appointment but do not have transportation can get a ride for free,” continued Key. “We want all people to have access to the care they need.”

Even with the transportation services provided, there are still certain challenges that 3:16 Family Medicine is hoping to overcome. One of these main challenges is getting back in touch with their patients once they have attended the clinic, especially individuals who attend the clinic without having a primary residence.

“One of the biggest challenges we face is follow up after the visit or even getting to and from the visit for some of our patients,” said Key. “Sometimes we have difficulty getting back in touch with a patient about their results because their living situation or contact information may be transient. Most people do not realize the large homeless population we have in our community and the degree of poverty that many in our backdoors are living in daily.”

Although there are still improvements to be made regarding the service. Key says she is very grateful to see how much it has been used for the betterment of the community. Key is especially grateful for her staff that take time out of their day to help provide the clinic.

“We offer these clinics in the evening hours, so I am very grateful to my staff and our providers for volunteering their time to work these extra-long days serving others,” said Key. “It is sometimes hard to arrange childcare or take care of our own situations, but these ladies go the extra mile to help others every day and for that, I am so grateful. Their hearts are just gold.

“We hope that these events offer hope and help to those who need it,” continued Key. “It is our blessing to be able to use our time and talents to reach out to our community and serve. Hopefully, it is making our community a healthier and happier place.”

ENTERTAINMENT

Raya and the Last Dragon: Adventures and Friendship

By Madison Creech

Contributing Writer

Disney Animation Studios, *Raya and the Last Dragon* is a beautifully made movie from the animation, to the music and finally to the storyline. *Raya and the Last Dragon* was released on March 5 in select theatres and on Disney+ with Premier Access.

A photo-like quality picture captivates the viewer with vivid lighting and color. Soon the viewer is engulfed into the mythical and magical land of Kumandra. Long ago humans and dragons lived in harmony in this magical land. Dragons provided the people with different aspects of the earth. For example, there were water dragons, rain dragons and light dragons.

Then, monsters threatened their land. These monsters known as the Drunn, turned dragons and humans alike into stone. The final five dragons, all brothers and sisters, sacrificed themselves for humanity. As a result, the Dragon Orb is created and soon Kumandra is split into different tribes named after different parts of the dragon—Heart, Fang, Spine, Talon and Tail.

500 years later, Raya is the princess of the Heart Tribe, complete with her own mascot, Tuk-Tuk. Raya is also a warrior, who was trained by her father. The Heart Tribe protects the orb at all costs from the other tribes. Every tribe is greedy and wants the orb to themselves. Raya ends up revealing the location of the orb to someone who was not to be trusted. Ultimately, the orb breaks and gets separated into each tribe. This causes

the Drunns to return. It is now up to Raya to defeat the drunns. To do this, she has to find the last dragon known to still exist, Sisu who is a water dragon. And once Raya locates Sisu, she must find all orb pieces to restore peace to the tribe's lands.

I was anticipating an action packed and mythical movie. The film definitely lived up to that expectation. Raya is an amazing character with many layers. There is something wonderfully universal about her as a character as well as her journey where she meets many new friends along the way. Raya becomes a character that any viewer can relate to regardless of age, background and ethnicity.

There was not a lot that I disliked about this film. It does seem a bit too dark for children under seven or so, but the action and mythical aspect of the film brings in the audience and keeps their attention the entire time. Disney always does well on their animation and live action films, so it is clear that it had a high production value.

Raya and the Last Dragon also works well because of the world rebuilding theme it has throughout the film. The message this movie delivers is trust and cooperation between one another, no matter how different. Which is beautifully portrayed to resonate with the world as it is today.

The ending allows the audience to ask questions, which leads many people to think that a sequel could happen. It is still too soon to say, but I am already eager to see more adventures between Raya, her loyal friend Sisu and all the friends they met along their journey.

Photo courtesy of Disney+



ENTERTAINMENT

‘I Care A Lot’ Delivers A New Villain You Love to Hate

By Abigail Cummings
Contributing Writer

Netflix is no stranger when it comes to hit movies and television shows. This past week, the streaming service released its new movie *I Care A Lot*. The comedy/thriller provides a commentary on the elderly population in the United States and shows what happens when one woman takes advantage of the wrong grandma.

I Care A Lot follows the actions of legal guardian Marla, played by Golden Globe winner Rosamund Pike, whose entire career revolves around scamming the elderly out of their money. She creates a scheme in which she convinces the doctors of the elderly patients, that their patients are incapable of taking care of themselves and therefore need a legal guardian. From there, she sells the elderly people’s assets, homes and material things, all while placing them in an assisted living home. All is going well for Marla until she decides to tackle an old lady named Jennifer, played by Dianne West. Little does Marla know, but Jennifer has a very powerful son, Roman played by Peter Dinklage, who is involved in the Russian Mafia. From here is when Marla’s luck turns south.

At first, the viewer believes Marla to be the ultimate villain, but that changes to Roman halfway through the film. Then the villainy shifts yet again back to Marla. Marla and Roman play characters that the audience loves to hate because they hold on to the hope that they are going to get their just desserts. By the end of the film just that happens, but not in the way one would expect. Photo courtesy of Seacia Pavao for Netflix

I started to align myself with the “bad guys” over the course of the film simply because of what Marla is doing to the elderly. I ended up wanting the villains to win in the end because the main character took advantage of too many senior citizens and justice needs to be served. As the viewer, I then had to decide to align myself with the lesser of two evils, the lesser in this instance being a Russian mob boss who wants his mom back at whatever the cost.

Another part of this film that allows for its success is the mystery and thriller element in it combined with the comedy. There are many twists and turns that *I Care A Lot* takes in order to develop the film. Because of this, the audience is constantly asking themselves what is going to happen next, that paired with witty one-liners, allows for an edge of seat experience. Rosamund Pike delivers the perfect villainess role while still managing to maintain the aspect of comedy in her lines.

So often in the film, one finds themselves wanting to turn it off because the actions of the characters are remarkably frustrating. But because of the mystery element and the performances of the cast the audience find themselves holding on just a little longer in order to see what will happen. The writing in the film leaves the viewers infuriated and mystified at the same time.

At the end of the day, *I Care A Lot* is yet another hit credited to Netflix. The success of this film can be mainly attributed to the mystery it holds and the portrayal of the villains. This film may not be one to watch all together with the family, but it would certainly make for some interesting conversation.

