



ZU Magazine *Grit*

ISSUE 5

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

H

ey readers! Welcome to the fifth issue of ZU Magazine. This theme's issue is "Grit."

We chose the theme way back in February. This theme has been popping up in our last few brainstorm sessions, and we felt that it was finally the right time to make it our theme.

In this issue you'll find stories of people overcoming odds through "grit" — the raw determination to reach a goal no matter what tries to get in the way. Grit can take the form of resistance and disruption or of creativity and optimism. It's the blood, sweat and tears born of passion and purpose.

In light of the global pandemic, I think it's important now more than ever to highlight these stories of grit — but also to give space to acknowledge how it's affecting us. Many of us are affected by our school's decision to move academics online and send us home. Many of us seniors are grieving because our last days of college are cut short, we may never see some of our dear friends again and our graduation ceremony is canceled. And it's hard, and our hearts are heavy. But there is still hope.

I find it in conversations with my friends, which never fails to lift my spirits. I see it echoed in jokes and memes online, which tells me that the world hasn't lost its sense of humor. And I feel it knowing that amid all of this chaos, there is a God who carries us. In the words of fellow student Jacob Spencer, "as this time feels overwhelmingly staggering, I am so thankful to worship a God whose light, love, peace and power cannot be quarantined. At the end of some of the most sacred times of college, there is a God who is appointing us to a new and greater beginning."

I must of course thank editors Ruby and Cheyenne for always being on top of their game. Art directors Sienna and Olivia did an especially lovely job designing this issue. And to our staff writers, thank you for your hard work and beautiful stories. I feel like each person involved in the magazine poured a little extra of themselves into this issue, and I want to thank everyone for that. I love working with you guys.

I think all of this has taught me that "grit" comes when you decide that the hope set before you is worth the pain you're about to endure. Holding the hope and the hardship in tension with each other? That's called faith. And I have faith in a Good Shepherd. And I have faith in us.

Yours,

Micaela



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COLLEGE WAS A CRUTCH

By Jacob Spencer

As I anticipated the last eight weeks of school,
I imagined photographs on the last day of class.
I imagined saying goodbye
to my friends and favorite professors,
parting ways with my go-to spot on Cougar Walk.
I imagined walking into UTCC for the last time,
mindful of the sacred opportunity
to worship in this community.

Never did I imagine
finding out that I had already sat in my last class,
experienced my last walk down East Campus,
and would never see some classmates again.

Never did I imagine
my friends being too scared to hug me for the last time,
watching my roommates pack up mid-March,
while they heard me cry on the couch at their exit.

Never did I imagine
athletes having senior nights with no fans
or entire seasons canceled,
students losing jobs and their food security,
all to sit and spiral,
trapped in their desolate apartments.

Never did I imagine a canceled graduation ceremony.

Never did I imagine it being over this soon.

I imagined learning to walk on my own in the next eight weeks.
But the crutch of college was ripped from under my arms
and all I have are two broken legs.

We will learn to walk again.

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GRITS FOR BREAKFAST

Life with a Girl Dad

By Kelsey Arvidson

It was exciting moving into our third house as a family. Every day we would play on the street and in the backyard pretending to live in a fairy forest. Every morning the smell of grits would waft down the hallway into my room. My dad loved them and would make them all the time, so I followed suit, perking up and jumping out of bed, picturing the golden maple syrup pouring over the mushy grains.

I love grits. But don't get me wrong, it was a process.

My dad is a "girl dad," but he raised me to be tough. I learned that sometimes you grow to adapt to the things that aren't ideal. The first time I spooned a pile of grits into my mouth, I gagged from the combination of texture and blandness. My distaste melted away as I glanced at my dad's smile, watching me become a person who makes their own decisions.

Hmm. Maybe grits don't taste so bad.

My caffeine addiction began in high school — the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. I would wake to the sound of coffee beans roasting. The thin walls of the house failed to mask the jolting sound at 6 a.m.

My first sip of coffee was met with a scowl of distaste. "This tastes like socks!" I exclaimed. A bold claim considering I have yet to consume socks. My dad convinced me that it was the origin of beans that have a sweet taste. I desperately tried to pick up the notes of cherry or chocolate, convinced I was also a coffee connoisseur.

Come sophomore year of high school, the sound of beans grinding became music to my ears. Each sip gave me joy because we were alike for even more reasons — two peas in a pod. I used to hate the bitter taste of coffee but I learned to see the world from a sweeter side, like my Dad. We still had our chosen differences, separating our commonalities. He preferred a darker roast, savoring the bitter aftertaste. I stuck to my vanilla lattes until recently, falling into the cold brew hype.

My dad used to play beach volleyball, and after hearing all the stories, I joined a recreation volleyball team. Like most kids, I tried all of the sports and activities. For my own sanity, I had to narrow down my extracurricular activities as I got older. A tough decision between a clarinet, running shoes or a volleyball.

Most days, my dad would get home from work exhausted from the long day. I would be practicing in the backyard, throwing my volleyball onto the roof trying to predict where it would land to work on my reaction time (debatably not a good method). The back

French doors would open and he would come out to play volleyball with me. His one rule was to not go easy on me, which improved my skill level.

I decided volleyball was my passion.

Throughout my 21 years, I've adapted my own lens on life. I learned to love and embrace a challenge. Grits, coffee and volleyball normally wouldn't make sense together but it's what my dad taught me to love through hard lessons. And grits aren't all that bad!

THE POWER OF THE WORD YES

By Maria Echeverri

What' and 'if' are two words as non-threatening as words can be. But put them together side-by-side and they have the power to haunt you for the rest of your life."

That quote from the movie "Letters to Juliet" illuminates what can happen when you question your decisions.

What if I said yes when everyone else said no?

What if I said yes when I thought I couldn't?

What if I said yes even when it didn't seem possible?

What if I said yes even when I was afraid?

Have you ever been afraid of saying yes to an opportunity because you felt you weren't good enough? Or, perhaps you were afraid of failure?

Human beings strive for comfort and security; unusual situations and lack of stability make us feel out of place. We are afraid to leap into the unknown and would rather pass on an opportunity that might seem too good for us. When our mentality is set on having everything we want, when we want it, and as fast and accessible as we can have it, we settle for the ordinary and throw aside what could be extraordinary. We would rather say "No, maybe next time" or "No, that is impossible," instead of thinking about the possibility of maybe. We say no because we are human and the fear of losing what we have overpowers our ability to respond to what we could achieve.

Shifting your mindset from a state of impossible to possible can create a whole new perspective for our goals and dreams. This extraordinary journey begins by saying yes. The power of this three-letter word is taking that first step into the unknown. It is having faith in something you may not see right away. It is an action of determination and perseverance. It is a test for patience and endurance.

This is something that every individual is capable of saying. It is leaving behind fears and worries that cloud your path to achieve all your dreams and goals.

This journey will not be easy; it is not given, it is worked for. It is a journey that requires more than just one attempt, it involves trial and error. Saying yes may result in failure, but from failure we learn to recover. It is from this recovery that we acquire a stronger drive and an extra push to continue working towards a goal. When we say yes, we take a state of willingness. We expect any outcome, positive or negative, and are ready to push through it.

If you knew that this three letter word could make your life extraordinary, would you say yes?

Yes, I can do it.

Yes, it is possible.

Yes, I will keep trying.

Yes, I won't be afraid.



SACRIFICES OF LENT

By Brandon Gonzales

You are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

This fateful truth within Genesis 3:19 is the way we begin the season of Lent. It serves as a humble reminder to humankind that despite all of the triumphs we accomplish in this life — the fortunes we find, the good deeds we perform — all of them will fade away.

Without the Lord, what good can we possibly offer to this dying world? What amount of work can equate to what he did for humanity as he hung on that tree, completely exposed, beaten and thirsty?

Our answer is found in Isaiah 64:6: “We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like a polluted garment.”

The truth is, without God we amount to nothing.

The idea that there is absolutely nothing I can do to repay the Lord for what he has done for me is astounding. I cannot wrap my head around the fact that there is no parochial duty I can perform, no mantra I can repeat, no prayer I can offer to meet the standard he set by dying for me.

This truth may cause some to wonder, “Why should I try to repay God in the first place?” However, I posit that it should instead increase our awe of him and urge us to worship from the depths of our souls.

Personally, I was not raised to observe Lent. Going to a Pentecostal church meant that I was to worship differently than most Christians. We were the Holy Rollers. Not exactly the contemplative type. I enjoyed this style of worship and still love to partake in it, but in recent years, I’ve found that my own faith needed a good dose of routine reflection and sacrifice.

Many of us have decided to leave all meat, except fish, out of our diet. Some may have decided to refrain from scrolling through Twitter and Instagram and instead turn through the pages of God’s Word. I have decided to avoid all drinks besides water, all sugary foods such as pancakes, donuts, cookies and ice cream, and to catch up on my year-long reading plan through the Bible.

Performing these actions have certainly proven to be sacrifices. Through them, I have learned that I have so much to offer the Lord but have often chosen to hold these things near and dear to my heart as opposed to him alone.

The \$60 I spend on coffee each month can be 60 more dollars that I give as an offering to my local church. The wasted sugary calories I consume can be wholesome calories that provide me with the energy to do God’s will. The time that I, and 37 percent of our student body, spend each day doing nothing but streaming Netflix can be time spent with the Lord, asking the Holy Spirit to illuminate his revealed Word.

These small sacrifices are steps toward a greater goal: sanctification.

The mission of everyone who calls themselves a Christian is to be more like Christ. We should be actively seeking out humility, courage, kindness and faithfulness in every season, not just Lent.

These 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Resurrection Sunday are reminders to serve God with our whole hearts. We are not called to offer a portion of our lives, but instead must be ready and willing to sacrifice our lives for the cause of Christ.

One of the great tools that recently convicted me is David Platt’s sermon, “Divine Sovereignty: The Fuel of Death Defying Missions.” In this sermon, Pastor Platt tells the story of a missionary in Romania who underwent torture and interrogation.

After being kidnapped and turned into a receptacle of violent beatings and vigorous questioning, the missionary turned to his six oppressors and told them, “What is taking place here is not an encounter between you and me. My God is teaching me a lesson through you ... you will only do to me what God wants you to do and you will not go one inch further because you are only an instrument of my Lord.” Platt continued to proclaim that the missionary only saw those six interrogators as his Father’s puppets.

It is an outrageous thought to ponder — that I may groan about my own sacrifices while others are losing their lives for Christ. Giving up certain foods or spending more time with him is the least we can do to offer God praise.

Let us not only worship him with our actions in this season, but in spirit and in truth in every season.

These 40 days should not be a time of ritualized practice, but a time of true sacrifice and conviction.



HOW TO START OVER

When the unthinkable happens, learn how to change your thinking

By Rose Hoos

A year ago, I was a liberal studies major with a solid plan to graduate, finish all of my tests and become a teacher as soon as possible. I had wonderful friends and a community that I loved. I was content. I had been planning to be a teacher since I was six and I was finally learning to be one.

My whole life changed in five minutes. My hometown changed in five days.

A mass shooting. My brother is missing. A friend of mine is on the news, all shaken up. We know the shooter. A raging fire. The community is burned to the ground.

My friends and family ended up being okay, but many other dear friends of mine were not so lucky.

Now I wanted to live a life that mattered, that helped someone. I wanted to give a voice to the victims of tragedies whose lives had been stolen from them. I wanted to make a difference.

I had chose to become a teacher because I thought I would be good at it; I liked working with kids and I had an excellent role model whose footsteps I could follow. However, this was not a good enough reason for me anymore.

I spent a semester trying to figure out what I wanted to do. I listened to the suggestions of those close to me and I evaluated my choices from there. I ended up taking some general education classes, some political science classes and some journalism classes. Journalism is where I found my voice.

Fortunately, I have parents who supported my decision and wanted me to find what I wanted to do. I have a community of friends and mentors who were willing to walk alongside me and helped me to

find my voice. I found a supportive community in my new major and people willing to help me learn and adapt my skills for the work I wanted to do.

This support made it easier to keep going when things got hard. I needed to take my casual narrative voice and adapt it to fit a concise news format, but that skill did not come easy. I had difficulty adjusting to a new class style with new classmates and new skills.

Many people were confused by my decision to change directions. Completing a new major would take an extra semester. I wouldn't graduate with many of my friends and my scholarship would expire. Why would you do this to yourself? Why would you not simply continue on the path you know works? I didn't have an answer for a while; I simply knew that this is what I needed to do.

The answer I have found as I have continued to learn and grow in my field is that this is where I belong. Journalism combines my talent and my passion. Recording a podcast, writing a story, filming an interview — these mediums give a voice to people who may not have one otherwise and that is what I hope to accomplish.



OVERCOMING THE MIND

Learning to push your limits further than you ever thought possible is all in the mind

By Micah Roth

The mind is something we often sell short. Today's society tells us that we always need to be happy and if you face any sort of hardship, it's okay to give up. Choosing to stick it out even when it gets to be too much can feel impossible. How can we push our breaking point further and further away?

When I think of tough people, I think of Navy SEALs. Brandon Webb, Navy SEAL sniper and author of "The Red Circle: My Life in the Navy SEAL Sniper Corps and How I Trained America's Deadliest Marksmen," explains, "There is a common [misconception] that to make it through SEAL training, you have to be a super athlete. Not so. In its purely physical requirements, the course is designed for the average athletic person to be able to make it through."

Hearing this should open everyone's mind to the fact that we can all do more than we ever thought possible. Whether you are a student, a CEO or the average 9-5 p.m. worker, this type of toughness is already inside of us; it is just about teaching ourselves that we can go much further.

"What SEAL training really tests is your mental mettle," continued Webb. "It is designed to push you mentally to the brink, over and over again, until you are hardened and able to take on any task with confidence, regardless of the odds — or until you break."

Pushing ourselves into this mentality is no easy task. But, if we can access this type of mental hardness, just think of the otherwise impossible things we could accomplish.

Navy SEALs live by these rules to be the most mentally sound elite fighting squad.

1. **Eat the elephant:** When we are going to take on a seemingly impossible task, like eating an elephant, we must cut up that task into small parts that are much more attainable, completing small task after small task until we finish the whole elephant.

2. **Visualize success:** Visualizing victory puts positivity into the brain. If we say I am never going to get through this, we set ourselves up for failure and we will be miserable the entire time.

3. **Emotional control:** Do not get emotionally hijacked. Take a breath — breathe in for four seconds, out for four seconds and repeat for four minutes. This simple technique is used by Navy SEALs when they are in some of the highest stress situations.

4. **Nonreactivity:** We cannot control everything, and not every situation is worth a level 10 reaction. Our reaction to situations is within us, not subject to anything else.

5. **Small victories:** Being positive about the smallest of things will get your mind on track even in the worst situations.

6. **Find your tribe:** Humans are innately social. Even the most introverted person still likes to be a part of a group. When we feel connected to people and have people there for us, we can conquer a lot more than we could on our own.

These tips and tricks are great to memorize and use throughout our lives to get our minds on track. But when bullets are flying and you are in that dark place, it comes down to your own psyche. Are you willing to push past the overwhelming things in life that make you want to quit? The way to reverse the soft, comfortable nature in our society is to push the point where we break further and further away.



LET’S TAKE A BREAK: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

With the stresses of senior year and what comes next, taking time after graduation is sometimes the best choice

By Channing Reid

Senior year of high school came with unexpected feelings and emotions. Remember when it seemed like such a crucial time? Remember when the pressure of decision-making was heightened? Well, four years later, I'll be walking across a stage and will be presented with a piece of paper that says I am qualified for life. Those high school feelings are revisiting, but only this time, they're much more potent. Now what?

I've been working hard towards my degree, attending to other extracurricular commitments and working part-time; my schedule is full from Sunday to Saturday every week. In the midst of all the busyness, it can be easy to forget that these four years are just a season of life. Other seasons are on the horizon and will come whether we want them to or not.

What are you going to do next? Are you applying for jobs? Are you going to go back home? For seniors, these questions may make your head spiral. For underclassmen, these questions will pop up in your head soon.

I genuinely love those questions. And, let me make this clear; they are good questions. I am someone who gets excited about their future. However, there is definitely no denying that these questions can seem extremely oversaturated for the typical senior. It makes a senior feel like they are an interviewee getting asked questions they may not have an answer for. And this, from my own experience, can lead to uncertainty, confusion and fear of what lies ahead.

Fresh out of high school, I remember thinking about being done with college — how I would be

free from the demands of academics and living my best life. Since the immersion into adulthood is something most college students long for, the reality that hits you during your senior year can be overwhelming. Society expects us to have the dream job set up, the master's program pursued or even the ring by spring.

I grew up knowing that I wanted to pursue a career in journalism, and I aspire to be a reporter and anchor in a market someday. Thankfully, I have been able to establish and refine my passion of storytelling and reporting over these four years. For the longest time, I figured that I would jump straight into the business right after college because it seemed like the normal thing to do.

But it wasn't until this year, in the midst of applying for jobs in my field, that I realized I have the rest of my life ahead of me. Why do I need to stress about obtaining a news job before graduation? That realization gave me unexplainable peace.

It can be so easy to feed into the stereotypes and normalities of the world to feel like we are fitting in. I think the same can be said about trying to get into a master's program. It may seem like the best option, especially when you don't know what to do next. But in reality, it could be a poor use of time and money immediately after college.

We tend to follow society's rules of doing things in the now rather than taking some time to figure things out. With this experience, I have learned how important it is to analyze everything and do things because I want to do them, not because society wants me to. Taking a break may be the best option for your freshman year of the rest of your life.



THE BEAUTY OF FAILURE

Why you shouldn't be afraid to fail

By Grace Yaso

Society has conditioned us from a young age to be completely appalled by the idea of failure. Although it's not said outright, society has skewed our idea of perfection and the standards that we feel that we must live by. We constantly compare ourselves to others and desire to live up to and surpass their accomplishments and successes.

Many suffer from the crippling fear of failure due to the high standards set before them. According to an article by Dr. Andrew J. Martin, Martin states that, "Fear of failure is examined from a need achievement perspective and in the context of research amongst high school and university students."

We are driven by the need to achieve certain goals, such as perfect grades and a list of extracurriculars. Failure is not a possibility in our minds.

But — what if I told you that failure is essential to success? That the two cannot exist apart from one another? The thought of failure as a positive force in our lives is countercultural and radical.

In an interview with Forbes magazine, Dr. Sam Collins addresses the idea of failure in relation to success.

"If nothing else, I hope you realize failure is temporary, and failure is good even if, undeniably, it feels really bad when it happens," said Collins.

Failure is uncomfortable and many shy away from that fact. Many prefer to remain within the comfort of four walls. However, it is through the uncomfortable experiences that you experience the most growth.

Now, just because we are destined to fail at some point in our lives doesn't mean we should stop working hard within our jobs and at school — it's quite the contrary. In whatever we do, we should do it for "the glory of God, not for human masters," (Colossians 3:24-25).

There are healthy ways to go about dealing with failure in order to grow from those experiences. According to a New York Times article, journalist Oset Babur suggests several steps that you should take in order to deal with failure effectively.

Babur first suggests being vulnerable with your mistakes. If you don't admit the error in your ways, there can't be growth.

Babur then describes how failure is conducive to building relationships. It allows others to see us as simply "human" and not some person on a pedestal.

Failure is something that seems almost taboo to talk about. However, if we stop and recognize that we are human and have shortcomings, then we can truly grow as a community and see that there is beauty in failure.

“Many prefer to remain within the comfort of four walls. However, it is through the uncomfortable experiences that you experience the most growth”.

KOBE BRYANT: GREATNESS TAKES GRIT

By Reid Conant

The Black Mamba. Grit. The two go hand in hand. The life and legacy of the 6-foot-6-inch guard doesn't just begin and end on the basketball court, however — it's much more than that. It's his inspiration and toughness as a fearless competitor on the hardwood that led to the impact he had on others' lives. Bryant is the perfect example of how one man can inspire millions based on the manner in which he lived his life and the wise words he left behind. It was never all talk with Bryant — in fact, it was almost always the opposite. That's what he will continue to teach us.

The definition of grit starts with failure. Bryant wouldn't be the same man without failure. Kobe had his fair share of failures in his young adult life, like the sexual assault case that saw him plead guilty before settling for more than \$2.5 million. Or, his struggles in his first-ever conference finals in the playoffs, where he shot four air-balls down the stretch against Utah Jazz in game five.

Kobe wasn't perfect and he wasn't afraid to admit it. In fact, Bryant took pride in missing the most shots in NBA history by more than a thousand. And yet, in forgiving fashion, he made sure that what many would consider "failures" did not define him.

Throughout those tough times, Bryant continued his life with that same mentality. "I play to figure things out, I play to learn something. If you play with a fear of failure, I think it's a weakness," said Bryant. "Failure doesn't exist. It's a figment of your imagination. [The only way you can fail] is if you decide to not progress."

That's what Bryant did each day. He proved it after his playing days ended and dedicated all his time to his wife and daughters.

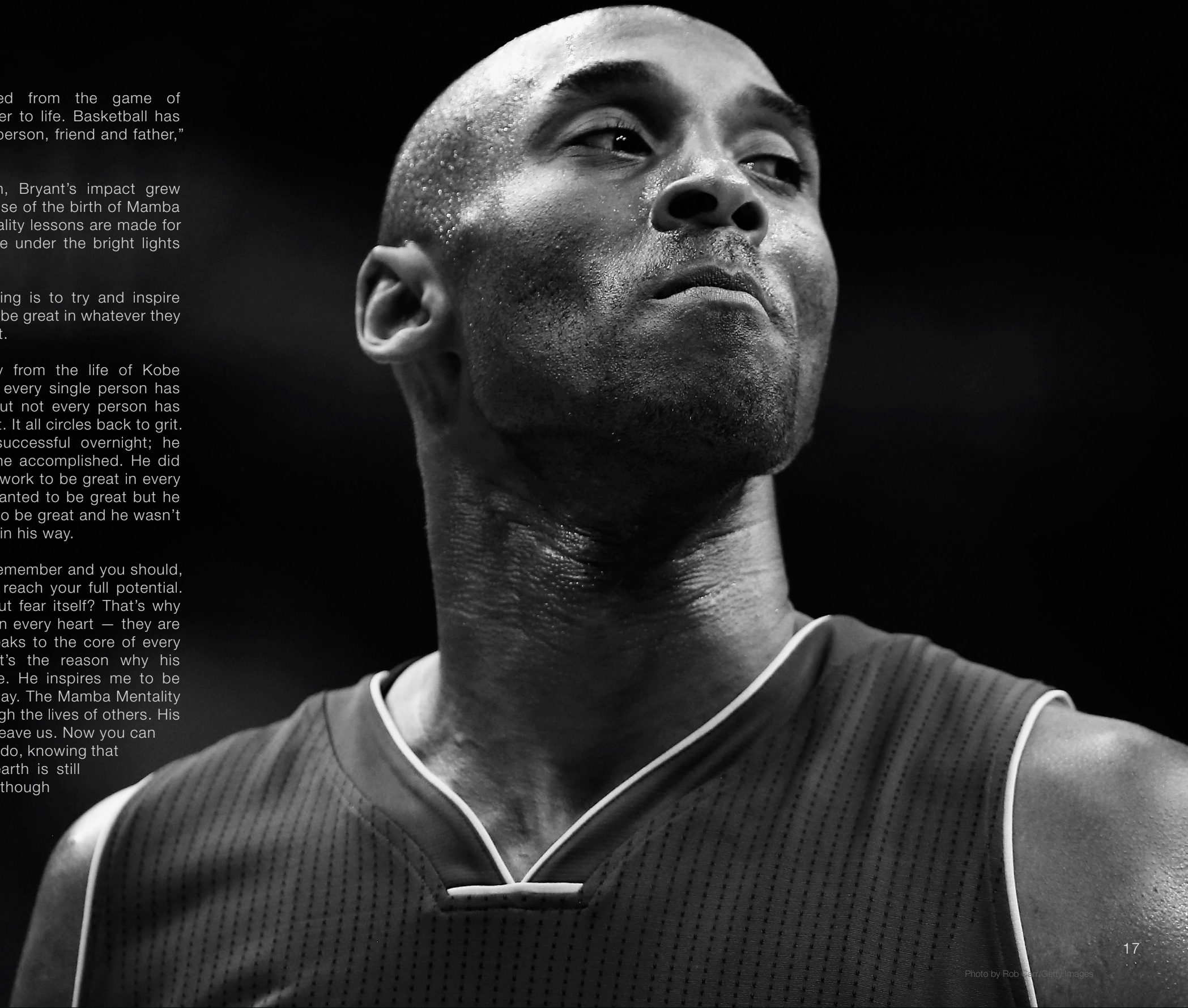
"Everything I've learned from the game of basketball carried it over to life. Basketball has helped me be a better person, friend and father," said Bryant.

As his career went on, Bryant's impact grew greater. This was because of the birth of Mamba Mentality. Mamba Mentality lessons are made for everyone, not just those under the bright lights on the court.

"The most important thing is to try and inspire people so that they can be great in whatever they want to do," said Bryant.

The biggest take away from the life of Kobe Bean Bryant is simple: every single person has potential to be great but not every person has what it takes to be great. It all circles back to grit. Kobe didn't become successful overnight; he worked for everything he accomplished. He did the time and put in the work to be great in every aspect of his life. He wanted to be great but he also knew what it took to be great and he wasn't going to let anyone get in his way.

That's the legacy I will remember and you should, too. Don't be afraid to reach your full potential. What is there to fear but fear itself? That's why his words strike home in every heart — they are brutally honest. He speaks to the core of every human being and that's the reason why his impact is immeasurable. He inspires me to be better each and every day. The Mamba Mentality will forever live on through the lives of others. His spirit will never fade or leave us. Now you can rest, Mamba. So please do, knowing that your purpose on this earth is still being lived out even though you are gone.



ESCAPING THAT BUBBLE: HOW TO GROW IN FAITH

By Jordan Green

Comfort might be the most attractive temptation in our everyday lives. There is nothing more tempting than surrounding ourselves with people we are comfortable with and agree with. It's easy to stay in one place, to generate an everyday schedule and to enter a social bubble that surpasses other areas of thought.

We see these bubbles all over. They are friend groups that are so tightly knit and emotionally attached that it seems no one else exists. They are relationships where instead of two people challenging each other, it is two people fully obliging to whatever desire they have. Even Azusa Pacific can be categorized under this umbrella: a university which requires their students to attend three weekly services and take yearly classes that are generally absorbed by one area of theological thought.

I can place myself in all of these bubbles and others probably can, too. It is easy to develop an identity of your own when you aren't challenged. Why would anyone want to be challenged in their understanding of who they are? Maybe an individual's true calling is to be placed comfortably in a bubble, surrounding themselves with those who can attest to their lifestyle. It all seems so easy this way.

But what happens when that understanding is challenged and confronted with other ways of thinking?

It is a scary thought. What if someone who is confident in who they are is faced with a circumstance that pushes them in a different direction? When considering the fulfillment of life, I am reminded of a quote from motivational writer Denis Waitley.

"It is not the pursuit of happiness that we find fulfillment, it is the happiness of pursuit," says Waitley.

The quote, of course, can be dissected in several different ways. To me, it represents the idea that when we are constantly looking for comfort, it is impossible to live a fulfilling life. Rather, it is the journey of personal reflection that leads to contentment.

The journey can be compared to a puzzle. It is impossible to finish a puzzle until every piece is connected; the journey is impossible to complete when one fails to acknowledge what is placed outside of their own bubble — which is just one piece of the puzzle. When we restrict our beliefs and moral attitudes to only what we know, a comprehensive understanding of the world ceases to exist. The puzzle could never be completed.

It's impossible to discuss with someone what they believe and why if they are unaware of the general biases of their own thought process. We need to examine our biases by asking ourselves the question, "How can you confidently say what you believe in if you have never attempted to look at things from a different perspective?"

It seems that this practice is frowned upon within the Christian community. There lies a fear that a shift of focus would distract you from your relationship with God. However, when applied correctly, the opposite effect can happen. Shifting your perspective allows you to strengthen your beliefs when you realize how powerful your faith is.

I encourage everyone to take a chance and step out of your comfort zone. Learn new things and customs that are not applicable to your everyday life. Test your faith by exploring new ideas. Not only will you grow stronger as an intellectual, but it might let you dive deeper into why you believe what you believe.



SEEING VS. PERCEIVING

By Mia Nishanian

Over the years, social media has taught the viewer that what you see isn't always what you get. A perfect couple seen through Instagram might not be as put together behind the scenes. A model might give a false representation of their body. Is retaining things at face-value healthy for your mind? What truly matters when living a non-influencer life in the age of social media?

The modeling and fitness world is a huge part of social media. People go to their favorite model's account and paint a picture in their heads of what their bodies should look like. The same thing applies to a fitness influencer because you mentally compare your body to the image on the screen. Apps like Facetune contribute to the false narrative of body image.

BBC discovered a correlation between social media and body image: "A systematic review of 20 papers published in 2016 found that photo-based activities, like scrolling through Instagram or posting pictures of yourself, were a particular problem when it came to negative thoughts about your body."

Body-positive Instagram pages are challenging the norms of the platform. Companies like Aerie post images of models that vary in shapes and sizes. Likewise, Good American, a brand created by Khloe Kardashian, made a point to have models who range in body type.

BBC also revealed a study surrounding body positivity: "The researchers found that exposing women to #bodypositive Instagram content appeared to boost their satisfaction with their own bodies."

Now, what about social media relationships? When your favorite influencer couple breaks up, you're often left sad and heartbroken, wondering why they would ever do such a thing. Many

influencer couples post videos after a break-up, sharing why the break-up occurred. It's a wake-up call to realize that people have private lives behind the camera.

Online influencer families like the Ace family and LaBrant families contribute to a narrative of what the "ideal life" should encompass — big house, designer clothes, all smiles all the time. Grace College offered its own perspective on a generation growing up with such media influences.

"The challenge comes when we become envious of everything our friends appear to be doing," read the article. "We compare their online world with our offline world and we often feel we don't measure up. Of course, we forget that we ourselves will only post the bright spots of our day."

What really matters in a world full of false realities? People need to understand that who you follow is who you are influenced by. BBC showed that when you surround yourself with positive connections, your mind becomes more positive towards social media. Taking social media depictions at face-value creates a false image of what life is intended to be.

"It's a funny thing about life, once you begin to take note of the things you are grateful for, you begin to lose sight of the things that you lack," said American broadcaster Germany Kent.

As the quote suggests, staying positive can change your mindset on life. Being true to yourself and realizing that social media is only a mere series of photos is key to having a sound mind. A reality check is often needed to finally realize that not everyone has the same body and lives like you. It is important to filter through life in a positive, healthy manner because drawing comparisons gets you nowhere.



SOMETIMES THE GRIND SHOULD STOP

The dangers of subscribing to hustle culture

By Megan Wilhelm

We've all heard the phrases "the grind don't stop" and "rise and grind" countless times throughout our educational careers. We admire those who hustle and value their tireless work ethic. We strive to meet high standards, whether it's society's view or our own, and we don't stop until burnout comes knocking. Among younger generations, hard work is praised. And although hard work is important, there comes a point where hard work turns into overwork. This glamorization of hard work and praise of insatiable work ethic is known as hustle culture.

Though hustle culture is more common among young adults working in business and corporate professions, the hustle culture mentality is embodied by college students as well.

At first glance, hustle culture doesn't appear so bad. What's wrong with wanting to be hard working and productive? The short answer is nothing — that is, until the behavior becomes toxic.

Toxic productivity can be hard to spot because among college students, lack of sleep is praised, caffeine addictions are celebrated and the concept of rest is scoffed at. It's no secret that balancing life in college is tricky. We're tasked with balancing homework, a job, spending time with friends, volunteering and so on. Even on my free days, a small voice in the back of my mind reminds me of something else I could be doing, some class I could get ahead in or some scholarship I could apply for.

Perhaps we embrace our hectic lives to brag about it to our peers. We compare our schedules with our friends, claiming that we're busier and more tired, as if there is a reward attached to our sleep deprivation. It's easy to believe the lies hustle culture feeds us. One of those lies is that less sleep equals higher levels of productivity. More time awake means more time to get things done, right?

According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), insufficient sleep is defined as an

average of less than seven hours a night. As much as we want it to, six or seven hours just won't cut it.

In his TEDx Talk "The Science of Sleep," Dr. Matthew Carter highlights how college students have normalized sleep deprivation. He compares this bad habit to that of smoking and eating only junk food.

"The effects of being sleep deprived all the time can be just as bad as smoking and just as bad as eating too much junk food, and yet lots of students would actually choose to go to a college where everyone looks sleep deprived because it looks like it's a really hard working college where people are very productive and achieving great things," said Carter.

Hustle culture has allowed us to believe that productivity is more important than our physiological needs. The truth is, our productivity increases when we are well-rested. Our minds are clear and we are able to do much more with the time given to us.

Hustle culture also tries to convince us that we don't have time for rest or relationships, that work is what we live for. Though our studies are in fields we are interested in and passionate about, they are still demanding and take a toll on us mentally, physically and emotionally. We all need a break at some point, and acting like we don't will only lead to burnout.

After all, we are only human. Hustle culture tries to convince us that we can do it all by ourselves through sheer willpower and fierce independence. But truthfully, we are fragile and frail. We are dependent on others and the rest their company provides. We need time for our minds to wander free from the constant beckoning of our busy schedules.

The longer we sit in the mentality surrounding hustle culture and toxic productivity, the more likely we will take the fruits of this thought pattern into adulthood. We can prevent falling into this trap by remembering that life extends beyond a job or career. We work to live, not live to work.

FROM OVERCOMING ADDICTION TO INSPIRING MILLIONS

By Raquel Gonzalez

After taking some time off due to her public struggle with drug addiction and eating disorders, worldwide pop star Demi Lovato has dropped her latest single “I Love Me,” a song about being enough even with all of her flaws.

Growing up, Lovato was an outgoing, goofy girl that wanted to follow her dreams of being someone like Shirley Temple, a legend who could both act and sing at an early age.

Lovato had a rough childhood with her birth-father, who was an alcoholic and a drug addict. This influenced her path towards addiction. In school, Lovato was severely bullied — at one point, there was a suicide petition passed around the school signed by her peers. With an absent father and a cruel school experience, Lovato began going down a self-destructive path.

In order to escape bullying, Lovato began homeschooling, where she was able to work hard towards accomplishing her dreams.

At 14 years old, she earned the role of Mitchie Torres in the classic Disney Channel Original Movie Camp Rock. In Lovato’s documentary “Stay Strong,” she admitted that she began to experiment with drugs and alcohol while working for Disney.

In the documentary, Lovato confessed how she was able to fool those around her. “I’m very good at manipulating people,” said Lovato. “There were times I would just continue to lie so that everything looked okay on the outside.”

Former Disney Channel icon Demi Lovato has been a role model for millions of fans accross the nation, even during some of the lowest points in her life

Because Lovato felt pressured to keep up with the Disney Channel scene of a perfect image, her struggles were kept under wraps. Wearing a mask that was presentable for the cameras, she missed out on living a normal teenage life. Lovato always had to look a certain way and sing the music other people wanted to hear. She felt no sense of control over her own life. Eventually drugs seemed to be the only outlet.

Drugs led to a spiral for the Disney star as anger issues emerged and her drug abuse became increasingly more severe. On a tour for Camp Rock 2, Lovato physically attacked one of her backup dancers. After this, Lovato finally decided to check into a rehab center where she learned she had bipolar disorder.

Not long after being released from rehab, she fell back into drug use. Although she admitted to her relapse, she continued this lifestyle, even going as far to perform hungover on American Idol in 2012.

Wanting to better herself, she checked into a completely sober house in January 2013. She lived drug, alcohol and phone free in order to stay away from reading what people were saying online.

Many don’t realize while she was a judge on The X Factor, she was continually working hard to better herself, even though the cameras made it seem like she was perfectly fine otherwise.

“You really have to lean into the people that are trying to support you,” said Lovato in her documentary. “Surrender because that’s when change is gonna happen.” After many years of struggles, Lovato did in fact change for the better. She became inspired to make better music, talk about her story and help others in any way she could.

Lovato is one of the very few celebrities willing to share their story with the public in hopes of it helping someone else.

Admitting to her relapse in her song “Sober” she sings, “I’m so sorry, I’m not sober anymore.” Her vulnerable lyrics left many fans sending tweets and prayers after the news broke out that she had overdosed in 2018.

Lovato never claims to be perfect. She constantly is trying her best to better herself every day even when it isn’t easy. As a result of this, she has encouraged many to seek help when needed and reminded people that they are not alone in their struggles. This is why she has become an inspiration to millions.

“I know what music can get you through, I know what music can do emotionally for somebody because I have experienced it myself,” said Lovato.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

The #metoo movement reveals how hard it is in the acting industry

By Charissa Enns

Before I decided I wanted to be a journalism major, I thought about being an actress my junior year of high school. I have a very clear memory of my mentors telling me that men would ask to sleep with me in exchange for a role.

I was not a fan of that. I soon realized that this was not the life God was calling me to. It also made me realize how tough the acting industry is. It takes grit to be in that industry, and the #metoo movement shows that.

It all comes down to one thing: favoritism.

Sarah Wilson, a sophomore and an Acting for the Stage and Screen major said, "It's very true in the sense that every place or company has politics and favorites, but when it actually comes to the business, you don't necessarily need talent, but you need the connections."

This creates an environment where men like Harvey Weinstein are able to coerce women into things they don't want to do because of the power and connections they have.

Hope Luna, a New York University Tisch School of Acting junior, commented on the Weinstein debacle.

"I was not surprised," Luna said. "The more I learn about the world and the more I learn about capitalism, the more I learn about things that are

just disappointing and the necessity of movements come like #metoo."

Weinstein was recently convicted in New York of third-degree rape and first-degree sexual assault, but was not convicted with some other serious charges, according to USA Today.

"To take down a name like that is a hard thing to do. It will take longer. It's about the punishment and it's having a future where we won't even speak his name. That man will no longer be a part of the industry," said Luna.

The #metoo movement is meant to make this easier for women; however, the movement itself has had many ups and downs in the industry.

"I don't actually know what the #metoo movement is. I thought it was a fad so I never actually looked into it," said Wilson. "Out of nowhere, one of our female teachers brought it up. I keep hearing a negative connotation with the #metoo movement and I truly don't know what it is."

According to Harvard Business Review, the #metoo movement was meant to be celebratory, but they were not sure how positively it would be received.

"The #metoo movement and representation is very important to me," said Luna. "However,

some of the biggest supporters of the #metoo movement at first has turned out to not be the best representation."

The #metoo movement offers resources to people who need healing and want to advocate. They also want to raise awareness of the issues in the workplace. Access to all of this information can be found on their site.

Women have to deal with how much they are paid, their appearance and the fewer roles available to them.

An Atlantic interview with Annie Truex touches on some of these issues, saying, "You can be a chubby guy, and it's a great look, but there isn't that equivalent for women. You're either stick thin or plus size.

Everyone's always on some sort of diet. Everyone's beautiful. The physical piece of it can get surprisingly exhausting."

Not everything is hopeless, though.

Wilson hopes to make a change by starting her own company where the company gender-bends classic plays to be impactful.

Strides are being made in the acting industry. The world is slowly transitioning. Roles are becoming more inclusive.

"We always need more artists of different backgrounds who are for social justice and that is just something I love. I mean, we are making history," said Luna.

"The #metoo movement is meant to make this easier for women; however, the movement itself has had many ups and downs in the industry."

Photo by Tassilo/Getty Images

FACES IN THE CROWD

Employees at APU give their perspective on community and the need for grit when moving forward.

By Marcus Dawal

From maintenance workers to employees at the Writing Center, it takes a lot of moving parts to make a university move forward. Azusa Pacific wouldn't be the same without the people working behind the scenes helping to make this school the place we call home.

I interviewed three APU employees and discussed what APU means to them, as well as their thoughts moving forward after last year's budget crisis.

Jonathan Hall, Summer Maintenance & Resident Advisor

"APU is an institution that exemplifies a Christ centered life. From its core principles to the way different departments like facilities operate on a daily schedule," said sophomore Jonathan Hall.

As a resident advisor working 40 hours a week doing maintenance for the school, the Christ-centred atmosphere at work helped him push through on those long summer days.

"[In] both jobs, I was led by people who personally connect with myself and my coworkers daily," said Hall. "Each day while working with facilities we would start in prayer."

As our school moves forward from our deficit, Hall emphasized that "we must keep to our core principles and not compromise in our actions or beliefs. After the change in leadership for the university, it seems evident now that we are on the right track to recover financially."

Rylie Cabalse, Event Services Staff

When Rylie Cabalse first arrived to APU in 2018, he immediately recognized that APU was "a beautiful community that proclaims Christ despite our differences," said Cabalse.

Working as an employee for the university's event services, Cabalse has experienced the feeling of community in his workplace.

"It has been such a blessing," said Cabalse. "Working here I am treated very fairly with the generous hearts of my supervisors and coworkers."

In order for our school to remain united and bounce back from recent setbacks, he was quick to note that Christ needs to be kept at the center.

"We have to keep Christ as our focus and work for him by honoring him," said Cabalse. "It won't be easy to come out of this setback but I have a firm belief that we'll make it out and be on an uprise."

Ryan Negrette, Writing & Speaking Center Tutor

When Ryan Negrette thinks of APU, the first thing that comes to mind is that "APU is community and APU is the home where I belong," said Negrette.

As a tutor in the Writing and Speaking Center, he considers it one of the best environments he has ever worked in.

"Working for APU is such a great experience," said Negrette. "My supervisors are amazing people and you can feel the Christ centered values at work daily in the office."

As we move forward as a university, Negrette believes APU must remain intentional in its pursuit to keep its core values.

"I think the best thing to do is to create action and work for it. If something is wrong, at least if we are trying to do something about it we are doing the right thing," said Negrette.



PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES: STORIES OF PERSEVERANCE

By Taylor Meckely

Running for president is something many people have considered an opportunity only available for the most elite — those who have been in politics for years and have worked to serve their country on a variety of issues. We assume that they went to Harvard or Yale, studied law and political science and are so eloquently spoken we wouldn't know what to say in their presence. But now, more everyday citizens are running for president — so when does the narrative change? As politics become increasingly more homegrown, so do the stories of the individuals who chose to run for president. Their stories are unique and have defined who they are as people, as well as who they are as politicians.

Bernie Sanders was born in Brooklyn, New York on Sept. 8, 1941. His parents faced financial struggles throughout his adolescence, which resulted in income inequality. This became one of the key political issues he is fighting against. He received his bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Chicago and got involved in the civil rights movement unfolding at the time. Sanders was a participant in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom march and is a firm believer in equality for all.

Sanders was led into electoral politics through his participation in the anti-Vietnam War movement and first ran as an independent before later caucusing with Democrats. Early on in his political career, he voted against the Iraq War and heavily opposed tax exemptions for the large and wealthy corporations. After winning a seat in the U.S. Senate, he heavily advocated for tax reform and took a progressive stance on

climate change and immigration. Sanders' support for social issues, such as the reproductive rights and the LGBTQ+ rights movement, have granted him heavy support from young voters who want to see a drastic change in the American government. Although some see his policies as teetering on the edge of socialism, many young Americans want to see him win — even adopting the phrase “feel the Bern” to show their support.

Sanders has a strong stance on universal healthcare, which would offer medicare to all and eliminate the need for private insurers. He views Trump's immigration policies as heartless and supports comprehensive immigration reform.

Overall, Sanders is known as the most progressive and liberal of all of the Democratic candidates, particularly because of his stances on tax reform and tax cuts for the lower and middle class.

Joe Biden was born in Pennsylvania on Nov. 20, 1942. He grew up in the small town of Scranton and had rather humble beginnings with a father who worked as a used car salesman. His parents were extremely hard workers, and he credits them with giving him a strong work ethic.

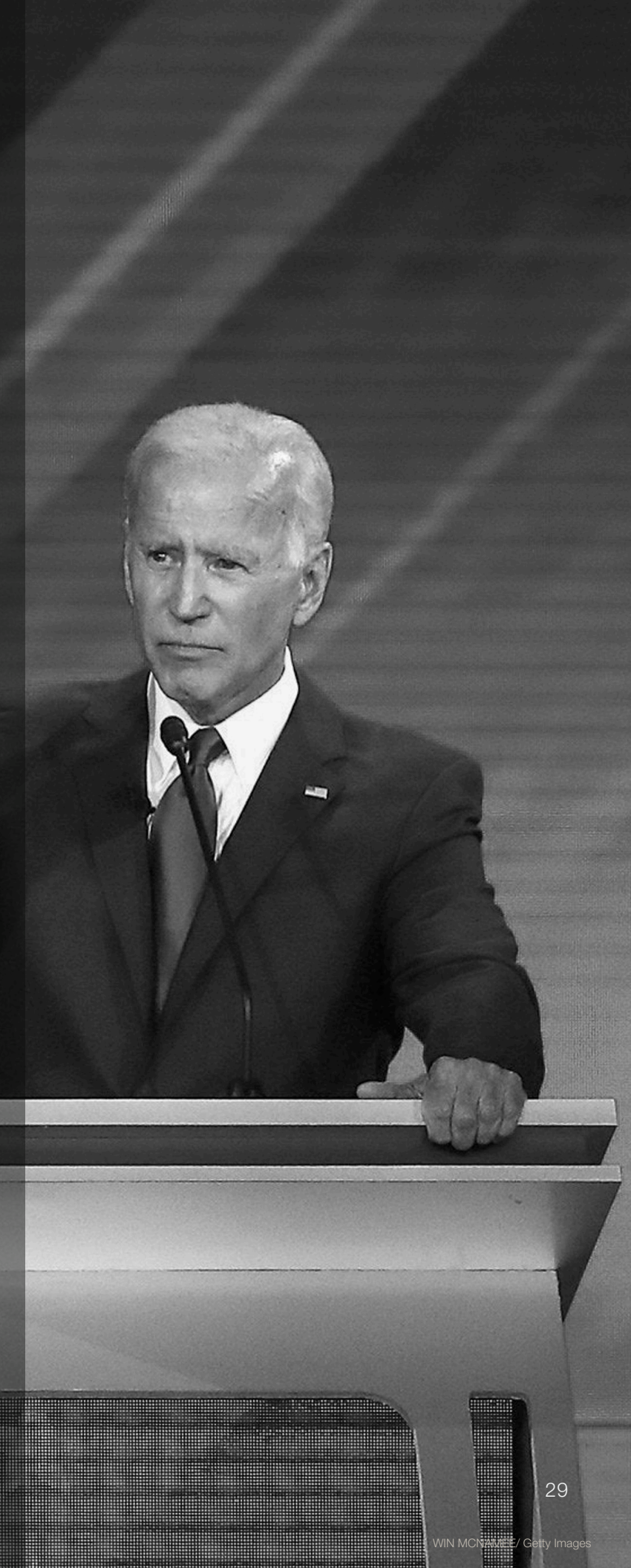
Biden attended the University of Delaware where he studied history and political science. Like many young men in college, Biden admitted that he spent his first two years of college much more interested in girls, football and parties than anything else. His political career truly began with the inauguration of John F. Kennedy in 1961, which sparked an interest in politics.

According to Biden, he was a rather poor student in law school and failed a class because he forgot to “properly cite a reference to a law review article.” In the early '70s he worked as a councilman and started his own law firm. Then, in 1972 he ran for the U.S. Senate and won, becoming the fifth-youngest U.S. Senator in American history.

Despite his overwhelming political successes, Biden faced tragedy in Dec. 1972 when a car crash killed his wife and daughter and severely injured both of his sons. Regardless of this life altering event, he persevered and served in the U.S. Senate from 1973 to 2009.

While serving as vice president to Barack Obama, one of Biden's signature issues was healthcare. He assisted in the passage of the Affordable Care Act. As someone who deeply understood tragic medical issues and the tolls they can take on a family, Biden has stated that healthcare is a personal issue to him. He worked very well alongside former president Barack Obama and their friendship through his presidency has benefitted Biden with Obama supporters.

It takes a dedicated and unique individual to run for president and an especially dedicated individual to make it this far in the race. Individuals who were originally considered to be front runners, such as Elizabeth Warren and Michael Bloomberg, have been forced to drop out of the race, leaving Sanders and Biden as the final two candidates. Will Biden be able to “Battle for the Soul of the Nation,” will we “Feel the Bern” or will we “Make American Great Again”? On Nov. 3, we will find out.



THE SEARCH FOR FREEDOM IN AN UNJUST NATION

When people think of California, their minds instantly go to Hollywood and the big businesses in Los Angeles. They may think of actors, singers and producers, or imagine that The Golden State is somehow more glamorous than most others. Few may be inclined to acknowledge the long history of abuse towards Latinx communities that happened here, or how generations later, Mexican-Americans are still being unjustly persecuted.

The early days of the United States began with colonization. The first major group to colonize California was Spain, beginning with San Diego and spreading as missions were built across the land.

In 1812, Mexico gained its independence from Spain and California was deemed a Mexican province. California was officially named a state in 1850 after signing a treaty with the U.S. to end the Mexican War only a few days after gold was discovered in California's land.

The Gold Rush ushered in immigrants from across the world who wanted to take the gold for themselves. Although Mexicans already inhabited the land, they began to face unprecedented discrimination as rumors spread of them being violent, greedy people who would cause harm to anyone trying to take the gold.

Spanish speakers, known as Californios, were labeled as foreigners and were charged outrageous fees that prevented them from working, and were later prevented from mining at all by the law.

Despite the influx of Anglo-Saxon immigrants, it was the Californios who lost their privileges, their land and their social standing when the Yankees took over. Their land was no longer theirs, and they had to suffer because a more privileged group became selfish, invaded their land and tried to claim the gold for themselves.

The Great Depression hit in the 1930s, leading to mistrust within communities. During this time, the Mexican Repatriation saw an estimated

400,000 to 1 million Mexicans and Mexican-Americans deported further south. Many of these deportees were U.S. citizens, but because of their backgrounds, language and culture, they were demonized and unjustly persecuted.

Although historians largely agree that this event occurred on behalf of racist U.S. policies, the U.S. has never taken ownership of the crime, claiming instead that these people simply "left" their homes, as noted by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS). The CIS also claimed that no federal record exists for these departures.

"Relatively few of them were expelled under formal INS-directed removal proceedings. The majority returned to Mexico by their own decision or through officially voluntary — though often coercive — repatriation programs directed by state and local governments and charitable aid agencies," CIS reports.

Around this time, many propaganda posters began to surface against Mexicans. These images were an example of how the government vilified Latinx communities, depicting a warped idea of Mexicans being dirty, violent, lazy and scheming.

La Plaza De Culturas y Artes is a Latinx culture, history and art museum in Los Angeles which puts these issues on display.

A propaganda comic from Fullerton Daily News depicts a Mexican man in a sombrero with the words "Mexican Peón" on it. The unkempt man walks across the Mexican/U.S. border barefoot, holding a bundle labeled with the words "ignorance — disregard for the law." Uncle Sam is on the other side holding a baton which reads "immigration law."

The implication is that the hero Uncle Sam will beat back the Mexican hooligan and preserve a just immigration law.

Another propaganda poster from the Library of Congress depicts Uncle Sam using a snow

How one of the most ostracized groups in America has endured throughout the years

By Brenda Covarrubias

shovel to pick up tiny people labeled as "Mexican revolutionaries" to throw in a fiery bin labeled "international rubbish can."

Latinx people have a long history of being discriminated against by the U.S., even when they are U.S. citizens themselves.

Before Anglo-Saxons inhabited California, the land belonged to Latinx people. California was Mexican. But through systemic racism, the U.S. oppressed Latinx communities, taking their money, their land and their rights. Families were torn apart and sent further south to areas they had never visited, and those in power refused to acknowledge what they had done.

The fact is that throughout U.S. history, Mexicans and those from Latinx heritage were not the bad guys. Rather, they were the victims of an oppressing society which favored one type of foreigner over the other.

It is important to acknowledge that oppression is not a competition. To say that one group had it worse than another helps no one, but by acknowledging histories that are forgotten and neglected is necessary if we plan to do better in the future.

U.S. President Donald Trump is a modern example of how systemic racism and propaganda still vilified Latinx people. During his time as president, Trump has called Mexicans criminals and rapists, encouraged an immigration system which caged children as young as two years old and separated families.

"You wouldn't believe how bad these people are ... These aren't people. These are animals," Trump said about Mexican immigrants.

It is important to know history in order to recognize problems presently and create a better future. Despite all the hardships they have endured, the Latinx community has always stood strong, aiming for a better future for themselves and their children — and the fight keeps going.

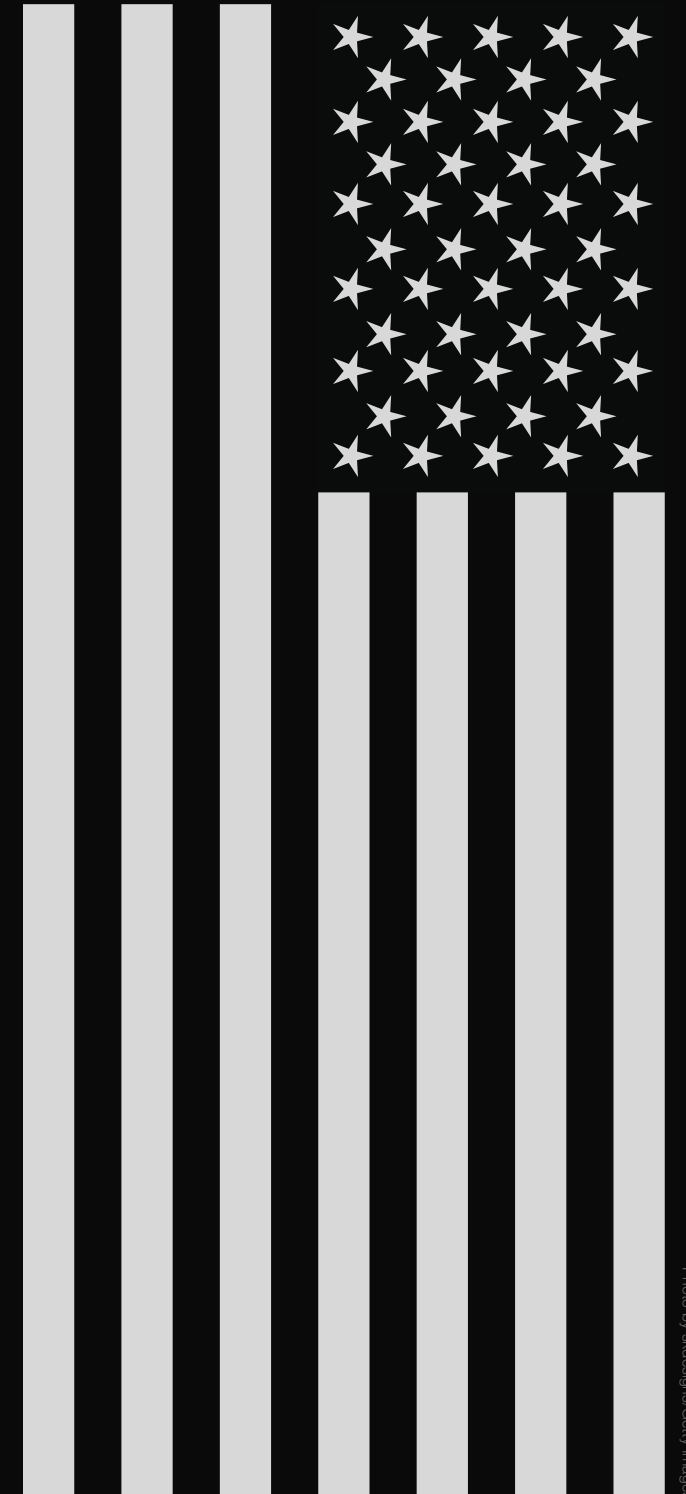


Photo by sdsdesigns/Getty Images



EPILOGUE: ON GRIEF. AND HEALING.

By Micaela Ricaforte

Last year, I experienced a personal loss. It was the first time I had been touched by grief. I'm still working through it and I still cry some nights, but I'm learning that it's a part of the healing process.

Meanwhile I happened to be reading a novel about a girl who inherited a kingdom and had to figure out how to rule it. On the surface it's a mystery/fantasy novel, but on a deeper level, it's about how to deal with pain and grief and loss and guilt and trauma. Her father was a monster who tortured the kingdom in many ways, and she needed to figure out how to heal herself and her people.

She drew her strength from those around her as they took on her burden, and through them she learned that healing comes when truths are heard, pain is acknowledged, forgiveness is released, and burdens are shared.

It also reminded me of the concepts that Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky talks about—*nadryv* (Russian) and *sobornost* (Greek).

Nadryv roughly translates to “tear” or “heart rending.” Dostoevsky says people who have experienced this kind of pain will often lash out at others to ease their pain, and those people will commit nadryv to others, perpetuating a cycle of brokenness.

One of my favorite poets/Greek translators, Anne Carson, puts it this way:

**“Why does tragedy exist?
Because you are full of rage.
Why are you full of rage?
Because you are full of grief.”**

Often the harm we do to one another is merely a result of our own suffering. But how do we stop that cycle?

Dostoevsky's solution to tragedy is a community of sobornost—a spiritual community where we bear each other's burdens and share in each other's suffering.

When I read this it reminded me of the church in Acts—as sisters and brothers we're called to rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn. It's what a family does. And it's the only way to truly heal.

And I see this in my friend's gentle listening. Her tenderness quiets my rage. I see this in my mother's love. She holds me in my wild grief. And I think to myself, this is what true love is.

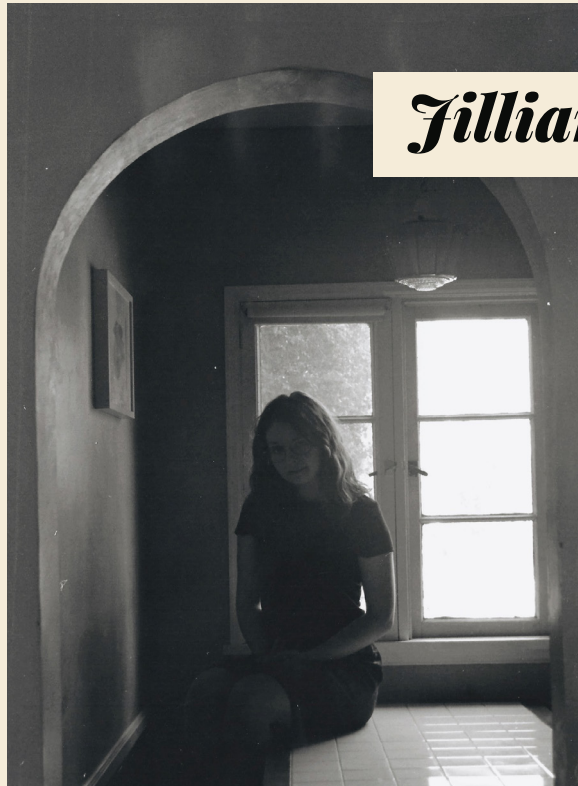
After all, that's what Christ models for us. He takes our nadryv—our shame, our guilt, our burdens, our pain, our grief—and bears it for us. suffers in our place. Forgives us. Welcomes us back with open arms. How is that not the purest love?

And I realized that to heal is to have been touched by grief, but to know it has not consumed you.

It's to know that you're strong enough to bear it, because you're not carrying it alone.

And it's to be unafraid to touch that grief again, for the sake of someone you love.

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT



Jillian Verner

Studio art by spring 2020 senior graduate



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Mission Statement

ZU Magazine is a publication of ZU Media, a multi-media student voice of undergraduate Azusa Pacific University. Our stories seek to bring people together while impacting our readers. We provide narratives, inquiries, and dialogue in a Christian academic setting that value individuals' stories as well as community concerns. Our writers are student journalists interested in crafting articles that connect with readers and challenge them to grow as people.