At the University of West Georgia, we are in the business of transforming lives, and we are focused on success. With so many advancements at UWG, our campus is constantly brimming with excitement. Through the Points of Pride, we celebrate these achievements and examine our success through the four major Strategic Imperatives of our Strategic Plan – Student Success, Academic Success, Partnership Success and Operational Success. Congratulations to all those who have strived for excellence and have achieved it!

September and October 2019

STUDENT SUCCESS

• Five UWG Tanner Health System School of Nursing (THSSON) Ed.D. students – Jennifer Castleberry, Bonnie Fellows, Meredythe Goodreau, Lisa Hesser, and Catherine Whitley – along with their instructor, Dr. Delene Volkert, had an article accepted for publication in the prestigious nursing journal “Nursing Education Perspectives.” In addition to the manuscript, a poster was presented at the recent National League for Nursing Education Summit, in Washington D.C. Volkert and three of the students – Fellows, Goodreau, and Hesser – were able to attend the conference and present.

• Rachel Park, a graduate student in the speech-language pathology program in the College of Education (COE), won first place for “Off the Beaten Path” from the Office of Education Abroad for her picture from the College of Education’s trip to Ecuador in March 2019.

• Monica Johnson, a current undergraduate student in COE’s Health and Physical Education program, received the Undergraduate Student Scholarship from the Georgia Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance (GAHPERD) in recognition for her outstanding work and dedication to her program of study.

• J. Antoine Shade, a current graduate student in the Ed.S. in Secondary Education program (Biology) in COE, has been named the 2019-20 Teacher of the Year at Sweetwater Middle School in Gwinnett County, where he teaches STEM.
• The SR Education Group named UWG the No. 6 best online college in Georgia. The rankings were determined by the universities’ annual tuition rates and median alumni salaries.

• Dr. Tori Ivy, assistant professor for Health and Physical Education in COE, is the recipient of the Young Scholar Award from the International Association for Physical Education in Higher Education.

• Bridgette Stewart, senior lecturer and Health and Community Wellness Program Coordinator in COE, has joined the Board of Directors for the National Wellness Institute for a three-year appointment. Stewart has also been named a 2019 Chancellor’s Learning Scholar.

• Agnieszka Chwialkowska, assistant professor of marketing in the Richards College of Business, was selected as the Center for Diversity and Inclusion Resident Scholar. She presented “Overcoming Consumers’ Barriers to the Adoption of Green Behaviors” at the 2019 AMA Summer Marketing Academic Conference and “How Culture Influences Propensity to Act Green?” at the 15th Vaasa Conference on International Business in Vaasa, Finland. Additionally, a third paper, “A Relationship Knowledge Development Process: An Opportunity Space Odyssey,” has been accepted presentation at the 45th annual Conference of the European International Business Academy.

• Dr. Dena Kniess, assistant professor of Counselor Education and College Student Affairs in COE, received $1,000 from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators to help fund research that will contribute to the understanding of competency development in graduate preparation programs in student affairs.

• UWG’s THSSON received the National League for Nursing Center of Excellence award at the NLN Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. THSSON was one of only 10 schools of nursing across the country selected for this honor.

• Dr. Andy Walter, professor of geosciences in the College of Science and Mathematics (COSM), was quoted in an issue of “Sports Illustrated” on the placement of Atlanta athletics venues.

• UWG’s THSSON is listed on Online-PhD-Degrees.com’s list of Top 20 Online Doctor of Nursing Education Degree Programs in 2020. The list, which is not ranked, is based on online availability, quality of coursework, and affordable tuition, among other criteria.
• UWG’s COE ranked ninth for the 2019-2020 Best Initial Teacher Certification Master’s Programs list from Teacher.org. The college was also ranked No. 16 for Best Online Master’s in Special Education by Online Schools Report and No. 26 for the best online teaching degree programs in the country by Study.com.

• Dr. James Dillon, professor of psychology in the College of Social Sciences (COSS), published a book titled “Inside Today’s Elementary Schools” with Palgrave-Macmillan Press. The book takes readers on a tour of a day in the life of a public elementary school in an effort to give parents and other stakeholders a sense of the realities of the classroom.

• Richards College of Business professors of economics Drs. David Boldt and Mary Kassis’ article, “Factors Impacting Student Success in Introductory Economics Courses,” has been accepted for publication in the “Journal for Economic Educators.”

• Dr. Kimberly Green, associate professor in the Richards College of Business, recently presented “Lessons from the Corporate 1—K for Management Classes” at the Academy of Management Conference.

• Dr. Jennifer Allen, assistant professor in the Department of Literacy and Special Education in COE, was named UWG’s nominee for the Regents’ Outstanding Teaching Award, and Dr. Diana Mindrila, associate professor in the Department of Leadership, Research, and School Improvement in COE, was named UWG’s nominee for the Regents’ Outstanding Online Teaching Award.

• UWG’s THSSON partnered with UWG Health Services in October to hold an immunization clinic in which nursing students vaccinated 300 students, faculty, and staff within a timeframe of only six hours. This not only impacts the health of our campus population, but helps students academically by reducing missed class time due to illness.

• Kerri-Anne Williams was named the 2019 Northwest Learning Community Assistant Principal of the Year. She is an alumna of the Educational Specialist degree program from COE and currently serves as assistant principal of Northwood Elementary School in Roswell, Georgia.
COE’s Dr. Olivia Uwamahoro Williams, in partnership with West Virginia University, has received a grant totaling more than $2.2 million from the U.S. Rehabilitation Services Administration. The project, titled “Innovative Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) training for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors,” will establish innovative and flexible evidence-based training pathways for knowledge and skills enrichment for vocational rehabilitation counselors who work with youth with disabilities.

Dr. Melissa Johnston, associate professor of School Library Media in COE, is able to extend her current project “Rural Engagement to Advance Learning in STEAM Digitally (REALISD)” with supplemental funding of $198,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Monica Smith, Assistant Dean of Richards College of Business, is the newest board member for the Community Foundation of West Georgia.

Kim Holder and the Center for Economic Education & Financial Literacy recently received a $20,000 Community Innovation Grant funded by the Community Foundation of West Georgia.

Dr. Lara Willox, along with co-PIs in COE Dr. Angela Branyon, Dr. Logan Arrington, Brian Lane, and Gina Brandenburg, received a grant from the Alice Huffard Richards Fund, a component of the Community Foundation of West Georgia. The $6,901 amount provided from the grant will go toward their project, “Creating a Seamless Summer: Bringing Innovative Activities to Haralson County.”

Share your story and tell us your own Point of Pride. For more information and to submit, visit westga.edu/ucm/points-of-pride.php