

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THIS YEAR'S 40TH ANNUAL MEDIA DAY

BRITTANY MERSFELDER
News Editor

School of Communication, Film and Media students are getting in gear for the 40th Annual Media Day held on March 8 and 9. This year's in-person event will host panelists, workshops, awards and networking with communication professionals.

"This is the first year that we have broken it into two days," said Professor Kelly Williams. "Media has become this event where we try to do a lot of things for a lot of different purposes. We broke it into different days to align goals in different ways."

Williams is a professor who specializes in Public Relations. She has been an integral part in planning Media Day for the past several years.

The first day of the event on March 8 will feature a series of panelists, several who are UWG alumni.

Panelists will discuss the current state of their industries, describe their career paths, and offer insightful tips for students entering those fields. Students will have a chance to ask the panelists questions. Panelists represent

careers from broadcast media, public relations, journalism, film and video production and social media.

"The first day is going to [have] a focus on listening and engaging with the panelists," said Williams.

After the panelists and the student showcase will be the opportunity for students to get involved with different organizations on campus in the form of a mini-coaching session. Organizations such as PRSSA, The West Georgian and Wolf Radio.

After the mini-coaching session there will be a luncheon held for students that register for it. Students always look forward to free food when the chance arises, making this the ultimate deal to attend Media Day. While enjoying the meal, students are encouraged to sit with the panelists that will be presenting that day.

"We have the luncheon which has been tradition, where we honor students and alumni," said Williams. "It's important to attend the luncheon because you never know who you are going to end up sitting next to. You never know what opportunity they might have for you or what opportunities you may have for them."

The second event on March 9 allows students to

WHAT'S INSIDE

NEWS

Professor of Management Information Systems Wins the 2022 Felton Jenkins Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award

By Trevor Gonzales, pg. 2

Georgia Looks to Introduce Updated Cannabis Laws

By Alanna King, pg. 3

LIVING WEST

What to Expect at this Year's 40th Annual Media Day

By Brittany Mersfelder, pg. 1

UWG's Volunteer Ambassadors Hold Heart 2 Heart Canned Food Drive

By Taylor Blessett, pg. 4

Wolf Wellness Offers Free CPR Anytime Classes

By Jannette Emmerick, pg. 4

OPINION

Beginnings of War: Russia Sends Missiles into Ukraine

By Brittany Mersfelder, pg. 5

SPORTS

UWG Basketball: Who is Deng Nhial?

By Lemuel Mbuina, pg. 6

Photo Essay by Jannette Emmerick on pg. 7

network with the various employers and companies and allows students and graduate students to present their work in a Student Showcase. This is the first time the department has held this event in hopes to help students promote their own work. This ranges from video production to crisis communications plans that were written for a class.

"Several folks will come looking for interns," said Williams. "We have a lot of alumni who like to come back and give in the form of internships and advice. Jacob Hawkins [UWG Alumnus] is working at Georgia Power in their communications department. He is talking about revamping his internship program. He wants to come back and be a part of it because he may be looking for interns to build up that program he's revamping."

"We are all about growing and expanding," said Williams. "The school has gone from a department to a school; our event is expanding even more to accommodate different needs of our different students."

NEWS



PROFESSOR OF
MANAGEMENT
INFORMATION
SYSTEMS WINS THE
2022 FELTON JENKINS
JR. HALL OF FAME
FACULTY AWARD
TREVOR GONZALES
Contributing Writer

Dr. Jeannie Pridmore, a Professor of Management Information Systems (MIS) in the Richards College of Business, was honored with the 2022 Felton Jenkins Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award presented by the University System of Georgia.

Dr. Pridmore was recognized with the award due to her hard work with MIS and the study abroad program between the University System of Georgia and the University of Münster in Germany. This program compiles students from UWG as well as other schools in the USG system.

“It is a huge honor, especially given how the past couple of years have been and it was something that was a bit unexpected,” said Dr. Pridmore. “I know there are a lot of good professors in the state and a lot of competition.”

In this program, students will typically work with one another virtually before traveling to Germany and working with the European Research Center of Information Systems. There, they continue to work on MIS projects and present it to a German company or organization. However, they have not been able to travel to Germany since 2019 because of COVID-19. With traveling out the window, Pridmore created a virtual program for both the USG and German students.

“In MIS, there is a very hands-on process called ‘design thinking.’ It is a user-centered design where you give a problem and students are supposed to be broad about the problem,” said Prid-

more. “Students will brainstorm with sticky notes then organize the sticky notes. After that, you create a plan to attack the problem and move forward.”

Many experts that Pridmore spoke to said she would not be able to do the design thinking virtually with students because there is a process to it.

“We used VR headsets and a program called ‘Spacial.’ This program allowed students to collaborate by creating a 3D avatar of themselves that moves with them and speaks with them,” said Dr. Pridmore.

Students were able to work with the headsets as well as hold breakout sessions using both Zoom and Mural.

Dr. Pridmore’s classes focus on many concentrations such as enterprise data, analytics and IOT Networking and Cybersecurity. She initially graduated from Auburn University with a degree in chemical engineering. After taking some control engineering courses, she decided she wanted to get her Masters Degree, which she received from Troy University.

“I just fell in love with data, problems, and being able to solve problems. I love math, science, and physics,” said Pridmore.

Her passion and hard work put her back at Auburn, where she received her PhD in IT and Innovation. Her dissertation was on situational awareness and interface design. After receiving her PhD, she moved to Maryland to teach at Loyola University for four years.

When she arrived at UWG,

Photo: Trevor Gonzales, *The West Georgian*

the school joined the S&P software enterprise program and with her background, she was able to help the school and students get the program up and running. Once she had the S&P program figured out, the school then joined the Cisco Network Academy which revolves around cybersecurity, cyber-ops and networking

“Students have an opportunity for jobs and a ton of hands-on experience with real-world systems. Seeing students get excited about where they want to go is very rewarding and beneficial,” says Pridmore.

The new MIS lab in the Richards of College of Business is the first one in the state of Georgia as well as the seventeenth lab of its kind in the nation. The lab has new routers, switches and other IT/IoT devices with cutting-edge technology and will be open in the coming months.

“It was the first thing I’ve worked with that is 100% collaborative,” said Dr. Pridmore. “Students learned how to collaborate virtually and that goes a long way. It was a very steep learning curve trying to figure out what to use, how to use it, and how to make it work. For the first few months, I did not sleep much.”

“It really worked out well,” continued Dr. Pridmore. We figured out things to do virtually that we didn’t think we could at first. I have some really great colleagues and we worked together really well to make it work. Winning the award after all the work I had to do means a lot.”

THE
WESTGEORGIAN

EST. 1934

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NEWS



GEORGIA LOOKS TO INTRODUCE UPDATED CANNABIS LAWS

ALANNA KING
Contributing Writer

Photo Courtesy of Associated Press
“Federal banking laws

States across the U.S. are moving towards legalizing cannabis leaving many Georgians wondering where state laws currently stand regarding the controversial plant. While 38 states have either legalized or decriminalized cannabis, Georgia still holds some of the harshest cannabis laws in the nation. As of 2022, it is illegal to grow, possess or distribute cannabis in Georgia. Possessing an ounce or less of the plant is considered a misdemeanor charge and can be subject up to one year in prison and a maximum of a \$1,000 fine. Georgia law states that any other amount of possession or action concerning cannabis, such distribution or cultivation, is considered a felony

“With the Republican legislature right now, it would be pretty hard to get anything more than medical marijuana passed in Georgia,” said Dr. Thomas Hunter, a professor teaching law at the University of West Georgia.

However, recent legislative movements in Georgia look promising for future legalization. Major cities such as Atlanta and Savannah have decriminalized cannabis, meaning that one

cannot go to jail for possession of under an ounce of the drug.

In 2019, Georgia passed the Georgia Hope act which allows patients with severe health conditions to possess low-THC medical cannabis oils within Georgia. Legislation is still pending on the distribution of this substance, according to the Marijuana Policy Project. The state also allows the sale and possession of CBD products, which contain many health benefits of cannabis without the intoxication that THC brings.

The issue of cannabis use in the U.S. is made more complicated by federal laws which still prohibit cannabis use. Even in states where cannabis is legal, the stiff federal law affects how cannabis is distributed.

“If something is entirely legal in a state, yet the federal government makes it illegal, the feds could still prosecute you for that,” said Dr. Hunter. “Because of pressure put on by their constituents, a number of bills were introduced in congress especially in the 80’s with Nancy Reagan’s “Just Say No Campaign” to pass federal drug laws even though they are duplicative of state laws.

have made it difficult for owners of dispensaries to do business because they are federally insured,” continued Dr. Hunter. “So, a lot of dispensaries have difficulty getting accounts in banks and there’s various problems about the money that they had—what they could do with it, whether they could have a bank account, whether they could deposit it...and problems with crime, because you have this massive hoard of actual cash.”

When states do decide to legalize cannabis, lawmakers are faced with many questions.

“You have this big debate in states about what to allow,” said Dr. Hunter. “[For] states that haven’t made it completely legal, do you do it for medical purposes? What does that mean? And do you go further than that and allow it...how do you allow it? Is it the state itself selling it? So, do you tax it? Is it going to be akin to alcohol or something else?”

Georgia state legislation is set to reconvene sometime in 2022 regarding three bills that will take steps toward the legalization of cannabis, according to the Marijuana Policy Project.

LIVING WEST

UWG'S VOLUNTEER AMBASSADORS HOLD HEART 2 HEART CANNED FOOD DRIVE

TAYLOR BLESSETT

Contributing Writer

Volunteer Ambassadors at the University of West Georgia are collecting canned foods for the Heart 2 Heart Canned Food Drive from Valentine’s Day until Feb. 23 for the Immersion Trip to Selma on February 25.

Coordinator of Student Leadership and Volunteer Programs, Khalis Thomas, decided with UWG Volunteer Ambassadors to form and host the Heart 2 Heart Canned Food Drive as an ongoing event that would allow students, faculty and staff to contribute by bringing two canned goods to enter for the trip.

“Right before I officially started working in the office, I asked the Volunteer Ambassadors for ideas that they would like to do once I become advisor,” says Thomas. “Canned food drives were an idea and from

there, we all collectively came up with the idea to host a befriending speed event before Valentine’s Day.”

Guests that can bring at least two canned goods would be allowed to participate in the Immersion Trip. The Immersion Trip is a trip to Selma, Ala. where the canned food that is donated goes to the Selma Area Food Bank but instead, Thomas and the Volunteer Ambassadors will donate the canned food to the UWG Food Pantry due to the Selma Area Food Bank being closed.

“The Immersion Trip to Selma is a trip for students to visit and learn more about the historical significance of Selma, Alabama on Civil Rights and Black history while getting to experience various landmarks and museums,” says Thomas. “The Center for Student Involvement and Inclusion has been hosting events for Black History month such as Step Afrika and The Immersion Trip to Selma, Alabama to teach students about the history and culture of the African diaspora.”

The Heart 2 Heart food drive

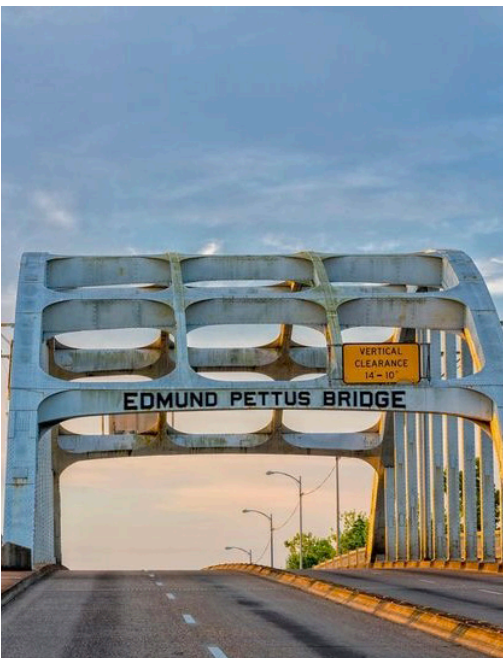


Photo Courtesy of UWG CSI

serves as a great way to allow students and the community to give back while also allowing others to understand and learn the importance of the trip and what experience traveling to Selma will give them.

“All donations will be given to the UWG Food Pantry to assist any students who may experience food insecurity”, says Thomas. “The University’s food pantry is facilitated by a student organization, S.H.I.F.T. (Students Helping to Influence, Fulfill and Transform).”

WOLF WELLNESS OFFERS FREE CPR ANYTIME CLASSES

JANNETTE EMMERICK

Feature Editor

UWG offers a free non-certification cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) class every month. UWG’s Wolf Wellness Center recently held a CPR Anytime class on Feb. 18 and plans to open the class every month to students and community.

Wolf Wellness provides CPR and emergency education to give the community knowledge and tools necessary for crisis situations. CPR Anytime is a free initiative sponsored and supported by the American Heart Association.

“I think people should be taking the time to learn very simple things to do,” says Bridgette Stewart, UWG’s Chief Wellness Officer and the Director of the Center for Integrative Wellness. “But things that truly do save people’s lives before paramedics arrive.”

CPR Anytime is a 40

minute class that teaches or refreshes the basics surrounding CPR, the automated external defibrillator (AED) and the Heimlich.

“We offer CPR classes for Departments on campus that may want to have everyone trained, we can schedule churches in the community, any entity that wants a course,” says Stewart.

CPR Anytime classes are open to any individuals including students, professors and anyone in the community. Wolf Wellness simply wants to provide resources and education as best as they can to aid the general public.

While the classes will be available every month, anyone can schedule a group lesson at their own convenience in line with Wolf Wellness’ facilities and instructor availability.

“If [students] are interested in having a CPR Anytime scheduled for your specific fraternity, sorority, organization and staff,” says Stewart.

Stewart recommends that anyone wishing to

take the class schedules a group session from anywhere between four to ten people to ensure the maximization of the instructor’s time and the effectiveness of the outreach.

UWG also offers certification courses for CPR and First Aid that require payments but if some are unable to take those classes, a basic course like CPR Anytime is recommended.

Students are also given the chance to teach and accumulate field experience for their given majors, where undergraduates are given the opportunity to lead the CPR Anytime classes.

Wolf Wellness offers many resources and outreaches to serve the community from CPR classes to wellness advice for exercise routines or other avenues within sports management.

“[Learning CPR] is invaluable, because ‘you’ (the lay responder) are responsible for over half of the survival of an individual,” says Stewart. “We’re trying to encourage proactivity versus reactivity.”

OPINION



BEGINNINGS OF WAR: RUSSIA SENDS MISSILES INTO UKRAINE

BRITTANY MERSFELDER
News Editor

Photo Courtesy of Associated Press

As of Feb. 24, war has begun between Russia and Ukraine as Russia launched missiles and the military pushed forth into the state. Russia had over 100,000 troops to the border initially, inciting panic across Ukraine.

The Russian military began placing troops at the border in 2021 as well with small droves of military headed to the border of Ukraine. This crisis between these two began in 2014 when Russia invaded Ukraine and seized its territory.

Ukraine began training their military in early January, while women and children were fleeing the country just days before the invasion. Those who have chosen to stay believe that Russia was using scare tactics for Ukraine to give up parts of their country.

Western Europe has asked for their citizens visiting Ukraine to leave the country. The United States has sent troops overseas to Germany, Romania and Poland. The latter two share borders with Ukraine, as Vladimir Putin, Russia's President, began his invasion on Feb. 24.

Some are asking why Russia wants to invade Ukraine and what benefits would they receive from this invasion. To be clear, the only benefit Russia would receive is getting land back that used to be theirs.

Ukraine was once part of Russia during the era of the Soviet Union. In 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed after the nuclear power plant incident in 1986 in Chernobyl. This left Ukraine to become its own country with its own culture and policies.

Putin claims that Ukraine belongs to Russia; to the Soviet Union that does not exist anymore. Putin does not want Ukraine to "fall victim" to the NATO and EU policies. Putin has also claimed that his actions are peaceful; after the attack began early this morning, it proved he was misleading the world.

Putin had a list of demands that would put an end to the standoff at the border. This list involves keeping Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia out of NATO, a defunct of the Warsaw Pact, Kyiv to relinquish its ownership of

Crimea, limit the number of missiles brought into western Europe and redesign Europe's security architecture, according to The Guardian.

Removing the number of missiles brought from the United States to Western Europe is a huge red flag; this means that, regardless of what Putin says, he may have bigger plans for the war. If Putin is threatened by having extra missiles nearby, it leads one to believe that he wants them gone so he can truly start World War III.

Most countries, including the United States, are not complying with his demands. This allowed the standoff to continue until the first attack.

With war ensuing, one can hope it will end faster than it began. Putin is the only one in this fight who wanted this war. Countries all around the world have access to nuclear weapons. That being said, they know how to use them. when to use them and will have strategies in place for them to be used. Should any nuclear weapons be deployed, mass casualties will ensue.

SPORTS



**UWG BASKETBALL:
WHO IS
DENG NHIAL?**
LEMUEL MBUINGA
Contributing Writer

Being a student athlete at UWG is not worth taking for granted; Deng Nhial, #2 on the UWG Men’s basketball team knows this. As a UWG graduate student looking to earn his masters in sports management, Nhial has embraced every moment since he stepped foot on campus.

Nhial came to West Georgia from Arlington, Virginia his freshman year. He played high school basketball at Wakefield High School and attended prep school at Cheshire Academy. Before committing to play for Coach Moore, Nhial knew that he wanted to be in an environment where he could be around good people and teammates.

“What I was looking for when making a college decision was just going to a school where

I could easily get along with the team, coaches and everybody else outside of that,” said Nhial.

Nhial has had some big moments in his career at UWG. He scored a career high 31 points against Shorter University in his junior year. Hwas a key contributor to the Wolves making it to the NCAA Division II tournament last season as he averaged 13.5 points a game.

“It’s really hard for me to pinpoint what personal experiences were best for me as a basketball player here,” said Nhial. “Things are still going along as we still have in-season games to play and what not. I think once I’m fully done playing college basketball, then I’ll truly know what moment meant the most to me.”

The journey as a

Photo Courtesy of UWG Athletics

college basketball player for Nhial wasn’t easy. He has been through the ups and downs as a college athlete. However, it has given him a sense of gratitude for the game of basketball. He has learned a lot from being at UWG not only as a basketball player but as a person.

“Being here in West Georgia has taught me that you have to be able to push through,” Nhial said. “I had to sit out my first year at UWG. I had to get surgery on my knee and sit out that whole year. I was finally able to play again going into sophomore year then I got surgery on my other knee.

“It’s really just a matter of having perseverance,” continued Nhial. “You can’t get too down on yourself. You just have to face the circumstances at hand.”

SPECIAL

PHOTO ESSAY
BY JANNETTE
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