

Feature Story

UWG Theatre Program



Twenty years ago, UWG's theatre program had only two faculty members and 12 majors. Today, the program has little semblance to its former self, as each semester members of the program work hard to actively travel and recruit for their growing student body. The theatre program is a nationally-accredited program with eight faculty members and approximately 60 majors.

Shelly Elman, director of theatre, calls the program a "blue collar theatre program" because of the hard work of the faculty and students –which is reflected in their productions. The skills that students develop in the theatre program include problem solving; making strong, bold and risky choices; being able to approach a challenge or a plan in a calm and productive way; techniques of acting; computer-aided design software; how to build and repair scenery; how to make costumes; and many more.

Students also play a major role in choosing what productions are done and how they are produced. "I think it allows them to make their own choices and their own opportunities," says Professor Elman. Another significant opportunity for students is to attend three theatre conferences during the spring semester, allowing students to be involved in a number of diverse workshops. UWG's theatre program also hosts a variety of workshops for those involved in all areas of theatre arts.

An important arm of the theatre program is the UWG Theatre Company, where majors and non-majors are involved in theatrical productions. There are five shows each year and a holiday murder mystery dinner theatre production to raise funds in the fall. Theatre majors are required to participate in these productions, and they must play different roles each time. When a production is totally student driven, faculty members mentor those students who direct, write or design. Producing a show is an extensive process that begins with marketing months before rehearsals start. Six weeks before the play, the director meets with the set and costume designers to discuss the visual elements and conceptual message of the play. After this, they meet once a week for a month to establish the designs. Designs must be completed by the first rehearsal so that the scene and costume shops can begin their builds for that production.

For auditions, actors have to prepare monologues and songs. When persons are chosen to fill all of the roles, a rigorous rehearsal schedule begins. Students rehearse Monday through Friday, 6:30pm – 10pm, and also on some Saturdays. Rehearsals take place until load-in — the day the set, lights and props are moved into the performance space. Load-in is followed by technical week – which begins 10 full days before opening night. Then, on the nights leading up to the show, dress rehearsals and a final dress community preview occur before the actual performance.



Part of the mission of the UWG Theatre Company is to ensure that students are involved in all aspects of the production process. There are two plays per season that students have the opportunity to write, direct, design and market. The motto of the UWG theatre program is "where success is an attitude," and it would be difficult to attain such a high level of success without the hard work of the faculty to complement the efforts of the students. "Our faculty are among the best and most hardworking faculty on campus and care deeply about every single student," says Dr. Pauline Gagnon, interim chair of Mass Communications and Theatre Arts.

INSIDE....

Faculty Spotlights:
Dr. Carolyn Sawtell
Dr. Elizabeth Kramer
Dr. Michael Orsega

Staff Spotlight:
Mrs. Jill Stallings

Events Calendar



Faculty Spotlight:

Dr. Carolyn Sawtell

Department of Sociology and Criminology



Dr. Sawtell has a background in K–12 education, but after becoming interested in inequality in education, she entered the field of sociology. She received both her master's and doctorate in sociology from Florida State University and is in her second year at UWG.

Courses that Dr. Sawtell teaches include Violence Against Women; Gender and Work; Sociology of Education; Statistics; Sex, Sexuality, and the Hookup Culture; and Marriage and Family. She says that the program offers interesting classes that are based on students' interests, and that there are many talented students in the sociology courses. "I like the small classes and the fact that I can teach via discussion rather than lecture," she says.

Currently, Dr. Sawtell researches the consequences of sexual abuse and sexual violence, specifically, whether women who have been raped have higher levels of depression and why. She is also looking at the changing definition of rape and the consequences of domestic violence. Within the Department of Sociology and Criminology, Dr. Sawtell is developing online sociology courses. Additionally, she is working to publicize the women's studies minor, which she directs. The program, established in 1993, is the interdisciplinary study of the impact of gender on individuals' lives.

In her spare time, Dr. Sawtell enjoys attending community events and parades. She also enjoys spending time with her son and volunteering at his UWG pre-K program.

Faculty Spotlight:

Dr. Elizabeth Kramer

Department of Music

In Dr. Kramer's five years at the University of West Georgia, she has been teaching students the history of more than 2,000 years of music.

Dr. Kramer received her doctorate in musicology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She teaches music major courses, music history, string methods, a graduate music history seminar, graduate research methods, and some liberal arts core classes, including music appreciation and world music.

Her primary research methods lie in 18th and 19th century music and culture from Germanic-speaking Europe, which is the area she explored in her dissertation and on which she publishes and gives presentations. Originally a violinist, Dr. Kramer recently started a new project that considers the role of the violin in jazz and popular music. She also loves early music and in her free time tries to get more students involved in playing Renaissance instruments such as the viola da gambas and recorders, which are held by the UWG Department of Music.

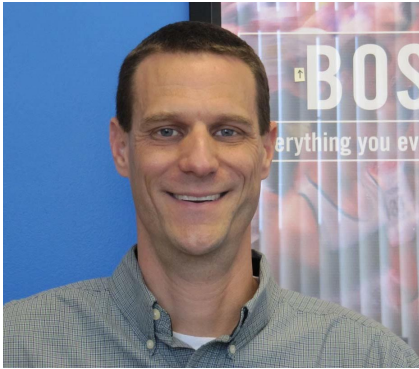
"I think music is an amazing form of human expression, both when it is coupled with other arts like visual arts, drama and literature and as music alone," she says. Dr. Kramer is a coordinator for the arts division of UWG's annual Big Night, which highlights undergraduate research in a number of disciplines. Students from the fine and performing arts who demonstrate a high level of scholarship can share their art with a wider audience.

Dr. Kramer enjoys reading, traveling and spending time with friends and family.



Faculty Spotlight:

Dr. Michael Orsega Department of Computer Science



Very few University of West Georgia professors can say they have a student in one of their classes who lives in Australia. Dr. Orsega is one of those professors.

Dr. Orsega received his bachelor's degree in physics from Penn State, his master's in applied mathematics from the University of Georgia, and his doctorate in computer science from the University of Tennessee. He has been at UWG since August 2009.

He says his experience thus far has been good, and he enjoys working with colleagues and students. "It's fun to help people do stuff they didn't know how to do before," he says.

Along with Dr. Orsega's Computer Science I and II classes at UWG, he has been teaching online non-credit courses for seven years. The courses are offered through Education To Go, the largest provider of online education for adults. Students register for the interactive classes through Distance Learning and learn with the online textbook, written by Dr. Orsega.

Currently, Dr. Orsega is working on getting his doctoral research published. His research is about a computer program that helps teach data structures. Also, along with a friend in the field of educational psychology, Dr. Orsega studies educational persistence, which involves presenting questions to students in different ways that increase the likelihood of completion.

In his free time, Dr. Orsega enjoys eating and wishing for more free time. He also enjoys running and ran the more than 26-mile Boston Marathon in 2003.

Staff Spotlight:

Mrs. Jill Stallings Department of Chemistry

Mrs. Stallings has worked in more departments in her time at the University of West Georgia than many people have even visited.

She worked for three and a half years in the Department of English before leaving in 1978 when she had her first child. Mrs. Stallings returned in 1987 and worked in several departments, including: the Department of Nursing, Facilities and Grounds, the Board of Regents, and the Department of Music. She now works as the administrative assistant in the Department of Chemistry.

Mrs. Stallings' job responsibilities include keeping the budget, ordering supplies, overseeing students who work in the office, maintaining office machines, assisting faculty with projects and much more.

One of the biggest changes that Mrs. Stallings has experienced in her time here is everything going from being on paper to being online. She has also watched the campus change from a small university to town within itself. "It is not a boring job. There is always something new," she says.

Mrs. Stallings says that she also enjoys her interaction with students and the respect and thoughtfulness she gets from the faculty. "That makes the difference in wanting to go to work instead of having to go to work," she says.

Mrs. Stallings enjoys being outside, especially when she is working in the yard or watching her grandchildren play.



Get Your Achievements Recognized

We want to hear from you!
From awards, events, publications, research projects to grants, we believe that your hard work should be recognized. Please send your Associate Dean the information necessary - and who knows? You may be the next spotlight in "The Connection!"

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA

DEAN *Dr. George Kieh*

ASSOCIATE DEANS

Dr. Denise Overfield

Art, English, Foreign Languages & Literatures, Mass Communications, Music, Philosophy, Theatre Arts

Dr. Timothy Schroer

Psychology, Sociology, Criminology, Political Science & Planning, History, Anthropology

Dr. Duane Yoder

Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Geosciences, Math, Physics

STAFF

Donna Hornbuckle
Staff Assistant

Brenda McCrary

Faculty Records Coordinator

Annette Pritchett

Scheduling Coordinator

Kimily Willingham

Budget Coordinator

NEWSLETTER:

This newsletter is a collaboration among the Dean's Office, The Department of Art (Graphic Design) and Mass Communications.

Writing: Larissa Sawyer

Mass Communications Intern

Supervising Faculty:

Dr. Amber Smallwood

Design: Elizabeth Bearden

Graphic Design Intern

Supervising Faculty:

Joey Hannaford

Events Calendar

April 9 - Executive Committee Meeting

April 16 - Math Day

April 18 - Closing Performance of Bat Boy: The Musical

April 22 - COAS General Faculty Meeting

April 29 - Spring General Faculty Meeting

May 3 - Regents' Teaching Excellence Awards

May 8 - Graduation

May 31 - Memorial Day

the connection

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA

1601 MAPLE STREET
CARROLLTON, GA 30118

WWW.WESTGA.EDU/COAS