

The Advance-Titan

INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN OSHKOSH CAMPUSES

VOL. 128, No. 14

DEC. 10, 2020

ADVANCETITAN.COM



April Lee / Advance-Titan

To keep his mother living at Evergreen Retirement Community safe from COVID-19, Eric Duwell and his wife, Janell, do weekly “window visits” at the facility. They tried Zoom visits in the past, but found those gave Eric’s mother far less joy.

Senior living battles COVID-19

By Joseph Schulz
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Robin Wolzenburg, the director of housing and clinical services for the senior living advocacy group LeadingAge Wisconsin, recently received an email that broke her heart.

The email, from a Wisconsin senior living provider, read: “Hi Robin, I want to let you know we have a COVID outbreak in our facility. I have 13 residents, two have already tested positive earlier this week, with eight more today. Two of them have already died. I have three staff members who are positive and I have no one to staff my building.”

Over the last month, Wolzenburg, who helps senior living facilities stay up-to-date with rapidly changing public health guidelines, says emails like that are “becoming the norm” as senior living facilities struggle to contain COVID-19, despite the array of safeguards in place meant to prevent its spread.

Community spread of coronavirus in Wisconsin has gotten so bad that employees are contracting the virus outside of work because much of the public still refuses to take the virus seriously, Wolzenburg explained.

“I’m hearing desperation and a lot of really defeated feelings in a lot of ways, going into the fall surge,” she said. “It didn’t feel as close to home until the last 10 weeks, when we just started seeing this awful increase with the community spread.”

That’s because senior living facilities throughout Wisconsin are either bracing for a potential outbreak, recovering from a previous outbreak or currently experiencing one, according to Wisconsin Assisted Living Association CEO Michael Pochowski.

“Even simply going to the gas station or to the grocery store there is a potential chance that you could be exposed to COVID,” he said. “So there’s really no one to blame when an outbreak happens.”

Locally, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services reported public health investigations at six nursing homes in Winnebago County.

The DHS list included investigations at Bethel Home, Eden Meadows, Edenbrook of Oshkosh, Evergreen Retirement Community, Park View Health Center and Peabody Manor.

However, any nursing home with a case among residents remains on the DHS website for 28 days as an active investigation.

To prevent coronavirus outbreaks in nursing homes, Wolzenburg says Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is requiring all staff members to be tested in nursing homes twice a week because the COVID-19 positivity rate is so high in Wisconsin. Residents are tested if they become symptomatic or if there is an outbreak.

Additionally, she said DHS is requiring nursing homes to test staff for COVID-19 at least every other week, regardless of positivity rate.

If a staff member tests positive, Wolzenburg explained that they are immediately sent home. The facility then begins contact tracing to locate people who were in close proximity to the positive case and then immediately test those close contacts.

Testing presents another problem as most of the tests being used take three days for results because most nursing homes do not have access to rapid testing, she noted.

Wolzenburg added that nursing homes have “some access” to

COVID-19 tests that produce results within hours, but those are not as accurate on asymptomatic carriers.

At assisted living facilities, Pochowski said if a resident or a staff member tests positive for COVID-19 it is considered an outbreak.

Once an outbreak occurs, the facility contacts its local public health department to confirm the outbreak and order testing supplies, he added. Assisted living facilities then test residents and staff members for COVID-19 based on recommendations from public health officials.

While the pandemic has created new pressures for nursing homes and assisted living facilities, it has also magnified a problem that existed before the pandemic, according to Wolzenburg and Pochowski.

Even before the pandemic, there was a shortage of workers in senior-living facilities, which combined with staff contracting the virus has created the perfect storm of staffing shortages.

“Prior to COVID, we had a very significant staffing caregiver crisis going on,” Pochowski said. “Then when COVID hit, it really intensified, so we just are in dire need of having caregivers come to work for our facilities.”

Beyond increasing the quality of care for residents, Wolzenburg said increased staffing in nursing homes specifically could help take pressure off the healthcare system.

“Even hospitals are trying to think about how they can help nursing homes with staffing because nursing homes could take more of their residents and free up some of those hospital beds for COVID,” she said.

However, nursing homes are not

allowed to accept new residents until 14 days after their last positive case, Wolzenburg explained.

“The problem is most facilities in Wisconsin right now are in some kind of constant outbreak,” she said. “They’re having at least one staff member test positive every time they test, especially in nursing homes, because they’re doing the regular testing.”

Aside from staffing concerns, Wolzenburg and Pochowski say the acquisition of personal protective equipment (PPE) remains an issue for many senior-living facilities as it’s become more accessible, but also more expensive.

“We were in dire need of any PPE when the COVID-19 pandemic first broke around February/March, and the supply chains have gotten better, but the prices are just unbelievable,” Pochowski said. “There’s some stuff that ebbs and flows in terms of availability.”

Wolzenburg added that the pandemic has taken an emotional toll on the staff in senior-living facilities, who are “working tirelessly” to care for our most vulnerable population.

“They have to meet their own needs to homeschool their children, too,” she said. “They’re also meeting the emotional, spiritual and psychosocial needs of all these residents in absence of having contact with their families.”

Going forward, Wolzenburg hopes people can start acting more selflessly in taking the pandemic seriously.

“We all have grandparents — we all have great aunts and uncles — think about them getting sick,” she said. “We need to really think about our actions, especially going into the holidays.”

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About the Newspaper
The Advance-Titan is an independent student newspaper published on campus since 1894. The paper is written and edited by students at UW Oshkosh who are solely responsible for content and editorial policy. Any UW Oshkosh student from all three campuses is welcome to work on the newspaper staff. The Advance-Titan is published on Thursday during the academic year.

Correction Policy:
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First Place Best of Show Newspaper, Associated Collegiate Press (ACP), 2020
Third Place Best of Show Website, ACP, 2020
Fifth Place Best of Show Special Edition, ACP, 2020

COVID cases trend down

By Sophia Voight
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Winnebago County saw a decrease in COVID-19 cases over the past week due to the lack of testing available to residents over the Thanksgiving holiday, according to the county health department.

However, the Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD) weekly COVID-19 report said the low number of COVID-19 cases will likely be followed by a spike in cases over next week as cases rise from family get-togethers and the increase in testing before Christmas.

The number of confirmed cases of the virus in Winnebago County has trended down over the last two weeks, according to WCHD COVID-19 data.

The first week of December saw an average of 71 confirmed cases per day, which is a decrease from the 102 cases per day reported the week prior.

WCHD reported 38 new cases of COVID-19 on Tuesday, with 650 active cases in the county.

The county dropped from its “critically high” burden level after Thanksgiving, having been in the worst burden status of COVID-19 since the beginning of September.

The county still remains in a “very high” level of burden for the virus, which is determined when active cases are between 538 and 1,537.

COVID-19 hospitalizations have decreased over the past week in the Fox Valley, Tracey Froiland, Fox Valley Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition coordinator, said.

Fox Valley area hospitals had 100 COVID-19 patients hospitalized as of Dec. 2, a decrease from the 126 patients the prior week, the WCHD COVID-19 report said.

Froiland said the area hospitals still have a high volume of COVID-19 patients, but many have surge areas open to help with the high volume of patients.

“Hospitalizations typically occur several days or weeks into a person’s COVID illness, so we will see what the next few weeks bring,” she said.

But Froiland said if people don’t follow COVID-19 safety guidelines by social distancing and avoiding large gatherings, hospitals will expect cases to rise after the holidays.

“Hopefully they did the right things and we will not see another surge of patients,” she said.

COVID-19 cases on the UW Oshkosh campus have also been trending low, with the daily positivity rate remaining below 2% in the weeks following Thanksgiving break.

The positivity rate for COVID-19 cases on campus have not been below 2% since students arrived on campus back in September.

There are 51 active cases of COVID-19 on campus as of Tuesday afternoon, according to the UWO COVID-19 dashboard.

Even with cases trending down, the county health department still recommends people follow strict social distancing precautions to limit the spread of the virus.

WCHD recommends that anyone over 65 or with a health condition avoid being indoors with people unless they are wearing a mask.

They also recommend getting tested 4-5 days after a known or potential exposure to the virus or if you have any symptoms, even if they are mild.

The Albee COVID-19 testing center will remain open over winter break and interim, with hours 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday until Dec. 18.

Holiday hours are 8 a.m.-noon, Dec. 21-23 and Dec. 28-30. The center will be closed Dec. 24, 25, 31 and Jan. 1, and reopen Jan. 4.

The Culver Family Welcome Center testing center is expected to remain open through the middle of January with its regular hours of 9 a.m.-5 p.m. through Dec. 18.

Holiday hours are 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Dec. 19 and 20 and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Dec. 21 to 23.

The Culver testing center will be closed Dec. 24 through Jan. 3 and reopen 9 a.m.-5 p.m. beginning Jan. 4.

The UW Oshkosh Student Association met for the last time in 2020 on Tuesday to discuss upcoming campus events and changes to quarantine requirements on campus.

Throughout the fall semester, UWO’s administrators have tirelessly sent updates, tweaked procedures and followed COVID-19 cases throughout the campus community alongside an weekly testing regimen for on-campus residents.

As a result, UWO’s positive coronavirus test rate has held steady at about 4% after performing roughly 2,250 tests per week.

The campus witnessed a large spike in cases early in September as the students moved into the city and on-campus housing, but since then, the positive tests have tapered off significantly.

“You can’t bring in this many people and not have [a surge in cases],” UWO chancellor Andrew Leavitt told The Advance-Titan in October. But since the university and students’ increased vigilance and adherence to prescribed guidelines has prevented any further spikes.

This is best illustrated by the absence of a significant spike following the Thanksgiving break. Since Nov. 29, on-campus testing at Albee Hall has seen a positive test rate of only 1.4% according to the university’s COVID-19 dashboard; lower than the semester’s overall positive test rate.

In response, rules have slowly been relaxed, with students being allowed to dine in Blackhawk Commons as of Oct. 28, the Dec. 4 return of the UWO Go shuttle service and the spring Taste of Oshkosh student involvement fair slated to take place in person, albeit with an altered and socially-distanced format.

Additionally, UWO’s quarantine guidelines have been relaxed slightly in accordance with guidance from the CDC. UWOPD Chief Kurt Liebold said in an email that as of Dec. 7, students not exhibiting symptoms may be released after 10 days of quarantine without testing positive or after seven days without testing positive in the previous 48 hours.

However, Liebold’s email notes it is still crucial to monitor for symptoms for a full 14 days, regardless of whether or not a student is in isolation.



Positive test rate stagnates near 4%

By Carter Uslabar
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UWO alumnus returns to teach in geology department

By Lexi Wojcik-Kretchmer
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Max Schwid, UW Oshkosh alumnus, came back to UWO for the fall semester in a break from his PhD program to teach in the geology department.

Schwid was a student at UWO from 2013 and graduated in 2018. Schwid planned on attending Queen’s University in Canada to get his PhD in Geological Sciences, but his plans had to change due to COVID-related traveling issues.

A former adviser contacted Schwid just as he was trying to figure out his plans for the semester.

Schwid said that Dr. Eric Hiatt “mentioned that UWO had an opening to teach mineralogy. This course is the foundation for all the other geology courses.”

Because of his interest in all things geology, especially the mineralogy of sedimentary rocks, he applied and got the job for the fall 2020 semester teaching two sections of Geology 205.

Before Schwid came back to UWO, he got his graduate degree from Virginia Tech and did his field research in rural villages in South China.

“Here, I studied sedimentary rocks that were deposited

after Snowball Earth ended and which contain the earliest animal fossils,” Schwid said. “My experiences in UWO’s research- and field-based geology program, and the faculty members that make it possible, provided me with these opportunities and the skills to compete with the best-trained geoscientists in the world.”

When Schwid was at UWO, he was able to study the end of the last ice age — known as Snowball Earth — with Eric Hiatt, a professor in the geology department.

“Sedimentary rocks deposited during this period (about 635 million years ago) link this major climatic transition to the evolution of complex life, record oceanographic conditions and set the stage for the appearance of animals,” Schwid said.

Once he graduated he “presented the results of our research at UWO’s Celebration of Scholarship, the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison, and to peers at the international Geological Society of America meeting in Seattle, Washington.”

Schwid credits UWO for many of the opportunities he received after undergrad.

“I took advantage of the many field courses that the geology department offers, which allowed me to investigate the

modern and ancient environments of Bermuda, South Dakota, Wyoming, Utah and Nevada,” he said. “Completing my degree in UWO’s geology department directly led to several additional career opportunities, including an internship with the U.S. Geological Survey in Oregon, the opportunity to complete my master’s degree, and lab and field courses run by ExxonMobil.”

Schwid will not be teaching at UWO next semester and will be able to get started on his PhD program in Canada.

Schwid is leaving UWO with some advice for students. For those who will not be graduating next semester he said to “prioritize your physical and mental health as much as possible. It can be difficult or impossible to achieve a balance, but it’s even harder to learn or excel when you are not well.”

As for students graduating and heading into the real world during a pandemic, Schwid said “networking for the next step in your career can still be done online, although it is certainly different. Any variety of relevant experience at this point in time, although it may not be what you expected/desired, may open doors in the future that you did not anticipate.”



Sophia Voight / Advance-Titan

If a board of health deems it necessary for public health and safety, they are be allowed to require citizens to get the COVID-19 vaccine once it becomes available to the public.

Will people be required to get a COVID-19 vaccination?

By Lexi Langendorf
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With the idea of a COVID-19 vaccine coming soon, it is certain that the question of whether or not to implement a vaccine requirement will have to be addressed eventually.

According to a Marquette University Law School Poll released in early September, 64% of registered voters in Wisconsin said they’d either definitely or probably get a COVID-19 vaccine, about one-third said they probably or definitely would not get the vaccine, and 2% said they didn’t know yet.

But the question is: Is it up to the general public to make that decision?

Former Harvard Law School Professor Alan Dershowitz said in an interview that the government has a constitutional right under the 10th Amendment to forcibly vaccinate a citizen to decrease the spread of a contagious disease.

The 10th Amendment states that any power not specifically given to the federal government by the Constitution belongs to the states and the people.

“If you refuse to be vaccinated, the state has the power to literally take you to a doctor’s office and plunge a needle into your arm,” Dershowitz said.

The Supreme Court has recognized that each state’s “police power” gives the state authority to enact health laws, including quarantine and vaccination requirements, in order to protect public health.

“Let me put it very clearly: You have no constitutional right to endanger the public and spread the disease, even if you disagree,” Dershowitz said. “You have no right not to be vaccinated, you have no right not to wear a mask, you have no right to open up your business.”

Dershowitz added that there are “cases after cases after cases” in which courts have ruled in favor of “reasonable actions to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.”

Dershowitz emphasizes the Supreme Court’s Jacobson v. Massachusetts decision in 1905, where the court upheld that a state may require smallpox vaccination if the board of health deems it necessary for public health or safety.

The court said that vaccination regulations did not violate the 14th Amendment right to liberty because they fell within the restraints to which everyone is subject for the common good.

The court also argued that if any individual is allowed to act without regard to the welfare of others, true liberty does not exist.

If the issue of a COVID-19 vaccine requirement makes it to the SCOTUS, past precedents including Jacobson v. Massachusetts will definitely play a large role in the Court’s decision.

On the opposite end, arguments against forcible vaccination are based on the 14th Amendment’s provision that no state “shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law.”

In order to mandate vaccines, a board of health must deem that vaccination is necessary for public health or safety, the only exception being proof that the vaccines “would seriously impair health or probably cause death.”

Employees who have a medical issue under the Americans with Disabilities Act and for whom a vaccine could create health and safety risks would likely be allowed to opt out of a mandate.

Employees who have a genuine “bona fide” religious objection to receiving the vaccine may also include candidates who are able to opt out.

Alta Charo, a professor of law and bioethics at UW-Madison, also added that, in some instances, union contracts bar employers from requiring vaccination.

However, employees who choose not to comply with a mandatory vaccination program could be terminated or put on unpaid leave until they opt to comply.

Healthcare employers will like-

ly have a greater ability to require employee vaccination to protect the lives of patients.

In regards to vaccination requirements in the school setting, Public Health Law Expert Professor Lance Gable said that despite parent protest, the state can require kids to get a future coronavirus vaccine, just as they can other childhood shots.

“State requirements of this sort, as long as they have scientific evidence supporting their necessity, often they’re going to be upheld,” Gable said.

At a town hall hosted by Healthline in August, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said that the vaccine won’t be mandatory in the U.S.

“I don’t think you’ll ever see a mandating of the vaccine, particularly for the general public,” Fauci said. “If someone refuses the vaccine in the general public, then there’s nothing you can do about that. You cannot force someone to take a vaccine.”

President-elect Joe Biden also told reporters that he would not make vaccinations mandatory.

“But I would do everything in my power – just like I don’t think masks have to be made mandatory nationwide – I’ll do everything in my power as president of the United States to encourage people to do the right thing,” Biden said.

Overall, a mandate is not likely anytime soon, and likely not to come from the federal government. Such a requirement could, however, be enforced at the state level.

If businesses or schools were to require workers or students to get a new COVID-19 vaccine, especially if the FDA allows emergency use authorization or shortcuts clinical trials, expect the issue to be handled in court.

It is most likely that employers and states may require vaccination for return or access to workplaces, schools and colleges and mandate it once the FDA issues full approval.

Q&A with state senator Dan Feyen

By Sophia Voight
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Dan Feyen

Republican incumbent for Wisconsin’s 18th senate district Dan Feyen beat out upcomer, Democrat Aaron Wojciechowski and is getting ready to serve his second term in office. The newly re-elected state senator addressed plans for his upcoming term and measures to improve the local economy affected by the pandemic. *This conservation has been edited for clarity and length.*

Q Can you break down your typical day as a state senator for the 18th district?

There are really two different “typical days” as a state senator. If I am in the district, my day will consist of attending events, meeting with constituents, joining Zoom or conference calls and checking in with my staff.

A typical day in Madison would consist of constituent or advocacy meetings, committee hearings, caucus meetings or floor sessions.

In the state legislature, no two days are ever the same, and new issues are brought to my attention constantly.

Q What are your biggest concerns for the members of your district going into the 2021 session? How do you hope to tackle them during your upcoming term?

My biggest concern is the economic livelihood of the 18th Senate District.

We have seen record waves of unemployment, and my office has been working diligently to help every constituent navigate the unemployment insurance system to get the benefits they deserve.

Q You just won reelection against Democratic runner Aaron Wojciechowski. What makes you the better official to represent the 18th state senate district?

I make it a point to work across the aisle with my Democratic colleagues, in fact, every bill I’ve authored that became law has received overwhelming bipartisan support.

In a time when we have a Democrat as governor and a Republican-led legislature, I think it is important to find common ground and craft good, common sense legislation that helps not only my constituents, but all residents of Wisconsin.

My door is always open to lawmakers or constituents, no matter where they land on the political spectrum.

Q During your campaign, you mentioned that getting our economy back on its feet following the government shutdown was your top priority. How do you restart the economy safely with the surge of COVID-19 cases in our region?

We can get our economy back on track by being smart and practicing common sense. This means washing hands, wearing masks and social distancing.

The new leadership in the state senate has recently spoken with Governor Evers’ office and begun to work on new legislation to address COVID-19 related concerns.

I would be supportive of another federal relief package for Americans trying to weather the storm until the vaccine is widely available.

There has been great news on the vaccine front lately, which is ultimately how our economy will get back to the pre-pandemic highs we were seeing.

Q The state has suffered a significant financial blow because of the COVID-19 pandemic. What approach do you think the Legislature needs to take in crafting its upcoming budget to reflect our new economic reality?

I think the legislature needs to be smart about where we spend money and find places where the government can be more efficient and do more with less.

The good news is that we have seen higher-than-expected corporate tax revenues, which should alleviate some of the budgetary woes we are facing.

I was happy to see the agencies commit to a 5% budget reduction earlier this year and was proud to do the same with my office budget.

We all need to tighten our belts in order to make sure that Wisconsin is still standing on firm fiscal ground when we emerge from the pandemic.

Q This year saw a rise in the Black Lives Matter movement and calls for defunding the police. As a strong supporter of law enforcement and correctional officers, where do you stand with calls to defund our police?

I am 100% opposed to defunding our police and law enforcement.

Taking money away from law enforcement is not the best path to reducing crime and keeping our cities and neighborhoods safe.

I am open to discussing any ideas that might help make our law enforcement more efficient and repair any damages in the relationship between police and the communities they serve.



April Lee / Advance-Titan

Since YouTube was created in 2005, the website has evolved into more than a platform for entertainment including a wide variety of educational videos.

How YouTube is changing education

By **Jelissa Burns**
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YouTube has just about any video you could think of, from cooking videos to gameplay walkthroughs, and everything in between. Since the creation of the website in 2005, people are now uploading 500 hours of footage every minute, and the website is generating over 1 billion video views daily.

“How-to” searches on the video platform grow over 70% in views each year. Viewers use the website not only to learn, but to teach. With the number of videos on the site used to instruct and teach viewers varying skills, it is possible that YouTube could replace skill classes and even some educational classes.

YouTube has opened up the tools for education in many ways. Students often use YouTube as an alternate form to learning about a subject.

“YouTube is my go-to when I don’t understand something from a class,” Katey Counts, a graphic design undergraduate at UW-Parkside, said. “As a design student who frequently uses the Adobe Creative Suite, I find the most informational tutorials on this subject on YouTube. Over my college years, I would attribute a large chunk of my Adobe skills to YouTube.”

Channels like Khan Academy, Edutopia and TED-Ed are all dedicated to teaching students different curricular and lessons throughout all grades. Yet, these channels don’t even scratch the surface of the list of channels dedicated to virtual teaching.

However, academic education isn’t the only way that YouTube has provided its users with more skills. In fact, when it comes to learning about new products, users are three times more likely to prefer watching a YouTube video tutorial than reading the product’s instructions. Videos like product unboxing, first tries and product

reviews are popular because the viewers get a real person’s opinion on the product they’re interested in.

The beauty category on YouTube is one of the most popular categories on the entire website. In 2016, beauty-related video views increased by 80%.

In fact, one of the highest paid YouTubers is Jeffree Star. Star is a YouTuber who focuses on beauty, makeup and cosmetics. In 2019, Star made \$17 million from YouTube alone, making him the fifth highest paid YouTuber of that year.

Young adults and teens have been using YouTube to learn cosmetic skills for years. Users age 18-24 make up 96% of YouTube’s demographics.

Counts, who watches about six to eight hours of YouTube a week, is one of the many young women who use the site for the beauty and cosmetic content.

“Makeup has been a big hobby of mine since I was a teenager,” Counts said. “I feel like a lot of people who are starting to get into makeup turn to YouTube.”

Users who are starting to get into any new hobby often use YouTube. In fact, 70% of millennial YouTube users turned to the site to learn how to do something new or learn more about something they’re interested in.

Nick Maas, a 22-year-old frequent YouTube user, admits that he has used the website in the past to help him in multiple aspects of his life. Maas said he watches about two hours of YouTube every day.

“A few months ago I needed to change a headlight on my car, and instead of bringing my car in, I figured I could save time and money by watching a how-to video on YouTube,” Maas said. “I’ve also watched ‘tips and tricks’ videos about serving and bartending that have helped me to learn and become better at my job.”

Counts said that YouTube has been a medium for her to gain

knowledge on hobbies that she’s already picked up.

“I have used YouTube to expand some of my hobbies,” Counts said. “Recently I’ve gotten really interested in interior design, and I have watched a ton of videos relating to that. I have learned a lot about interior design from YouTubers. I also enjoy cooking, and YouTube has such a wide variety of culinary tutorials.”

When it comes to education, YouTube has long been integrated into lesson plans and curriculum for teachers to help explain their lesson topic more thoroughly. In a survey conducted on participants aged 14-23, YouTube ranked the highest as a preferred learning tool, with 59% of participants choosing the website.

Lillian Fowler, an early childhood/elementary education major at UW Oshkosh, said that YouTube has assisted her in her teaching.

“I use YouTube very often myself to guide teaching,” Fowler said. “As an education major, I use YouTube a lot for looking up certain types of lessons and different types of lesson planning. There are a lot of people on YouTube who record how they are planning lessons, what they use to plan lessons, how to make students more engaged in learning, etc. I use those videos a lot to help integrate better materials into my own learning.”

From cosmetic looks, cooking tutorials and instructional videos on how to build an Ikea bed frame, to learning how to play the guitar or figuring out a math

equation, YouTube has a video for you.

When it comes down to it, YouTube is evolving to be more than a social media app or video platform for entertainment. The user-generated website is slowly making its name in the world of education. The site can even be used as a reference or source for essays and reports.

While it’s already starting to evolve into more than a platform for entertainment, is it possible that YouTube could replace some aspects of education, be it in the classroom or even just at home?

Fowler seems to believe that, in some ways, YouTube is already doing this.

“Absolutely,” Fowler said. “There has not been a single class I have been in that doesn’t use YouTube in their instruction. Teachers/professors pull up YouTube videos in every class to help what they are teaching. It’s a resource that many people use.”

Other users agree that YouTube has the ability to be an educational platform.

“I think with this enormous pool of information that YouTube has, it has ways to enhance education and in some ways replace it,” Maas said. “Many topics learned in school could be learned from the comfort of your bed.”

“YouTube and media in general play a big part in what keeps students engaged and helps students understand in a different way,” Fowler said. “Some students like watching videos more than students who like reading out of books. If we have a resource like

YouTube, it allows for us to move a little bit past the curriculum and look at it in a different and sometimes better way.”

It’s hard to tell what direction the site may take in order to keep up with its increasing popularity. Since Google purchased the site in 2006, the website has seen many changes, such as the addition of Youtube Premium, which gives users the ability to purchase a monthly membership that allows them to watch videos without advertisements.

Stricter guidelines and rules have also been placed on videos being uploaded and even comments being made. With the introduction of monetized videos, sponsorships and advertisements, YouTube has also become a means of income for a lot of people.

Despite all the changes, one thing remains the same. YouTube continues to be a free-access website for users to view and upload video content of their choice. While some channels get paid to upload videos, a majority of the channels do not.

The idea that users are uploading content for the simple fact that their video is going to help someone out there, with little to no gain in return, is what makes YouTube so special.

For some users, YouTube is just an app used to find out the newest features on the newest phone or how a foundation will look on certain skin. But for others, YouTube has become a home and a place of comfort. There are so many communities throughout the website, so there is a place for everyone to fit in.

“I would say YouTube has made a large impact on my life,” Counts said. “It’s comforting knowing that if there’s something I want to accomplish, someone has likely already made a YouTube tutorial for it.”

I think with this enormous pool of information that YouTube has, it has ways to enhance education and in some ways replace it.

- Nick Maas

English professor gathers large following

By Kaitlyn Scoville
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“All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players; they have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts....”

That leads directly to him being a podcaster, a political commentator and more. Dr. James “Duke” Pesta of the English department is a perfect example of this.

Pesta, according to the Heartland Institute, “received his M.A. in Renaissance literature from John Carroll University and his Ph.D. in Shakespeare and Renaissance literature from Purdue University.”

He has taught at several academic levels, and has focused courses on “Shakespeare, Renaissance literature, the Bible, Russian literature, Christian apologetics and C.S. Lewis,” Heartland’s website stated.

His most recent academic endeavor was starting at UW Oshkosh in 2008, where he became a tenured professor in the English department in 2014.

Aside from teaching at UWO, Pesta has had several collaborative opportunities off-campus that have accumulated a great social media presence.

His most notable and ongoing off-campus activity is the “Dr. Duke Show,” which runs weekdays at 6 p.m. on thefreedomproject.com. It has over 350 podcast episodes.

On Nov. 27, the Dr. Duke Pesta Facebook page announced the show’s newest series, “Mob Rule: Unmask-

ing the Radical Left.”

Pesta is the executive director of The FreedomProject Academy, which, according to their website, is “rooted firmly in the Judeo-Christian values as promoted in the Constitution by our Founding Fathers, who strove to guarantee the preservation of our God-given liberties.

“FreedomProject teams up with churches and private schools to stream Judeo-Christian classes into brick and mortar classrooms across the country,” the website said. “This allows for the rapid expansion of faith-based schools across the nation ... What better way to restore American values than to bring the worlds of faith and education together again?”

Ben Shapiro, a political commentator, media host and attorney, who has over 3.4 million followers on Twitter, endorsed the FreedomProject Academy.

According to Pesta’s 2017-2018 UWO Outside Activities Report (OAR), he made over \$5,000 from the FreedomProject Academy annually, aside from his earnings from the university.

Pesta is also a policy adviser for the Heartland Institute, where their mission is “to discover, develop and promote free-market solutions to social and economic problems.”

Furthermore, the Heartland Institute “plays an essential role in the national movement for personal liberty and limited government,” according to their website.

From 2014-2016, Pesta discussed common core for The Bottom Line. According to

The Bottom Line’s website: “Get your daily dose of current events with a Biblical World View.”

On Nov. 12, 2019, Pesta and Yvette Hampton of Schoolhouse Rocked did a collaboration episode of the “Dr. Duke Show,” discussing homeschool advocacy.

Pesta has also done several collaborations with Alex Newman of the John Birch Society and the New American, who “seeks to glorify God in everything he does.”

FreedomProject Academy and FreedomProject Media are all subsidiaries of the John Birch Society.

Pesta has been active with “Truth in American Education” since 2013. June 27, 2018 was his most recent contribution, where he and Newman’s FreedomProject Media episode was featured for discussing a proposed education & labor department merger.

He has also been a guest speaker for the Red Pill Expo (RPE). According to their website, their purpose is to “help truth seekers understand how the world really works – contrary, in many cases, to commonly held illusions.

“Bring[ing] together world-class experts to set the record straight on fake narratives, fake history and fake news,”

the website continued. “In other words, we are here to dispel the illusions that often shroud the most important aspects of our lives.”

The RPE “speakers” page stated that Pesta spoke on the necessity of homeschooling, the decline of morality and critical thinking in the classroom, and “myriad ways colleges and universities indoctrinate students.”

Pesta has also done collaboration podcasts with Charlie Kirk of his nonprofit “Turning Point USA,” whose mission is to “identify, educate, train and organize students to promote the principles of freedom, free markets and limited government.”

“Turning Point USA believes that every young person can be enlightened to true free market values,” the website said. “Since its founding, Turning Point USA has embarked on a mission to build the most organized, active and powerful conservative grassroots activist network on high school and college campuses across the country.”

Pesta and Kirk’s most recent collaboration was on July 26, 2018, which discussed who could beat President Donald Trump in the 2020 election.

On Oct. 19, Kirk’s Twitter got blocked for spreading misleading information, which had 1.8 million followers. However, his active social media accounts still reach over 100 million views per month, according to his website.

Pesta has also done several podcast episodes with Canadian podcaster Stefan Molyneux, who is permanently banned or suspended from PayPal, YouTube, Twitter, Mailchimp and SoundCloud for hate speech.

When his YouTube was banned, he had over 650,000 subscribers.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, “Molyneux has been delivering ‘race realist’ propaganda, based on pseudo-scientific sources, to his audience on an ongoing basis for over two years, and thus has encouraged thousands of people to adopt his belief in biological determinism, social Darwinism and non-white racial inferiority.”

Some other Pesta/Molyneux podcast collaborations include “The Catholic Church Built Western Civilization”, Riots discussion, “Art! What is it good for?”, “The Devil is Inside!”, “Killing History” and “The Philosophy of Satan.”

Other social media accounts include his Parler @DukePesta, Twitter @DukePesta, Facebook at “Dr. Duke Pesta,” “FreedomProject Academy” and “FreedomProject,” and YouTube at “FreedomProject Media.”

What better way to restore American values than to bring the worlds of faith and education together again?

- FreedomProject website

UWO alumni discuss teaching during pandemic

By Andrew Hansen
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The UW Oshkosh Aspiring Educators Organization held a first-year teacher panel featuring three alumni who spoke about the realities they faced teaching amidst the COVID-19 pandemic this past Thursday.

“I originally imagined my classroom having a front area where kids could gather on a carpet and a back area for table space,” fifth-grade teacher Andrew Mayer said. “There’s just very limited space now due to COVID, and there’s a lot of

limited areas that kids can’t be touching within a certain timeframe.”

Sixth-grade social studies teacher Sydney Huff says that when teaching in person, you have to be more cognizant than usual of students’ activities.

“We have to have all of our desks facing forward and we have to have a seating chart so that we know what kids are in close contact with each other,” Huff said.

All three of the teachers say their schools have since moved teaching to either an online or HyFlex model.

Huff says that moving classrooms online has brought with it several challenges.

“Our kids are struggling and the relationships they have with their teachers is the thing that is keeping them going,” Huff said. “We don’t know what’s going on behind those computer screens at home so those relationships with the kids is one of the most important things.”

Mayer says that moving online has made personal connections with students much more valuable.

“If you can somehow get the

students to realise that what you’re teaching actually matters and it’s somehow relatable, I figured out that’s when I have the best engagement,” said Mayer. “Really students want to get to know their teacher.”

Third-grade teacher Tianna Borchardt says that she has made it her goal to reach out to students’ parents at least once per month.

“I had a student that was struggling in math, but he worked hard and did phenomenally on his last test,” Borchardt said. “I called home

right after school to tell his mom how proud I was of him.”

The nation’s top Infectious disease expert Dr. Anthony Fauci told ABC’s “This Week” last Sunday that in spite of the uptick of coronavirus cases the U.S. is facing, in-person classes should be the “default position.”

The spread of COVID-19 “among children and from children is not really very big at all, not like one would have suspected,” Fauci said. “So let’s try to get the kids back.”



Make some magic
and join the Advance-Titan
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Students’ opinions clash on prof. conduct

By Heidi Docter and Kaitlyn Scoville
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A UW Oshkosh professor who has received two harassment complaints by students within the last three years has many positive reviews on Rate My Professors and mostly full classes every semester. For many of those who have had Dr. James “Duke” Pesta as an English professor, it’s either a love or hate relationship with the teacher and his classroom conduct.

The first complaint was filed in May 2017 when a student alleged that Pesta, then an associate English professor, discriminated against them based on their political identity and used hate speech in class. Later that year, the university decided Pesta did not harass or discriminate against the student.

The second complaint arose after an open forum on March 18, 2019 to address bigotry, hate, homophobia and racism on campus following a social media post.

The 2019 complainant alleged that the professor retaliated after the student spoke up about the professor-student dynamic in his classroom, without naming him, at the open forum. A few weeks after the open forum, the student reported that the professor continuously diverted class time to discussing her comments at the event.

The 2019 complaint was rescinded, but at the time UW Oshkosh Provost and Vice Chancellor John Koker criticized Pesta’s classroom management.

“By your own account, you spent much class time talking about issues related to the public forum that were unrelated to the stated curriculum on your class syllabus,” Koker stated.

The Advance-Titan contacted Pesta for comment via email seven times over the course of the semester with no response.

According to UWO HR, Pesta began as a professor in 2008 and received tenure in 2014.

Andrea Toms, a graduate student for English, has taken or audited 10 of Pesta’s courses over the last five to seven years. He is also her thesis adviser, and Toms said that Pesta encourages using one’s freedom of speech in the classroom — something she said she doesn’t see in other classes. “You can challenge professor Pesta, even rudely so, and it does not affect your performance in the class,” Toms said. “This is a rare phenomenon on this campus. Professor Pesta honors his promise to let all students speak without fear of censorship or grade reduction.”

Toms also thinks that what’s common among other English professors is they only lecture on how they perceive the texts in class.

“As an English major, that’s very frustrating because if we’re all going to reach the same conclusion of any texts that we investigate, you can do that at home for free,” Toms said.

Toms also said Pesta is unlike what she thinks UWO sees in a



Courtesy of the Dr. Duke Show
Students who have taken classes with English professor James “Duke” Pesta leave with conflicting opinions on his classroom conduct.

professor.

“He stands outside the scope of what the university deems socially acceptable,” she said.

Furthermore, Toms believes that though there may be differences in the classroom, it shouldn’t be a deterrent to how people treat each other, and that’s how she wants Pesta’s classes to be understood.

“We don’t have to all get along or have the same social, political or religious viewpoints to be able to function together,” Toms said. “That is how you grow as a person; that’s how you grow intellectually.”

Toms said that students who may feel uncomfortable in Pesta’s classes need to understand that the works are to be understood in several perspectives without dismissing them.

“Name one person in history who got to where they got by being comfortable,” she said. “You don’t have to embrace what a person is saying. I think there should be an understanding, a civil degree on both sides that we should be able to say, ‘Hey, I disagree where you’re coming from, but thank you for sharing that with me.’”

Pesta asked several students to write about their perceptions of his classes in response to the complaints, and 25 students replied.

Aaron Preston audited Pesta’s spring 2017 Shakespeare course and wrote one of those letters, and clarified that Pesta did not once ask students to write anything specifically.

Most of the students’ letters noted a large “IF” Dr. Pesta wrote on the marker board at the start of every class period, emphasizing that the beliefs of the authors in the curriculum may or may not exist.



And, as several works of literature had to do with God and religion, the “IF” represented that the beliefs were true only if God existed.

Much of the content discussed in Pesta’s courses revolved around Shakespeare, who dates back to the 17th century, and historical literature from the 1900s or hundreds of years ago.

“In terms of the content of [English 392], the biggest challenge to overcome was the specific literature that we were exposed to, which consisted of Christian-based writers,” Jacob Covey, a double major of English and history at UWO, who attended Pesta’s English 392 course in spring 2017, said. “These writers focused on problems of their time, and looked to grapple with them through a perspective not otherwise focused on in a university setting.”

“What I love about his approach is that he likes to teach from the historical content,” Toms said. “It’s not saying that you can’t have a Marxist or feminist perspective at all, but it makes sense to learn about these books from their historical foundation.”

Preston said Pesta believes that assessing the historical context of literary works is more important to address first before connecting it with modern times.

“One of the things he talked about was that one thing that frustrates him as a literary professor today is that we tend to read our

context into books that are written hundreds of years ago,” Preston said. “But these are historical books written in a historical context based on what was happening in the world at that time.”

However, Preston said that one thing about Pesta’s classroom philosophy stuck out to him.

“He says your education should serve as a window to help you see beyond your own self and to see beyond your own ideal, to see what you have thought or believed in the past, rather than a mirror that simply feeds back to you what you already know and already believe,” he said.

Covey said in his letter that it was “one of the most equal and open environments that [he] ever experienced.”

He has also taken English 396 in spring 2016 and English 347 in fall 2016.

In the letter, Covey stated that any assignments would not receive a downgrade if a student chose to write and defend their own views.

“These journals were to be our personal responses to the portion of the book assigned for that day — regardless if it was positive or negative,” Covey said. “Dr. Pesta told us that as long as the pages were written, nobody would be docked points for what they had said — so long as it was relevant to the book.”

Furthermore, “though our opinions were sometimes challenged

and tested by both the text and our fellow peers, the arguments had always harkened back to the words written on the page,” Covey said.

Covey also stated in his letter that Pesta had posed warnings throughout the course, asking several times if anyone was uncomfortable.

“None had replied during the semester,” Covey continued in the letter. “Even so, he would encourage students to email him or see him during his office hours to speak about any hardships or issues associated with the class.”

Overall, though, “Dr. Pesta’s method of teaching ran directly in-line with the text, and he made sure we felt both intellectually challenged as well as comfortable and safe to voice our own opinions and thoughts on the stories and concepts they focused on,” Covey concluded in his letter.

Preston said that even though not every student may have the opportunity to take Pesta as a professor in their college careers, he encourages everybody to take a professor who is similar to him.

“He wants me to become a better student, a better thinker and a better citizen,” Preston said.

While Pesta has received shining reviews from some students, others are more critical of his classroom conduct.

He stands outside the scope of what the university deems socially acceptable.

- Andrea Toms, UWO grad student

Pesta: Classroom controversy

From page 6

Kelsey Beauchamp, a UWO senior who took Pesta’s Shakespeare class in spring 2019, said Pesta made her “incredibly uncomfortable.”

“That August before the semester started, my grandfather committed suicide,” Beauchamp said. “I remember [Pesta would] say comments about how people that committed suicide were cowardly or weak.”

Beauchamp said the atmosphere Pesta created in the classroom didn’t exactly allow for the freedom of speech he advocated for, a complaint evident in other student accounts as well.

“I won’t ever say he prevents students from arguing and trying to share their own opinion” she said, “but I think what needs to be acknowledged is the atmosphere of his classroom.”

She said Pesta “would read kids’ journals out loud” anonymously, and “he would kind of mock” them.

Beauchamp said “he was just very domineering in class,” so “it made kids kind of scared to voice their opinions.”

When asked if she ever talked to Pesta about her concerns, Beauchamp said “God, no. I knew how he felt about someone like me, you can go on [his podcast] and you can see how he talks about the LGBT community.”

Pesta hosts a podcast called “The Dr. Duke Show,” from FreedomProject Media, that focuses on several topics along the political spectrum.

“When you do have a public presence that makes it known what your political views are, to the extreme that students in minority groups acknowledge that you might not agree with their humanity completely or at least their ability to have certain human rights, I don’t think it’s up to the students to approach him,” she said.

“Even as a gay person, I don’t really care what my professors’



Courtesy of the Costa Mesa Brief YouTube channel

The Advance-Titan interviewed several of James “Duke” Pesta’s former students to paint a clearer picture of his classroom conduct.

political views are,” Beauchamp added. “What’s different with Pesta is that he crosses that line of holding political ideologies and then bringing them into the classroom.”

An anonymous student who also took Pesta’s Shakespeare course in spring 2019 reiterated many of Beauchamp’s concerns.

“Duke Pesta claimed that he approached the class as a ‘radical free speech environment’ where anyone can say anything,” the student said. “And that sounded good.”

“But he didn’t seem to own up to that promise over the course of the semester,” they said. “He kind of picked out every student who did a feminist reading of ‘Measure for Measure,’ and he said, ‘This is totally wrong.’ And with some derision, like, ‘You don’t really understand Shakespeare if you would make a point like this.’”

They said “when he does things like that, he kind of takes control of the conversation,” and “it really killed that environment of openness and free speech that he seems to be advocating for.”

The student also discussed a time when Pesta offended them in class.

“[Pesta] said the natural outcome of atheism today is suicide culture, which is really horrifying and really offensive to me as an atheist.”

According to the student, in a discussion of “Macbeth,” Pesta discussed the condoning of homosexuality as comparative to condoning pedophilia.

“Now we’re suddenly getting into places like condoning homosexuality and pedophilia as though they’re the same thing, but they’re really not,” the student said.

Sam Diemel, a student who took Pesta’s Shakespeare course in spring 2018, filed a complaint against Pesta in 2019 that was later rescinded.

“[Pesta] is an absolutely fantastic educator for the few moments that he wants to talk about the class content,” Diemel said, “but, in general, I would say [he’s] really distracted with an alternative agenda that doesn’t have anything to do with the course.”

“Anyone who tries to even slightly challenge him and gets shut down; he really is very teacher-centric and he’s the authority in the room,” Diemel said.

Diemel said she didn’t feel uncomfortable for herself while in Pesta’s class, but for the others in the class.

“There were openly and non-openly trans and gender nonconforming students in my class who I knew well,” she said. “I was uncomfortable all the time because I knew that the things he was saying were directly attacking some of these people.”

Diemel said she also didn’t feel comfortable discussing Pesta’s conduct with him directly because she said “he is very good at maintaining himself as the leader in the room.”

When asked if Pesta brought up contemporary issues in his classes, all three students said he did.

“He’s really against modern people trying to force our modern views on Shakespeare,” Beauchamp said. “And the irony of that is in most of his classes, he focuses on [complaining about] socialism and Marxism, modern ideologies and our view on God.”

“Personally, I think if we’re not going to be talking about modern views, we shouldn’t be talking about any modern views including his own; that’s kind of

how his teaching is,” she added.

According to Diemel, “It felt like he was looking for an excuse to bring up those issues. He would essentially say, ‘OK, in the play that we’re reading right now we’ve got something to do with marriage. Speaking of marriage...’ and then he would say a bunch of things about how the sanctity of marriage is being ruined today.”

“Technically you’re relating it to the course material, but that is not enlightening my view on Shakespeare at all,” she added.

In regard to how Pesta used his class time, all three students brought up frequent, lengthy rants that took up class time.

“In my notes I have parts where I say, our class started at, I think, 11:30, and I’d say ‘it is now 12:15 and he hasn’t even started talking about Shakespeare yet’; he never stayed on topic during class,” Beauchamp said.

As for Pesta’s past dropped complaints, the anonymous student said they think the nature of the university’s investigation is partially to blame.

“It seems like the reason he gets away with it every single time is because the university accepts written submissions as evidence,” they said. “But I guarantee you if we had more people actually going into his classes and seeing exactly what he is saying, assuming he wouldn’t actually change what he says, then the university would probably come to a different conclusion.”

Beauchamp didn’t choose to file a complaint because “after he had mentioned how many complaints had been filed against him, it didn’t matter what I had to say.”

“It’s disappointing because the one day he did teach he was a wonderful professor,” Beauchamp said. “I would have enjoyed him if he had remained on topic and taught us Shakespeare.”

How has the pandemic impacted tourism?

By Joseph Schulz
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Oshkosh has long been known as “Event City,” as it attracts thousands of tourists each year for its various festivals and events.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, however, many of those events, including EAA AirVenture, Lifest, Rock USA, Country USA and countless other gatherings were canceled.

To better understand the impact of those event cancellations on tourism in Oshkosh, we spoke to Amy Albright, the executive director of the Oshkosh Convention and Visitors Bureau



Albright

(CVB).

This has been a strange year from a tourism perspective. Many of the iconic events in Oshkosh were canceled due to COVID-19, and people weren’t traveling quite as much. How was that impact felt in Oshkosh?

2020 has been an extremely challenging year for the hospitality and tourism industry. Obviously, that’s true of Oshkosh, as well, the state of Wisconsin, the country and, honestly, the world.

COVID has just made it really hard to encourage travel because it’s not safe at this point. And it also makes mass gatherings virtually impossible, which is a huge part of what drives tourism.

That means not being able to have concerts, not being able to have meetings and conferences

and really just the whole gamut.

There’s a really big trickle down effect when it comes to tourism. So if you think about AirVenture not coming, the hotels and the restaurants, and the hospitality world suffers.

But then all the other things that go along with events, so if you think about all the logistics, whether it’s, electrical services, bathrooms, tents and all of the other services that are needed for these events, the list just goes on and on and on and it’s just really hard to replace that kind of business.

How did the CVB have to change its practices to accommodate for the pandemic?

We’ve been focusing on “What can we do, right now?” Like, we can’t have AirVenture this year, we can’t host the other events, but what can we do? We

decided that supporting local and really try to rally our residents around what they could do in Oshkosh was the way to go.

We did everything, from encouraging takeout and delivery to making sure people know everything that’s going on in town, like an exhibit going on at the painter center, or to access parks and trails, just all the ways that they can engage with Oshkosh and, hopefully, spend some money and make some memories here while they can’t travel to other places.

The summer wasn’t terrible, but I think the fourth quarter of this year and the first quarter of next year are going to be rough because of the colder weather and differing guidelines from state to state.

The CVB has also been working on the “Love Oshkosh” campaign to en-

courage the community to wear masks and practice good social distancing practices. Would you be willing to talk a little bit about that and why it was important for the CVB to help spread that message?

We partnered with the city of Oshkosh and other partners in the community to launch a campaign called “Stay Safe, Love Local.”

Instead of being preachy in talking about the messages that are already out there, we really wanted to take a positive spin on it to say, “Here’s how businesses are staying open, and the protocols they’re following; and you can follow along with that.”

So, if you wear your mask, and you socially distance and you wash your hands, there’s a higher likelihood that businesses can stay in business.

Opinion

Be wary of caffeine intake during finals week

By Owen Peterson
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With the threat of finals week looming, many students will be preparing to engage in their semesterly toil, full of late-night night study sessions powered by UWO students’ (second) favorite legal drug: caffeine.

It’s common for college students to utilize caffeinated beverages such as coffee and energy drinks to provide them the energy that they need to power through their studies, but without careful moderation, excessive caffeine intake can have some unintended consequences.

First of all, what is considered excessive caffeine consumption? The FDA suggests that 400mg of caffeine is the most that a healthy adult should consume in a day.

That amount is roughly equivalent to “four cups of coffee,” but that isn’t really the most useful metric ever.

In slightly more relatable terms, using measurements from Reeve Coffee House, 400mg is roughly equivalent to two 20oz sweetened cold brews, one and a half 20oz unsweetened cold brews, two 20 oz iced coffees (without milk), or two and a half 16 or 20oz lattes.

In terms of products you can find in vending machines, Starbucks bottled frappuccinos range anywhere from 75 to 130mg and the canned Doubleshot espresso contains 110mg of caffeine.

Aside from coffee, energy drinks are also heavily used for additional energy. A 16oz can of Bang contains a whopping 300mg of caffeine, a 16oz Rockstar contains between 160 to 300mg, a 16oz Monster has 188mg and Red



Carter Uslabar / Advance-Titan

College students rely heavily on caffeinated beverages to get them through finals, but at what cost?

Bull has 80mg (albeit in a 8.4 oz can).

Some of the side effects of even moderate caffeine consumption are increased blood pressure, insomnia and, as if college students needed any more of it, anxiety.

These impacts in mind, it is easy to see how a heavy reliance on caffeine during finals week can make an already stressful time harder to deal with than it needs to be.

In the long term, regular caffeine consumption can also develop into a dependence, which itself has many negative effects. Once one begins to rely on caffeine for energy on a daily basis, withdrawal symptoms such as headaches, constant fatigue and even depressed moods may begin.

The whole “I can’t function without my morning coffee” idea

has more or less become a joke at this point, but not one without its base in truth. I’ve personally seen just how stressed and fatigued people can become once they have become used to caffeine supplying them the energy they need to accomplish their work.

I should clarify, though, that I’m not implying that one week of above-recommended caffeine consumption is going to destroy your body, ruin your life and cause you to fail all of your finals, but simply noting that, as with most substances, there is a healthy and unhealthy amount that you should be mindful of.

All that being said, there is a healthier alternative to stay energized and motivated during finals week.

The obvious alternative to con-

suming copious amounts of caffeine is to focus on your sleep.

While sleep hours may seem like a scarce commodity for a busy college study, getting adequate rest should always be a priority, especially in times of high stress like finals week.

Getting sufficient sleep is one of the best ways to maintain a high level of energy and keep your anxiety low, but excessive caffeine can be a hindrance to these natural processes.

Studies have shown that even daily levels of coffee intake can have serious effects on your sleep cycle and cause restless sleep and daytime drowsiness. This is especially true if you consume caffeine less than six hours before going to bed, which is among the many reasons that you should avoid all-

night studying.

Even though slamming your third or fourth coffee of the night at 11:30 p.m. may make you feel as alert and ready to cram for that test you forgot was tomorrow, this is probably not going to be the case.

When intentionally depriving yourself of sleep and tricking your body into being alert, not much learning will actually be taking place.

First of all, according to a Texas A&M study, your brain loses efficiency with each hour of sleep deprivation. This basically shows that, while you may feel up to the task of a long study session, your brain has no real interest in processing what you are “learning,” making your efforts futile when it comes to test time.

On top of that, late-night studying should also be discouraged because of a slightly more obvious reason: you need sleep to consolidate memories and learn new information.

Without sleeping enough to enter multiple stages of REM sleep, the stage of sleep where the storage of memories occurs, which occurs every 90 minutes during sleep, all of those terms and concepts you worked to memorize will probably not stick.

In other words, your extra three hours of studying will largely be in vain if you only end up getting six hours of sleep.

So, while it may feel like three additional shots of espresso the night before an exam will carry you to a better test score, this artificial energy boost is no substitute for getting good rest and letting your brain do its thing.

‘Words of the year’ are appropriately dreary

By Owen Peterson
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Last week, Merriam-Webster released its annual list of the “words of the year,” and, as per usual, it served as an imperfect but entertaining time capsule of the year.

Trying to define a span of 365 days with only a select few words is never an easy task, but 2020, more so than most years, had the luxury of being defined by one event, and this was reflected in the selections.

Merriam-Webster selects their words of the year by looking at the search traffic of certain words on their website as well as year-by-year increase in searches for the word. From this, they compile a list of the most significant words and present them in the list.

The selected word of the year was “pandemic,” and a plethora of other pandemic-related terms appeared in the runner-ups.

In addition to “pandemic,” “coronavirus,” “quarantine” and “asymptomatic” were all identified as words that defined this nightmarish year.

The list also captured the civil unrest of the year with “defund,” in reference to the movement to defund the police in response to police violence against Black people.

In a similar vein, “antebellum” made the list in part due to the controversy surrounding the name of

the band “Lady Antebellum.” In 2020, the band changed its name to “Lady A” due to the connections of the word “antebellum” to the enslavement of Black Americans before the Civil War.

Both “mamba” and “icon” got places on the list in response to notable deaths. “Mamba,” because of the “Black Mamba” nickname that Kobe Bryant gave himself, and “icon” because of its heavy usage in tributes to Ruth Bader Ginsburg and John Lewis.

On a much lighter note, the word “kraken” was deemed significant due to how much the word was looked up after the new Seattle NHL expansion team announced that its name would be the “Seattle Kraken.”

Controversially, “irregardless” made it on this list for a second year, its first being in 2016, and for the same reason as well. The word, yes, it’s a word, became a subject of debate on social media after various celebrities claimed that it was not, to which Merriam-Webster responded by pointing out that it has been in their dictionary since 1934.

President-Elect Joe Biden also had some representation on this list, with his trademark “malarkey” being a runner-up. This inclusion follows a trend of words being used by presidential candidates finding their way in this list. “Bigly,” as popularized by President Donald



Carter Uslabar / Advance-Titan

Merriam-Webster’s annual “words of the year” list takes a serious turn to reflect on this rough year.

Trump, and “shellacking,” used by former President Barack Obama in 2010, are two other notable entries in this ilk.

The last word to mention is “schadenfreude,” which, I have to say, is the most fun word on the list by a mile. This word, borrowed from the German language, means “enjoyment obtained from the troubles of others.”

The word garnered so much attention this year because of its increased use when Trump got COVID in early October, and was

often used to encapsulate the emotions of many in reaction to the incident.

Overall, the list does a decent job of encapsulating a lot of what 2020 was, but at the cost of some of the more outlandish words that have made it onto the list in the past.

In earlier years, the Merriam-Webster list has included fun words such as “defenestration,” “sardoodledom,” “ebullient” and “surreptitious,” but this year had a pretty decided lack of these kinds of words, and focused more on se-

rious topics.

It is likely that the spots usually dedicated to the likes of “dissident” were simply not present due to the heavy focus on COVID, which, to be fair, is more than justifiable.

I think the inclusion of the weirder words is what usually makes these lists fun to look at, but perhaps the slight shift in tone is appropriate considering the year 2020 has been.

Dear Chancellor Leavitt, I was wrong

By Joseph Schulz
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Dear Chancellor Leavitt,

I apologize. I was wrong. In an editorial earlier this semester, I predicted gloom and doom. I predicted that we would once again be sent home and forced to continue classes entirely online.

It was quite the sensational article. I accused you of lying, and disregarding our health and safety for financial gain. Moving students back to campus was a long-shot gamble, one in which you and I had placed starkly different bets.

Now that the semester is coming to an end, and we’re still here, I feel that it’s time to make amends and point out what went right.

This entire semester, administrators have worked tirelessly to keep students on campus. All of the email updates, policy tweaks and community testing paid off, as UW Oshkosh’s COVID-19 testing positivity rate had held steady around 4% after performing roughly 2,250 tests per week.

As a result, out of a student body of roughly 10,000 students, there were only 51 active coronavirus

cases from on-campus testing. For comparison, the university’s positivity rate of tests on campus was about 17% in late September, with roughly 450 active cases, according to UWO’s COVID-19 dashboard.

Administrators largely attribute the spike in September to moving thousands of students back to campus. After that immediate spike, the university and students increased their vigilance, preventing further spikes.

For example, there was not a significant spike in COVID-19 cases following Thanksgiving break.

In fact, on-campus testing at Albee Hall has seen a positive test rate of only 1.4% since Nov. 29, which is significantly lower than the semester’s overall positive test rate of 4%.

Administration contained the spread of COVID-19 on campus, without having to move classes online and quarantine thousands of students in residence halls like UW-Madison, the flagship UW institution.

As administration scrambled to contain COVID-19 and get that initial outbreak under control, so



The Advance-Titan

Joseph Schulz apologizes for an earlier editorial, which predicted an early end to in-person instruction, in an open letter to Chancellor Leavitt.

too were educators, who worked tirelessly, many delivering in-person and virtual classes simultaneously.

Those efforts have ensured that, for the most part, we’ve been able to receive a quality education this semester. It isn’t what it was before, but it couldn’t possibly be the same given the current situation.

At the end of the day, administrators, students, faculty and staff should all be proud of their efforts this semester. We defied the odds and made it work. Congratulations.

Sincerely,
Joe Schulz
Managing Editor
The Advance-Titan

Letters to the Editor

Don’t hold off on finding a job

By Connor Ziegler
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It is hard to find a job during a recession. As we all know by now, recessions bring nothing except high unemployment rates and leave people worse off than they were before.

Nobody wants to be in the position of not being employed for a period of time, especially college graduates who end up graduating at the time of a recession.

During a recession, some might tell college graduates to maybe hold off on finding a job right away and maybe pursue other things that can help them in the future like attending graduate school after earning a bachelor’s degree.

For example, people who graduated during the last recession of 2008-2009 might tell you that they held off on finding a job after graduating, because it was hard for everyone else to find a job at that time.

Since we are currently experiencing a recession given the COVID-19 pandemic, I think that this recession is different from past recessions and upcoming college graduates may not need to hold off on finding a job right away.

When recessions hit our economy, you always hear about people losing their jobs and people who can’t seem to find a job. According to the Federal Reserve Economic Data, the unemployment rate among college graduates between the ages of 20 and 24 in March of 2020 was 4.2%.

Once businesses started to close down for a brief period of time, that number soared to 20.4% in June 2020. If this number remained consistent for a couple of months, re-

cent college graduates might want to consider their options and maybe choose a different path than to join the labor force right away.

However, this does not seem to be the case of this current recession.

Over the next couple of months, since the unemployment rate among college graduates between the ages of 20 and 24 reached an all time high in June, that number quickly began to drop. In July, it dropped to 17.6%. Then it dropped even lower to 13% in August.

In September, that same unemployment rate dropped to 9.9%. Finally, in the month of October, the rate dropped to 7.9%, which one could say is starting to creep towards the average over the past couple of years.

With that being said, I believe that college students who plan on graduating in December of 2020 or May of 2021 shouldn’t worry about delaying on joining the labor force. This recession is different from past recessions, because the unemployment rate among college graduates has fallen dramatically in just a couple of months.

Whereas in previous recessions, the high unemployment rate remained relatively consistent or fluctuated rapidly during the months of the recession.

College students between the ages of 20 and 24 should not hesitate to join the labor force after graduation, because this recession is different in nature than in the past and they should find it relatively easy to obtain a job in the next couple of months, given the steady decline of the unemployment rate.

Meal plan problems

By Haley DeBauche
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I am currently a sophomore at UW Oshkosh, and I have had multiple issues with determining what type of meal plan option is best for me. There are a few different options, but none of them fit my financial and personal preferences, and other students have agreed with me and have encountered the same issues.

Since the beginning of my academic career at UWO, I have heard about meal plan issues from multiple people, such as friends, roommates and other UWO students. The issue of money and usefulness always tends to be a consisted concern amongst these individuals – myself included.

The usefulness and cost of the plans is the main issue that I would like to address. The meal plan options have changed just in my two short years here at UWO, and I am sure they will continue to change, but the options are not changing in the areas that are most important to college students: usefulness and cost.

I am aware that the university does offer restricted meal options for students with dietary restrictions and allergies, although it is a hassle for the students to go through this process, and there is

always a chance that the student may not like the meal they are offered with those restrictions. This is an issue of usefulness and is being utilized to the student’s full potential.

There are a few different solutions that should be implemented to encourage students to utilize their meal plans and be cost effective. The first solution is to implement cheaper meal plan options.

I understand the need for a meal plan for individuals on campus, but not all students utilize the meal plan and it becomes a financial issue. Personally, I utilize the platinum meal plan which is 100 meals for \$1,000 dollars. I am in week 11 of the academic semester and I have 80 meals remaining.

This seems like a waste of money to me, and I wish I could do something different. The meal plans to me are more expensive than they need to be for how much they are utilized overall.

A solution to the cost issue would be to create smaller meal plan packages for students, or don’t require a meal plan option at all. I understand the financial aspect that the meal plans have on the university, but it is not fair to the students financially.

Meal plans could determine if a student comes to UWO or not. They may have been impacted by

the pandemic in some way and may not be financially stable.

Implementing a meal-by-meal option could be an option, were a student can pay for the meals as they go or add them to their account and at the end of the semester it can be paid for. Plenty of students across campus have this issue and end up purchasing their own groceries each week and spending even more money that the majority of college students don’t have.

This year will be my last year of having a meal plan on campus, but I just want to try and help the future UWO students prepare for how meal plans are utilized and the cost of each meal plan and what it entails. Students may be picky eaters or only prefer certain things and this can lead to the “freshman 15” due to students eating pizza and burgers every day because that is the main source of food the dining hall offers.

Overall, a solution to this issue could be solved by simply asking the students who have meal plans what they would think of offering smaller packages and simply what they think of their options in general. Future UWO students should be aware of what they are getting into and be prepared.

Letter Guidelines

The Advance-Titan welcomes and reads all letters. Timely, well-written, provocative opinions on topics of interest at UW Oshkosh are given first preference.

All letters are subject to editing; not all letters can be published. Letters exceeding 300 words may be edited at the discretion of the Advance-Titan staff. Name, position, address and daytime phone number are required, although only name and email will be published along with the article.

The Advance-Titan does not publish anonymous or open letters and letters printed elsewhere.

If your letter is chosen for publication, we may attempt to contact you for verification via email or phone.

To submit your letter, email atitan@uwosh.edu.

Sports



Photos courtesy of Emil Vajgrt

The NBA regular season will begin on Dec. 22, and the Sacramento Kings play their first game on Dec. 23 against the Denver Nuggets. The 20-year-old will likely see pre-season action in some, if not all, of the team’s four preseason games. From Dec. 11 to Dec. 17, the team will play two preseason games against the Portland Trail Blazers and two preseason games against the Golden State Warriors.

The ‘King’ of Oshkosh

By Cory Sparks
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Out of the 7.8 billion people in the world, only 600 are able to say that they are on an episode roster before opening night of the regular season. Oshkosh native Tyrese Haliburton became one of those 600 when he was drafted 12th overall in the 2020 NBA Draft by the Sacramento Kings.

The number of NBA players will be cut down to 450 the night before the regular season, but judging by the Kings’ trust in Haliburton seeing that they picked him in the first round, it would take a lot for him to not make the team’s active roster.

Haliburton played basketball for Oshkosh North High School, and in his senior year he put up game averages of 22.9 points, 6.2 assists, 5.1 rebounds, 2.5 steals and 1.7 blocks. The Oshkosh native star had a high school career-high of 42 points against Kaukauna High School.

In his stellar senior year, Haliburton led the team to a 26-1 record.

Seen as a selfless player in high school, Haliburton received nothing but praise about his play from his high school coaching staff. His pass-first style of play at the point guard position stems all the way back to his days as a member of Oshkosh North.

The A-T attempted to contact Haliburton, but his agent stated that he is no longer doing local media stories.

“Ty’s style is a direct representation of who he is as a teammate. Ty loves to share the ball and get his teammates involved,” Oshkosh North basketball head coach Brad Weber said. “He would always pass up his own shot if he had a teammate open.”

Following his senior year of high school, Haliburton attended and played basketball at the University of Iowa State. In his first year as an Iowa State Cyclone, Haliburton had game averages of 6.9 points, 3.6 assists, 3.4 rebounds, 1.5 steals and 0.9 blocks.

He then took a huge leap during his sophomore year with game averages of 15.2 points, 6.5 assists, 5.9 rebounds, 2.5 steals and 0.7 blocks.

Haliburton’s biggest stand-out component is that he is an accomplished winner who hungrily

pursues winning at a high level. His array of accomplishments and winner mentality really helped him stand out of the crowd, according to his high school coach.

“He is a winner. [He is a] state champ, Big 12 tournament champ, USA gold medalist [and] any team he has been on has won,” Weber said. “Ty made people, and teams, better. There is one stat that Ty cares about — the win. His desire to do what the team needs to do so they can win is what set him apart from a lot of other players.”

Haliburton’s most significant area of improvement is his ability to become an all-around scorer. The pass-first guard has worked relentless hours in the gym in order to achieve his play as a scoring threat.

This improvement, combined with his ability to read the floor and understand the game well, brought Haliburton’s game to the next level throughout his high school and college years as he molded himself into an NBA prospect.

“His overall strength on the offensive end is the most notable improvement,” Weber said. “His vision, passing ability and

IQ have always been there. He now has a more complete offensive game. I had a chance to work him out when he was home before the draft, and was impressed with how consistent he is with his shot off the move and midrange.”

When Haliburton’s name was called in the 12th spot of the 2020 NBA Draft by the Sacramento Kings, the moment brought nothing but happiness to the star point guard’s coach. He sees Haliburton as someone who has worked for everything that he has earned, and his coach is thrilled to watch his not-so-young-anymore pupil take the NBA by storm.

“I am so excited for Ty and the Haliburton family. They have gone about it the right way. He has spent countless hours honing his craft and searching to be a better version of himself,” Weber said.

In terms of how the 20-year-old will fit on a young Kings team that had 31 wins and 41 losses in 2020, Haliburton’s high school coach sees him complimenting their backcourt quite nicely in a Western Conference that has become significantly harder over the course of the last decade.

“He is going to fit in nicely. It

is a young group that offers him a chance to earn playing time his first year. He will complement Fox and Hield in the backcourt,” Weber said. “Ty’s ability to play with the ball and off the ball will offer the Kings flexibility in their line-up and a greater ability to guard teams in the West who like to play a more guard oriented line up.”

From a high school showout in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, to a first round draft pick for the Sacramento Kings, Tyrese Haliburton is making it known that his purpose on the basketball court is to do whatever it takes to help the team that he is on win.

Haliburton’s character, just as much as his selfless play, will be a healthy mesh at the professional level with his new teammates, and his high school coach is thankful that the young guard’s selfless personality has not gone unnoticed.

“I love that the experts and analysts lead with his personality and character before they speak about his abilities and skill,” Weber said.

Arts & Entertainment

Managing editor wakes up, groans



By Joe Schulz
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Fall semester two years ago, during my junior year at UW Oshkosh, I made a series of decisions that would inevitably change the entire trajectory of my life. I had just moved out on my own, I was working at Walmart with a minor substance abuse problem and I really didn't have a whole lot of direction in my life.

It was then as I was sitting in my "media writing" course, a journalism major for all of 5 minutes, that Professor Vince Filak simultaneously put the fear of God in me and gave me something to strive toward.

Vince began giving the speech he gives at the beginning of every semester, barring a pandemic, about how it's very, very difficult to find a job in journalism if you don't do student media. He told the story of a talented writer he once knew, who didn't participate in student journalism and could not find a job upon graduation.

This freaked me out because, on a good day, I'm a halfway decent writer. So after class, I did the only logical thing I could think of: I emailed Vince and inquired about how to join The Advance-Titan. He connected me with Christina Basken and Nikki Brahm, former news editors at the A-T and the duo that really taught me how to be a reporter.

I was also in the "Intro to Radio" course offered by the Radio/TV/Film department, which boasted hands-on broadcast experience at 90.3 WRST-FM. The class was taught by Randall Davidson, a Fox Valley native and lifelong broadcaster. It was in RTF 120 where I learned that a kid from the Fox Valley could forge a successful career in media. Until then, I thought the only people working in media graduated from UW-Madison, Marquette or some Ivy League school.

Quickly after, the journalism department hosted its 50th Anniversary with keynote speaker Jim VandeHei, an Oshkosh native who rose to journalism heights. VandeHei's speech made me believe that if you work hard enough, stick to the facts and trust your gut, anything is possible.

At this point, a highly motivated and naive 21-year-old me began cranking out stories for The Advance-Titan. Soon after, I met Advance-Titan adviser and journalism department internship coordinator Barb Benish who helped me get more involved at the A-T and land a summer internship at The Ripon Commonwealth Press writing the seasonal tabloid, The Green Laker.

The next semester, I continued on in both student media organizations, meeting Calvin Skalet, Jack Tierney, Neal Hogden, Evan Moris and Cody Wiesner, a group of dudes that made me genuinely feel included. In fact, Calvin, Jack, Neal and Evan are still sworn to secrecy in regards to the events that took place after one night after a journalism conference. All I can say is that Evan was a college bartender, and I was trying to keep up when we went clubbing in Minneapolis. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

Anyway, I spent that summer learning from Tim Lyke and Jonathan Bailey, a pair of journalism pros. That summer, I learned that not every story needs a news lede and people like seeing photos of other people. It was the first time I was a paid staff member at a real newspaper, and I made every dumb mistake in the book before hitting my stride.

I returned to the A-T the next fall, sick of writing fluff pieces and ready to do "hard news," and was thrust into a leadership position that I was not ready for. I wasn't mature enough that first semester as Managing Editor. Tasked with ensuring everyone had content by production, and if they didn't plug the holes, I was not the easiest per-

son to work with. Thank God folks like Jack, Cody and Leo Costello were there to reel me back into reality. That semester I also built friendships with Kaitlyn Scoville, Amber Brockman and Bethanie Gengler, and ripped off Michael Scott's "Boom Roasted" scene from "The Office."

During the break between semesters, I had a couple of job interviews that didn't pan out and The Ripon Commonwealth had been sold, dimming the chances of my summer position being available. Additionally, this was the first time that I had experienced a sustained period of nothing because the A-T had wrapped up for the semester and I wasn't writing regularly. I was off for the first time in what seemed like forever, and I didn't really know what to do with myself.

Then, my dad had a heart attack and missed our family Christmas. We had a rocky relationship up until that point, but at the time I remembered thinking to myself, "What if the last conversation you ever had with your dad was an argument about whether to impeach the president?" Ultimately, the heart attack was a good thing because doctors found a blockage in my dad's heart that could have spelled doom if it had gone untreated. Even so, I grew up from that situation and, in a lot of ways, that winter of uncertainty prepared me for the next year.

When I returned to school in the spring, I was helping run the A-T and WRST, while writing for Miles Maguire's news blog, The Oshkosh Examiner, and The Oshkosh Herald. Let me tell you, that semester, the A-T was firing on all cylinders. Carter Uslabar, our fearless leader, was ensuring each page was visually appealing while being the best Arts & Entertainment reporter around; Amber and Kaitlyn were absolutely killing it on news every week with hard-hitting reports as well as fluffy features; Sophia Voight was letting her voice

be heard and spreading wisdom on the opinion page; Cory Sparks and Greg Sense (the sports bros) high-stepped it into the end zone on the sports page. Man, those were the glory days. Every Tuesday night was a party in the newsroom (figuratively speaking), and the paper looked stunning each and every week.

And then COVID-19 hit. We moved our production entirely online, abandoning the print product for months. The camaraderie of Tuesday nights was gone. Still, we forged ahead and managed to cover the early days of the pandemic, arguably better than The Oshkosh Northwestern. Amid the craziness of covering stay at home orders, business closures, event cancellations and criminal justice, a staff departure at The Ripon Commonwealth allowed me to return to my internship.

I've stayed on at the Commonwealth throughout my final semester at the A-T, reporting on local government, business and education. Unfortunately, due to industry pressures, the Commonwealth and The Oshkosh Herald are a few of the only local newspapers still doing it the right way. In returning, I'm still learning valuable lessons. For example, Tim taught that it's our duty to call out local officials when they are wrong, which has recently gotten me into a little trouble.

My only regret this semester is that I didn't spend enough time in Reeve 19. I've had to miss several production nights due to other work commitments and it eats at me sometimes. I spent three months missing my friends and missing the newsroom, but I'm gone most of the time.

Leaving is bittersweet. I'm ready to join the "real world" and, officially, begin working full-time at the Commonwealth. But at the same time, I'm definitely going to miss my friends and mentors at UW. The only part I won't miss is juggling three jobs and being a

full-time student.

There are too many people to thank each individually, but I'm going to list a few anyway because it's my article and I'll cry if I want to.

To Vince, thank you for putting the fear of God in me all those semesters ago, for teaching me the journalism rules, for encouraging me to reach out to The Herald, for always giving me a space to vent on-campus and for the amazing Vince memes on the A-T server.

To Randall, thank you for helping me see that someone from this area could have a career in journalism, for believing in me, for the endless stories, for always having something positive to say and for letting me call you on your home phone in retirement whenever I feel the need to chat.

To Miles, thank you for emphasizing "document-based reporting," which forced me to dig through court records, economic statistics and various other public documents, for giving me a place to publish work between semesters, for pushing me to be a better reporter and for letting us watch "The Post" in law class.

To Calvin, Christina, Jack, Neal, Carter, Cody, Amber, Kaitlyn, Sophia and the countless others, thank you for teaching me how to be a leader in the newsroom, for giving me space to grow as a journalist, for being good friends and for putting up with my shit each week (it's not easy). You are all way smarter than me and are either already off doing great things, or are well on your way.

To Barb, thank you for believing in me since I joined the A-T, for seeing leadership potential in me, for being my legal counsel, for being our "newsroom mom," for your never ending dedication to the A-T, for letting us have pizza parties at your house, for your nightlife policy when we're at conferences and for always being there for us. Seriously, Barb, you are a superhero.

Senior send-off: Copy chief’s caffeine-addled hands type thanks to family, friends

By Kaitlyn Scoville
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My college career began in September 2017. I was fresh out of high school and ready for a change. However, I was a commuter. I knew from the get-go that meeting new people and becoming active on campus from 30 minutes away would be difficult to do.

So, I started off by getting a job on campus. I got hired early in September at University Books & More and the Corner Convenience Store. It was convenient for me as I could walk straight to work after my day’s classes that I had already driven over to Oshkosh for.

After my first day of work at the C-store though, I had witnessed a car accident on the way home. For some reason, I took that as foreshadowing for how my career at UW Oshkosh was going to go. I had no idea what I wanted to do.

(Nobody was hurt in the accident, by the way. Maybe that meant something too.)

I was actively working and going to class, but something didn’t feel right yet. It felt almost exactly like how I functioned in high school in Ripon.

A year passed, and I had finally changed my major from communications to journalism, because I preferred writing over speaking.

Becasue after COMM111, my confidence in public speaking plummeted.

I knew I always wanted to have a career doing something that allowed me to interact with people and give the community something good and wholesome to think about. I didn’t think I could do that with a comm major.

During the Taste of UWO at the beginning of the fall 2018 semester, I came up to The Advance-Titan’s table where then-Editor in Chief Calvin Skalet was sitting so nonchalantly. A few of the week’s newspapers were strewn about, with a sign-up sheet right in the middle.

Naturally, I signed up. But unfortunately, I didn’t hear back until the following spring semester in 2019.

Christina Basken and Nikki Brahm reached out to me to start writing for the A-T. My first story was published on Feb. 28, 2019 about HERstory month.

I hadn’t even taken the baseline journalism courses yet, so I had no idea what I was doing. All I knew was that I had to interview at least three people and discuss what happened at the event. It was a mess, but Christina and Nikki met with me again and helped me learn the ropes — and I caught on quickly.

I had applied to be a news editor at the end of fall 2019. Christina and Nikki interviewed myself and a few other students for the position. Though I didn’t get the job, they suggested that I work on copy desk. It’s the table in the middle of the newsroom where some students sat, read and edited every story before they got published.

That was probably one of the best things that has happened to me in my college career, aside from starting at the A-T to begin with.

Since I began with the A-T, I have written 37 articles with them, gotten two opportunities freelancing for “real” newspapers, garnered skills in news writing and became the Copy Editing Chief in spring 2020.

English classes were never my strongest suit in school, but becoming a journalist has become a way for me to develop a new love for writing that I never had before.

I have nothing else to thank other than my time at the A-T. I’ve been to Washington, D.C. (for the first time ever) for a newspaper conference with a handful of my A-T friends, met Jim VandeHei, co-founder of Axios and UWO alumnus, and visited Milwaukee with Carter Uslabar and Amber Brockman for a NewsTrain, just to name a couple.

But most importantly, my time at the A-T has taught me to be more confident in what I do.

Whether it’s copy editing, writing a banger fluffy feature or a topical news story, I’ve shown myself a new side of me that I never thought existed.

I’ve grown as a writer, a speaker and a person. I can now talk interpersonally with-



out having a panic attack, take some decent photographs, send out some killer emails and put together a great story.

However, I still have several people to thank for getting me where I am today.

I would like to start by thanking my parents for pushing me to attend UWO despite my pessimistic attitudes leaving high school.

Christina and Nikki, thank you for helping me dissect the block of text I had for my first story and teaching me the inverted pyramid and paraphrase-quote before Vince Filak even did. And thank you for putting me on copy desk.

Filak, thank you for letting me come to cry in your office whenever I was on campus with an existential crisis. I still owe you that case of Diet Coke.

Barb Benish, thank you for being the best adviser there is.

Cody Wiesner, thank you for being the best Copy Chief and walking dictionary/AP Stylebook that I have ever met. I have dozens of colored pens now because of copy desk.

Joe Schulz, thank you for believing in my writing abilities and helping me get my freelancing opportunities with The Oshkosh Herald and The Ripon Commonwealth Press. I can’t thank you enough for getting my foot in the door, and I’ll miss you jamming out to ‘80s music in the newsroom until 1 a.m.

My beautiful girlfriend Hailey Vadnais, thank you for being so supportive and my cheerleader when I didn’t believe in myself. And thank you for helping me stop my caffeine addiction.

Ryan Phillipson, thank you for being the best boss at the C-store/Bookstore I’ve ever had, even though I’ve been there longer than you (we’re going to ignore the fact that’s going to change soon, though).

Anna Liedtke, Alex Bullock, Mallory Villwock and Noah Abhold, thank you for being the best coworkers at the C-store/Bookstore. I’m going to miss our antics.

Heidi Docter and Kira Moericke, thank you for being banger copy editors.

And Heidi, take next semester as the next Copy Chief in stride. You’re gonna crush it.

As I’ll be walking out the door of the newsroom on Dec. 8, I’m sure I will probably shed a tear or two behind my mask. I wouldn’t have had the opportunity to chase my dreams, or even had the idea of what my dream could look like, if it wasn’t for The Advance-Titan.

Thank you.

Looking to get involved next semester?

Join The Advance-Titan

email atitan@uwosh.edu for more information

make friends • build your portfolio • open to students of any major • learn meaningful skills