

# THE LEDGER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA



**READ HOW THIS NEW ORDER MAY IMPACT DIVERSITY  
RESOURCES IN UNIVERSITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY P.3**





# A virtual sitdown with Karen Cowgill

Talking to Epidemiologist Karen Cowgill about the work she's done and her thoughts on the epidemic.

By **LUKE DENUELLE**  
NEWS REPORTER

In an interview with Karen Cowgill, an Affiliate Assistant Professor at the University of Washington Department of Global Health, she spoke on the work being done within the University of Washington on COVID-19 research. Cowgill has an eclectic background. After completing an undergraduate degree in biology, she was initially drawn to clinical health. Formerly unaware and uninterested in the field of public health, as many who may have had her class will have heard already “The School of Public Health was right across from the School of Nursing” — and the rest is history.

Cowgill shared her thoughts on COVID-19 regarding a number of things. When prompted on the seemingly constant fluctuation of infection rate — that over the course of the last six months there seems to be no consistent rate of infection or consistent change in rate — Cowgill explained that while it's difficult to understand the exact causes of communicability, the tendency for a disease to be transmitted from one infected individual to

another, she suspected it has to do with pockets of activity.

“We probably have smaller networks where we are getting a lot of transmissions sustained over a short period of time. That network may then have a reduction in case numbers due to either control measures being implemented, such as mask wearing and social distancing,” Cowgill said, “or in some cases, though I think this is relatively rare, in a defined network you may have some herd immunity developing. But we are certainly very far away from having herd immunity at a national level.”

Within networks, should there be an import of infection into a network that has yet to be exposed, especially without the adoption of Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions — things such as wearing masks, keeping distance and washing hands — you could see a surge of infection.

Cowgill became interested in infectious diseases both from a biological angle and from an equity angle, first getting a masters degree in Public Health before obtaining her doctorate in Epidemiology and a second masters in Medical Parasitology.

Cowgill also mentioned that docu-

mented reinfection with the novel coronavirus is rare. Her more pressing concern is long term immunity.

“With any pathogen it is normal that some people will quickly mount an effective immune response and some people will never mount an effective immune response, and some people will be sort of in the middle,” Cowgill said. “And the people who don't mount an immune response or whose immune response is not very effective are a tiny tiny minority compared to those who do mount an effective immune response”

She explained that the virus has not been around long enough to see how immunity will persist over time. Anyone who had a weak immune system will likely be reinfected simply due to the nature of our immune systems, and this is not unique to COVID-19. The real concern is when individuals who had strong immune responses begin to show reinfection down the road.

“What I'm more concerned about is people whose initial immune response is good and strong and are initially protected against reinfection but whose immune response wanes over time. What we don't know is over three to five years.”

Cowgill emphasized that a measured,



COURTESY OF UWT DIRECTORY  
Karen Cowgill, an Affiliate Associate Professor at the University of Washington Department of Global Health.

reasonable safety precaution is important to handle the COVID-19 response. While maintaining six feet social distancing and wearing a mask are still important, contact tracing, to her, is another important tool in halting the

spread of any communicable disease. Contact tracing involves finding someone who has tested positive may have come in contact with during their incubation period, and alerting those individuals that they should quarantine.

## Diversity resources might be impacted by recent Executive Order

Universities across the U.S. are figuring out how their Equity and Inclusion programs will be impacted by the recent White House order.

By **MITCHELL FERMO**  
NEWS EDITOR

Universities across the nation, including the University of Washington tri-campuses, are currently figuring out how a recent White House order will impact their diversity, equity and inclusion programs, training and education. On Sep. 22, President Donald Trump issued Executive Order 13950, preventing any and all institutions that receive grant funds, as well as the Uniformed services, the Federal workforce and government contractors, from promoting “divisive concepts” in relation to diversity training.

By Oct. 22, all organizations and institutions that receive Federal grant money will be subject to a review of the content of their diversity training, and institutions which are found to be promoting divisive concepts will possibly lose their funding. “Divisive concepts” include race or sex stereotyping and race or sex scapegoating, which are further defined in the order itself.

Some universities have temporarily halted their diversity and inclusion programs as they evaluate their trainings and weigh the cost of non-compliance. The University of Iowa had placed a two week hold on all equity and diversity

training while they reviewed their programs. Meanwhile, some universities, such as the University of Michigan, have remained firm in their programs and planned to continue every scheduled training and educational event.

UW Tacoma's Vice-Chancellor of Equity and Inclusion James McShay explained that the UW tri-campuses will also go ahead with scheduled diversity, equity and inclusion events and training.

“I've been informed that the State Attorney General's Office has formed a working group to review the order,” McShay said. “The guidance that we've been given from UW is that all campuses will move forward with [Department of Equity and Inclusion] education and training that is planned and/or currently underway — as this work is central to our University's mission.”

When asked to clarify if UWT would follow the main UW campus' guidance, McShay confirmed UWT will continue with everything as planned.

“Yes, absolutely,” McShay said. “We will move forward with all planned DEI education and trainings at UWT given the guidance received from UW. Please know that this work is central to the mission of our campus.”

Critics of Executive Order 13950 state the order overreaches in what is



COURTESY OF WHITEHOUSE.GOV  
Executive Order 13950 deals with racial scapegoating and racial stereotyping.

acceptable and does not allow a proper review of materials with the chance for clarification and the ability to properly adjust training and education. In a letter to the White House, the American Council of Educators stated that the order was far too expansive in requiring a complete review of all federally funded grants which utilize diversity training.

“At a minimum, a mandate this sweeping and intrusive should be subject to a regulatory process under the Administrative Procedure Act, which would allow affected organizations to

ask questions, seek clarifications, and recommend changes before the new requirements take effect,” said ACE in their letter.

At the time of writing, it is currently up in the air as to how UW Seattle, Tacoma and Bothell will be affected by this order. The Washington State Attorney General office is currently looking at the legality and feasibility of the order, and it will still take time to send documents and resources over to the Federal government. Despite the uncertainty, UWT Chancellor Mark Pagano has reaffirmed

the campus' commitment to having and supporting an Equity and Inclusion program with the resources it needs.

“We're moving ahead,” Pagano said. “We have a lot of work to do with respect to implementing new things as a result of our climate survey feedback ... [Diversity resources and training] is central to our campus mission. We have six major goals in our strategic plan, and one is on culture and one is on equity. It is a major focus on campus and central to our mission and central to our core values.”





The final presidential debate took place on the evening of Oct. 22.

COURTESY OF NBC BROADCASTING

# The upcoming presidential election and how students can use their voice

A recap of recent debates and resources for students looking to vote.

By **LUCAS CASSOL**  
NEWS REPORTER  
**TALIA COLLETT**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

What was supposed to originally be the time of the second presidential debate between President Donald Trump and former Vice-President Joe Biden was instead a night for personal time for each candidate. Due to concerns regarding COVID-19, the debate was altered into two town hall-style engagements where each candidate was present on different networks and asked questions by a host as well as voters.

Starting with Trump's town hall, hosted by NBC, the president was pressed on questions regarding his recent diagnosis of COVID-19 and the peaceful transfer of power by host Savannah Guthrie. At the same time, Joe Biden was on ABC speaking with host George Stephanopoulos on similar subjects like the response to the pandemic and bringing stability to the nation.

Critics have noted the contradictory statements implying that the president had tested positive prior to his debate with Biden. Regarding the diagnosis, Guthrie asked for clarification on the timeline of diagnosis.

"I probably did, and I took a test the day before and the day before," said the president regarding his testing prior to the first debate. He would add, "Possibly I did, possibly I didn't."

Trump has made his position on the pandemic well known in the months since quarantine began. He actively promotes reopening the economy rather than implementing strict policies regarding masks and stay home measures. The former vice president differs heavily here. Biden spoke on the pandemic as well, noting the importance of them in power to set an example.

"When a president doesn't wear a mask or makes fun of folks like me when I was wearing a mask for a long time, then you know people say, 'Well, it mustn't be that important,'" Biden said.

Biden briefly touched on the economy but echoed a similar sentiment to the quote above. His platform has historically been about returning normalcy to the White House and bringing a steady nature to the position.

Trump also touched on his previous statements regarding the peaceful transfer of power, this time stating he is willing to commit if the election is deemed "honest."

Then, the two returned to the stage for their final debate on the evening of Oct. 22. The two candidates remained consistent on their stances regarding prominent and important issues such as COVID-19, climate change, race relations and immigration reform.

In response to COVID-19, we encountered more of the same reactions from the two candidates as we have in the past — where Trump calls for a re-

opening of the economy and shows confidence in an impending vaccine, Biden pushes for the maintenance of precautionary measures.

As for issues regarding immigration reforms, it was more of the same as well. Trump declared his administration changed the policy that Obama and Biden established and claims that now we have the "strongest borders we've ever had," and that those in confinement are, "so well taken care of, they're in facilities that were so clean." However, he refused to discuss attempts to reunite separated children with their parents.

Then, when asked about the failure to pass immigration reform when he was last in the White House, Biden claimed this was because he was merely vice president and it took too long.

"Within the first 100 days that I'm in office I'm going to send the United States Congress a pathway to citizenship for over 11 million undocumented people and all Dreamers and DACA kids will be immediately certified again to be able to stay in this country," Biden said in his rebuttal.

But Biden consistently and promptly refused to answer Trump when asked who built the cages at the border.

The two debated issues surrounding Medicaid as well. Moving forward, Trump stated that he would "like to terminate Obamacare, come up with a brand new beautiful health care." He claims this health care would be better

while also helping those with pre-existing conditions. Biden, on the other hand, announced his wishes to provide the option of "BidenCare," an option that allows individuals unable to obtain Medicaid in their states to be automatically enrolled.

Moreover, the topic of finances surfaced again. With arguments surrounding personal finances — the reluctance of Trump's tax return release and an allegation towards Biden surrounding alleged income from foreign sources. The two also debated the issue of a national minimum wage in which Trump supports a state-by-state decision on the matter whereas Biden wishes to push a nationwide \$15 minimum.

Along with these debates, the topic of getting out to vote has permeated through the country. For UWT students, ASUWT President Vincent Da and Director of Legislative Affairs Ronan Houston provided details on the resources available for students looking to register to vote.

"Currently, we just finished launching a website this week, where all info is easy for students to search," Da said. "There is a helpful Q&A section about voting and the events related to helping people vote."

Along with registering to vote, Da was asked if there are any programs for students who want to learn more about the political process and become more educated voters.

"In partnership with CEI on their real talk series, they are going to discuss and examine the history of voting and the strong importance of it and we are invited to present on how to register to vote for new students," Da said. "Ronan Houston, our director of Legislative Affairs had drop-in zoom hours related to voting but he is also releasing a video content guide for students navigating election information, how to vote, resources."

Finally, we asked about where students can go to drop off their ballots, and any events being held alongside the election.

"Right on Pac Ave near the bus station on campus, but also on November 3rd Ronan and I will be hosting the student engagement hub where students and the public can come into the CSI to print off their ballots, have any questions about voting or drop it off," said Da.

On the importance of voting, Houston had this to say:

"While voting is not the only way to participate in our democracy, doing so will allow your voice [to] be heard by politicians who would otherwise ignore it. With the plethora of challenges facing us today, voting at least guarantees you'll have a seat at the table."

For more information on UWT elections follow the link:

<https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/huskiesvote>



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# Marginalized identities on campus

"Hate has no home here" is little more than a symbolic gesture to our university, no matter how many languages you write it in.

By **ANDREA NADAL**  
OPINION EDITOR

Hate has no home here, a bold claim by our university. But hate has always had a home in the halls of power, and our university is no different. They say you are safe here, that your diversity is valued. But at every step, you are made to fight injustice and demand to be recognized as a whole person.

**"Hate has no home here, a bold claim by our university. But hate has always had a home in the halls of power, and our university is no different."**

When the professor tells you that Puerto Ricans should be happy to be American citizens when the archipiélago was destroyed by Hurricane Maria. At least there is a spotlight on you now, she will say. A spotlight on your devastation and the white men who are invading your land once again to "save" it.

She shifts my narrative of power and resilience and creates herself as the savior. The white American professor asserting to her Caribbean student the great power of America and how they will save your peoples from the destruction that they have created with their desecration of land and resources. With their disregard for the screams of the earth and their tempting of fate by exacerbating climate change.

She speaks of their arrival, of their helping hands and aid, but does not admit that once they feel they have given enough they will leave. Does not speak to the fact that once they leave so does that light they so graciously cast upon you.

Three years later the archipiélago is still in ruin, and recent earthquakes have only added to the chaos ... with the exception of the tourist Hotspots. Because the thing about a tourist economy is that your land is not for you ... but for the white man who comes to play. The white man who wants to go somewhere "tropical," who wants to relax and feel the slow pace of "island living." Not ever seeing the people or their struggle. Not realizing or caring that his glass is filled with the tears of the people mourning their independence.

But that is of no concern to the white American professor, her only concern lies in keeping a tight grip on the narrative that has been fed to us,

and to continue to swallow it whole.

When you challenge the microaggressions of your peer and now they are directed at you, suddenly you have become the symbol of all the hate that has corroded their mind. Suddenly you are made to take up arms on behalf of all of the marginalized identities you hold, and the members of those communities.

The brown woman who dared speak her mind, who dared to challenge the white man as the venom of his ignorance dripped from the words tumbling out of his mouth. And without a true rebuttal he simply responds "I know that I am smarter than you," a half-cocked smile chiseled into place by anger.

So you look him dead in the eye and demand to know how. You dare him to say the words. But he falters, so unused to being challenged, and he can form no response. Simply reassuring you of what he knows, of what society has taught him. That he is the bearer of knowledge, wisdom and truth. And surely no woman could take that from him.

**"When the university allows Customs and Border Protection to register for your career fair. More concerned with their funding than with the lives and safety of our undocumented students."**

The person of color who attempts to approach a hateful comment with compassion. With the understanding that we come from very different lived experiences, and attempts to give you insight into theirs.

But instead, you are met with resistance. A doubling down on a hateful narrative founded in ignorance. An insistence on the equality in this country that you have never had the privilege of experiencing.

They come to you with unfounded statistics and racist talking points meant to silence you. Boldly claiming that if you felt oppressed you ought to just "pull yourself up by your bootstraps." And this is the biggest joke of them all.

As though that isn't why you're here. In the same university as her. As though your father didn't have to do exactly that after coming to the states in order to afford you this opportunity. As though that isn't exactly the goddamn problem with the system in

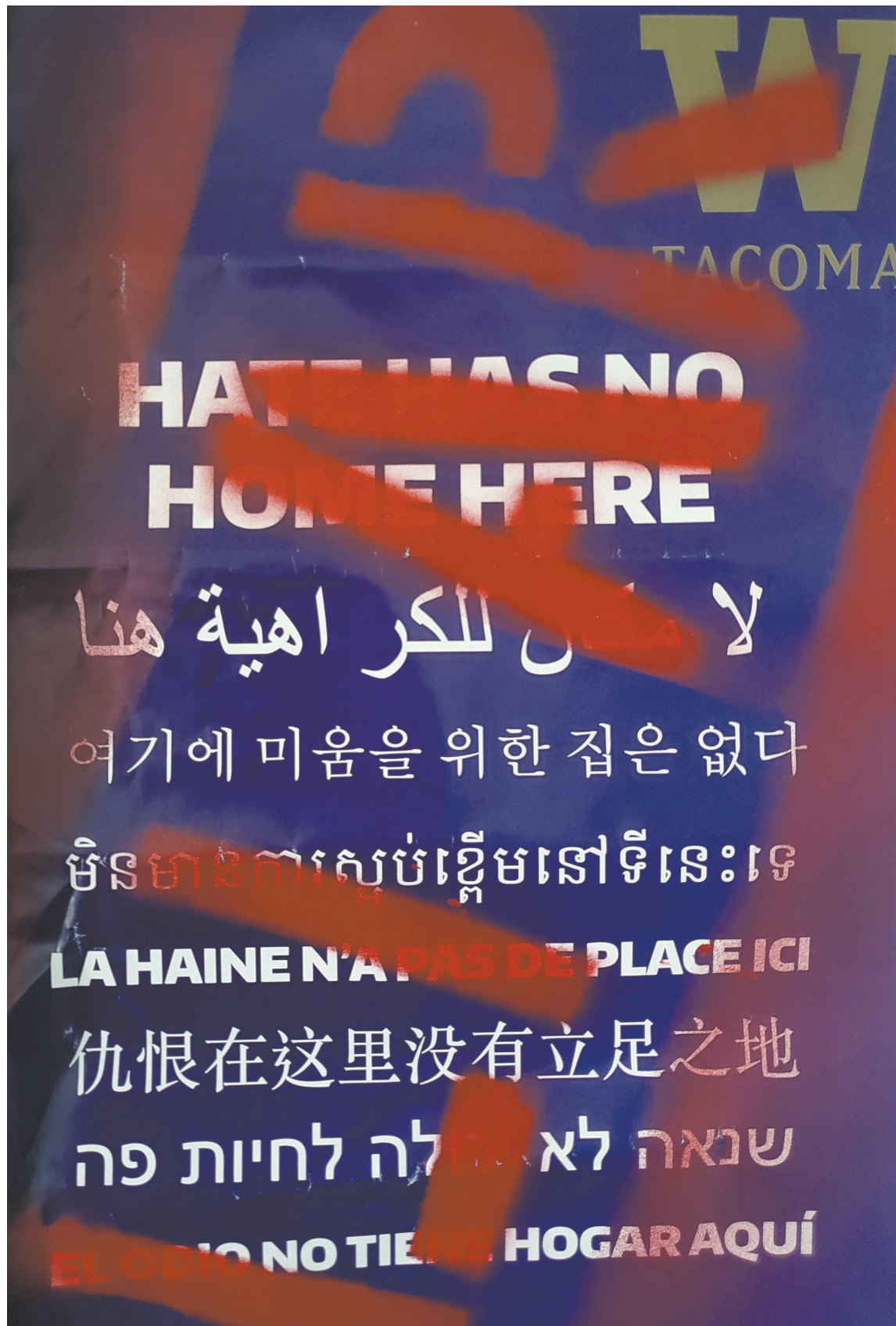


PHOTO BY ANDREA NADAL

A poster from the protest that took place last year after Customs and Border Patrol was allowed to register for the UWT career fair.

place. No one should have to pull themselves up from nothing. But she doesn't see that, she has learned to view a challenge to the system as a challenge to her very existence. Privilege is a bitch like that.

When the university allows Customs and Border Protection to register for your career fair. More concerned with their funding than with the lives and safety of our undocumented students. So we rise up in solidarity and speak out against this injustice, but the university responds

with little more than excuses. Writing off the concerns of the students. Touting their half-baked plans as accomplishments and acting astonished by our contempt.

Eventually we caused enough trouble and they were no longer allowed to attend. But the hollow words of the university still ring in the ears of many, and any semblance of trust in the university to protect our marginalized students was torn to pieces.

So when I see "Hate has no home here" plastered all over campus, I can't

help but feel a burning in my chest. I can't help but be reminded of every single time that hate not only had a home here but thrived here.

**"[...] and any semblance of trust in the university to protect our marginalized students was torn to pieces."**



# Why we must tend to ourselves

Your current state of mind is the most important to take care of, so let's start treating ourselves more estimably.

By **BENGISU CICEK**  
OPINION COLUMNIST

How would you rate your current mental health? Have COVID and quarantine made it worse?

Being secluded in our homes away from gatherings such as school, work and social events may make us ponder on our thoughts more.

We may be thinking too deeply in the past or too far into the future rather than focusing on our present selves. These thoughts could become stressful for us as we question the future and the unknown events that will take place. Oftentimes we want to be able to control our lives and protect ourselves, so these overwhelming thoughts may cause us to raise our guard more.

When a simple “Are you okay?” or “How are you feeling?” makes us want to spill every emotion we’re fostering, we must take a step back and ask ourselves “Did I tend to you enough today?”

As our universities and workplaces found different ways to continue our work through zoom and online projects, we may still feel just as busy as we were

before COVID. Although we are home, we are behind our computer screens working and we are still capable of forgetting to nurture ourselves daily. Life has not stopped, and this quarantine has not decreased our stress levels nor has it taken the weight off of our shoulders.

Our schedules might be packed all day, or even more than before. We may have to go to work or attend class in the morning, and then work more throughout the day and then run hundreds of errands throughout the 24-hour day as time ticks away.

When the weekend finally hits we might be so tired we sleep in or we go to our second job before we even get over the exhaustion from Monday through Friday. And then, just like that, Monday rolls back around.

This might feel like a never-ending cycle for us, and we may even feel like human robots just working away, unable to know what the future holds.

As hard as it is, these thoughts of ours need to come to a complete halt and vanish. We can't question the future anymore, because no matter how much we read the news, we cannot know what the

fate of the world holds.

Instead, we need to tune into our current state and ask, “What can I do to improve my mental state right now?” and “What are some barriers that are holding us from doing so?”

We may have a constant overwhelming emotion looming when we have dozens of errands on our agenda and multiple assignments to complete. This may discourage us from tending to our mental health as we think our errands and assignments are top priority. While school and work should be a top priority, if your mental health impacts your decision making and school/work performance, then mental health should be at the top of your list. We are not robots that will work endlessly until we die, life is so much more than that.

Before quarantine, we surely had somewhere we always wanted to visit or something we always wanted to accomplish. These goals should not be forgotten due to the pandemic. Yes, some activities are on hold right now for our safety, but it doesn't mean we can't accomplish other things while simultaneously practicing self-love and self-growth.



COURTESY OF NAKSIM GONCHARENOK

Free your mind and take care of yourself.

# There is more to dyslexia than meets the eye

The most common learning disability that not many people fully understand. How to help kids who learn in a different way.

By **MADI WILLIAMS**  
OPINION COLUMNIST

Dyslexia is a common learning disability. Dr Sally Shaywitz, the co-director of the Tale Center for Dyslexia, estimates that “80 to 90% of children who struggle with learning disorders have dyslexia.” Yet, children with dyslexia are often left in the dark because they are not progressing as fast as their peers. People may think that they understand dyslexia but it goes much deeper than just getting your d's, b's, p's and q's confused. There are actually multiple forms of dyslexia, each with their own unique challenges.

The website MedicineNet contains facts about dyslexia that I found to be incredibly enlightening. One section went into detail about the different types — the three main types are primary dyslexia, secondary or developmental dyslexia and trauma dyslexia.

Primary dyslexia is passed through hereditary genes or genetic mutation. Secondary dyslexia is linked to brain development issues during fetal development that typically diminish as the child matures. Trauma dyslexia is caused by brain trauma to the area of the brain that controls reading and writing.

As stated in a MedicineNet article, primary dyslexia is the most common, it is a dysfunction on the left side of the brain that does not change

with age. Early intervention is critical. Kids with this type of dyslexia can be successful throughout their education if they receive the resources and support they require. But there are a few who will continue to struggle with reading, writing and spelling throughout their adulthood either from late intervention or the severity of the individual's case.

Other types also include visual dyslexia, which is when the brain does not properly interpret visual signs, auditory dyslexia where the brain has issues processing sounds and speech, and dysgraphia which is when a child has difficulty holding and controlling writing utensils.

This learning disability affects one in five students, or 15-20% of the population according to the dyslexia center of Utah. As such, it is important to realize that each person experiences it differently.

Even though this is one of the most common learning disabilities, kids and parents are still struggling to obtain the support from the schools that their children attend. Many schools teach by breaking a concept up into parts — a student is given one step and a time and does not continue until the majority of the class masters the previous step. This learning style works well for dyslexic students since they need to understand the whole picture from the

beginning in order to understand why the steps are in place to begin with.

Even with these difficulties, individuals with dyslexia have other strong suits and often thrive in subjects apart from reading. Many are creative and artistic since it is often easier to understand concepts by viewing the entire picture, since art does not have strict rules or a particular order things have to be done in order to have understanding. Many children with dyslexia overcome their disability and grow up doing jobs many people think someone with dyslexia couldn't, in fact many famous people who are in a wide range of jobs are dyslexic — a quick google search and my mind was blown. Some are actors, musicians, athletes, scientists and politicians

It is important to realize that people with dyslexia are capable of all kinds of activities. They just need more help with reading, writing and spelling. They just need the support from family and schools in order to be successful, as we all do at times.

In some states families have a harder time finding support for their children in schools. This is an issue that I have had a lot of exposure to. My aunt, who lives in Florida, is currently having trouble getting her son the help he needs. She shares the struggles she has dealing with the schools and how they fail to benefit her son.



ILLUSTRATION BY SANDRA ENTEROVIC

A look at what dyslexia looks like.

But despite their difficulties, she also looks at the positives that come with dyslexia and highlights the ways in which her son excels in other subjects. She also remains positive about the progress he makes in school, even with the obstacles he faces every day. Instead of viewing success as individual excellence in every subject, we should look at the subjects that an individual is successful in, celebrate those and offer the support that is needed in those that they struggle with.

If people would look at dyslexia in a more positive light and understand that these kids just learn in a different way, it would change their perspective of school and show that they are capable of doing anything. If the schools would stop enforcing one standardized way of learning and try alternative methods, not only would it benefit the dyslexic students, but it would also teach other students new ways of looking at the same problems.



# Supporting our youth: from art to housing

Alma Mater hosted the Arlington Youth Art Exhibit, each piece has been purchased to be hung at a youth home, the Arlington Apartments.

By LORE ZENT  
A&E COLUMNIST

In an effort to support our youth, Alma Mater partnered with the Tacoma Housing Authority to host the "Arlington Youth Art Exhibit." This showcase exhibited pieces from young artists under the age of 24 with their youngest applicant being 11-years-old. Each submission was judged before a community panel based on the piece's message, impact, medium and skill.

This exhibit came to a close on Oct. 21 and viewings were limited to five guests at a time by scheduling a 30-minute time slot online. Those who visited could find a range of different art mediums on display including digital, traditional, photography and mixed media art pieces. Multiple artists expressed their enthusiasm towards the exhibit.

"It's important to celebrate your growth. As well as celebrate the growth of others! By showing your body of art you can show that it's okay to be proud of who you are and the positive qualities and works of art you can bring into the world," said Shania Smith, one of the artists featured in the exhibit. "You may find that there are others like you that you can bond with.

Make you feel closer to a community you can call home."

After the showcase ended, the art was purchased and prepared to be displayed at Tacoma Housing Authority's youth home, The Arlington Apartments. This new building is set to open on E. 38th and Portland Ave. It will contain 58 units to provide homes for homeless youth from ages 18 to 24. Amenities at the complex will also include a community garden and health clinic among many other support resources.

The goal of this event was to create a circle of support to strengthen the Tacoma community, to show there are always new innovative ways to care for each other.

Smith also expressed their desire to help others feel included and empowered.

"From my understanding the presence of art in the Arlington Apartments is to help youths feel comfortable. Comfortable in a place where you see something hung up on the wall. And maybe you can relate to the illustrations and it brings you peace," Smith continued. "I feel that is another way to make a place feel a little more familiar."

To the residents of Arlington Apartments, welcome home.



PHOTO BY LORE ZENT

Artwork featured in the exhibit was comprised of many different mediums.

## The 15th annual Tacoma Film Festival

A week of entertainment to bring joy to the dark world known as 2020.

TACOMA



FILM  
FESTIVAL

COURTESY OF TACOMA FILM FESTIVAL

By MADELINE HILLER  
A&E EDITOR

Film fans rejoice, the Tacoma Film Festival is still on this year! The 15th annual festival may look a little different but the fact that it is still happening on Nov. 6-13 can be considered a win for Tacoma in light of everything else going on.

The TFF will be completely virtual this year so, unfortunately, we won't receive the old movie theater atmosphere typically offered by The Grand Cinema. Due to COVID safety measures, The Grand Cinema is unsure about their reopening procedure and is currently in the process of reaching out with surveys and questionnaires to consider what it would take for people to come back.

This isn't going to stop the TFF though. The Tacoma Film Festival will hold screenings via streaming. Tickets are on sale now and will be ranging in price from \$10 for a basic, single view ticket to \$175 for a VIP multiviewer pass that allows you and your friends access to all virtual events this year.

How the TFF will work is relatively straightforward. Once you buy your ticket, you will receive an email with a link that becomes active one hour before your film or event is scheduled. You'll be able

to watch said film or event on one screen multiple times in a 72-hour window beginning from your ticket time. The link you receive via email will not be shareable once the film starts.

Despite the events that 2020 has brought forth, creators from all over the world have made a total of over 125 films to be featured in the film festival. This includes music videos, feature films, shorts, animations and more.

Something to highlight this year are the eight works by Indigenous Peoples and their perspectives on global issues like climate change. These films were created from Canada to the Pacific Northwest all the way to Brazil.

Another film to look out for is the centerpiece film of the festival, "Since I Been Down," directed by Gilda Sheppard. Sheppard is a faculty member at the Evergreen State College Tacoma Campus. The film is based on the community of Hilltop in Tacoma and the drug trade in the '90s.

Other Pacific Northwest based films include:

### "LATCHKEYS" (TACOMA)

Directed by: E.C. Timmer

Description: Young Jenny comes from school to an empty home. Her single father works late, returning long after his daughter.

Jenny, with her irrepressible spirit, uses her solitude to offer a gift of connection to her father. 26-year-old Jenny rediscovers the expressiveness of her childhood, offering the same gift of connection to another young girl much like herself.

### "EMMETT (TIL DE REMIX)" (TACOMA)

Directed by: Masahiro Sugano

Description: This spoken word film, a collaboration between filmmaker Masahiro Sugano and poet Avery R. Young, pays homage to the Civil Rights Movement in honor of Emmett Till. Filmmaker Sugano skillfully captures Young's powerful poetry in all its gut-wrenching glory and soul-soothing rawness. Young brings an entire church congregation with him every time he delivers a poem. It's a Baptist minister style of performance that links the Black Church's long-standing ties with social movement.

Poets like Avery R. Young have a way of wielding song and story to help us heal and maybe even lead us to redemption and liberation. This film honors poetry, life and movement building. This is for the poet as much as the people who have come before and who will continue to come after, who speak truth to power and who will always fight on the side of justice, equality and freedom.

### "YAI NIN" (SEATTLE)

Directed by: Champ Ensminger

Description: Champ Ensminger is a Thai American filmmaker born in Chiang Mai and raised in Spokane. After graduating from the University of Washington in Seattle with a degree in comparative literature and anthropology he moved to New York City where he then worked at the video hosting site Vimeo before moving forward as a freelancer and production assistant at the web agency.

He returned to Chiang Mai in 2013, where he spent time as a volunteer and workshop instructor at Documentary Arts Asia, a nonprofit aimed at bringing agency and exposure to Asia-based media artists. Ensminger recently earned the Emerging Artist Fellowship at the Jacob Burns Film Center and is currently part of the production team at World Famous in Seattle creating content for brands like T-Mobile, Microsoft and Amazon.

Film Description: Ninlawan Pinyo is the matriarch of a Thai American family, who hustled for her fortune by founding a naem (pork sausage) factory in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Even though 2020 has had many ups and downs, most likely with more to come, the Tacoma Film Festival is sure to bring a dash of positivity in the form of digital art in the midst of a rough year.



# Moves the Mariners need to make this offseason

The Mariners have loads of young talent but what moves do they need to make to finally end their 19th postseason drought?

By **BROOKS MOELLER**  
SPORT COLUMNIST

With the world series set to be an intriguing matchup between the Tampa Bay Rays and the Los Angeles Dodgers, the unusual 2020 Major League Baseball season is coming to an end. We can all thank the Rays and the baseball gods that the Houston Astros have been eliminated from the postseason and will not have another shot at a championship after their massive cheating scandal in 2017 was discovered.

Although this was a decent consolation prize for Mariners fans, we still had to endure another season ending before October as the franchise's playoff drought has officially hit 19 years. 2021 was general manager Jerry Dipoto's target of competing for a playoff spot when he began this rebuild, so I am going to go into detail about what the Mariners can do over the next offseason to ensure that the streak will not hit 20.

## SIGN BULLPEN HELP ... AND A LOT OF IT.

The Mariners had the third-worst bullpen in baseball this season, posting a 5.92 ERA overall to go along with eight blown saves. As mediocre as their final record of 27-33 was, this was still only two games short of a playoff spot. This shows how important winning the close

games are and if they were able to close out a couple more of those games, then we might have seen them competing in the playoffs.

The biggest problem with the Mariners' bullpen this past season was their inexperience. There were multiple occurrences where a relief pitcher would enter the game and I would ask myself "who is this guy?" It seemed as if we were throwing minor league pitchers out and praying we would find a diamond in the rough.

Luckily, there are a lot of options out there for Dipoto if he wants to make a big free-agent splash and bring in a proven relief pitcher. One name that stands out to me the most and I would love to see coming out of the pen is Liam Hendriks.

Hendriks will most likely be asking for a long-term contract and thankfully the Mariners are a team that has the cap space and the ability to do so. He has been one of the most consistent relievers in baseball over the past five seasons, including a stellar 2020 where he posted a 1.78 ERA and 14 saves with Oakland.

## SIGN AN EXPERIENCED STARTING PITCHER.

This is one of the position groups that I am most excited about heading into 2021. We saw flashes of greatness

from almost every starter that took the hill for the Mariners in 2020, but some were still not able to consistently show that they should be locked in rotation.

The team went with a six-man rotation in the shortened season and Dipoto has already made mention of how he hopes to do this in 2021 as well. That being said, I believe that five of the six spots in the rotation have already been filled. My predicted order is Marco Gonzales, Justus Sheffield, Yusei Kikuchi, Nick Margevicius and Justin Dunn.

I have confidence that Gonzales and Sheffield will continue to consistently build off of their great 2020 seasons. This will be more of a "prove it" year for the other three as they showed glimpses of their talent but were not able to consistently do so, especially with top prospects Logan Gilbert and George Kirby waiting for their shot in the bigs.

Dunn and Margevicius are two pitchers I could see succeed out of the bullpen if they are not able to be consistent starters. Kikuchi's tenure in Seattle could be over after 2021 considering there is a team option that could buy him out of his \$56 million contract.

The sixth spot is wide open and could easily be filled by Gilbert or Kirby but, personally, I would love to see a veteran pitcher signed to eat innings



COURTESY OF CBC SPORTS

Marco Gonzales will lead a solid Mariners rotation in 2021, but they could use one more arm to help them succeed.

and help mentor the younger pitchers.

## BRING IN A VETERAN OUTFIELDER.

I pray that I won't have to watch another season where Tim Lopes and Jose Marmolajos are our primary left fielders. I have nothing against the two, they are solid utility players but are not natural outfielders.

My first choice would be to start future star Jarred Kelenic, who is considered to be one of the best offensive prospects in years, but if Dipoto is planning on waiting a bit longer on bringing him up then I would love to see a veteran outfielder brought in.

Michael Brantley is a name that sticks out to me. Brantley is 34 and could easily be the guy to fill that spot until Kelenic or even Taylor Trammell is ready. He has been one of the most consistent hitters of the past decade and will most likely only require a one-year deal which would help us win now without ruining any future plans.

If Dipoto is able to pull off a couple of the moves I made mention of, this will be the most excited I have been for a Mariners roster in a long time. The playoff drought may be on its final stretch.

# Gentrification is the real horror in "Vampires vs. the Bronx"

A group of teenagers uncover a secret vampire organization planning to take over their neighborhood.

By **HENRY NGUYEN**  
FILM CRITIC

As October is coming to a close with Halloween just around the corner, it seems as though our world is becoming scarier and scarier as 2020 comes to an end. This also means that horror movies are now being streamed more than ever. However, most horror movies are filled with cheap scares, minimal focus on a message and a lack of substance.

Directed by Osmany Rodriguez "Vampires vs. the Bronx" is a comedy horror that takes place in the heart of the Bronx. It's a film about the necessity of community togetherness in order to get through even the toughest of times.

The movie's exposition shows the Bronx currently going through major changes surrounding both the properties in the area along with their inhabitants. Stores and homes are being bought out left and right. Meanwhile, Miguel Martinez, or "Lil Mayor," — played by Jaden Michael — is trying to get everyone in the neighborhood to attend his block party in order to raise enough money to save the remaining businesses.

After returning home one night Miguel witnesses a terrifying vampire sucking the life out of a poor gang member. Following the event he tells his friends to which they later discover that the real estate company, cleverly named "Murnau Properties," is a secret vampire organization planning to wipe out the entire neighborhood by buying stores and killing their owners.

The film is an allegory for gentrification, how it harms communities and pushes residents and business owners out. I feel as though the way the movie portrays this idea through its plot by utilizing villainous white vampires is clever and thought-provoking.

The script itself is very funny. Joel Martinez, also known as The Kid Mero, gives a wonderful performance playing the owner of the neighborhood's bodega, Tony. The rest of the main characters are played by a POC cast, which is great for positive representation. Each actor also brings something different and diverse that adds to their role as well.

Vampires have to be up there on the list of the most non-scary horror creatures. The movie makes an impressive attempt to create frightening portrayals by giving the vampires disturbing half

## REVIEW

### Vampires vs. the Bronx

★★★★★

#### The Good:

- Strong positive message
- Diverse cast and characters
- Script is funny and feels real

#### The Bad:

- Predictable plot
- As a movie classified in the horror genre, it's more comedic than horrific
- Similar to what we've seen on Netflix

human half bat makeup. There is always something disturbing and uncanny about Chimeras and the movie captures this feeling well.

The way the film is set up also gives off a feeling similar to Netflix's "Stranger Things." If you're a fan of "Stranger Things" and want something similar, then this would definitely be up your alley. However, I went in expecting something even more unique; I loved the idea of white people as vampires "gentrifying" a neighborhood and the horrors that come from it.

This results in a rather predictable plot. It also lessens the effect of the vam-



COURTESY OF BROADWAY VIDEO

A group of teenagers uncover a secret vampire organization planning to take over their neighborhood.

pires as villains since they have so much going against them. They stay true to vampire lore, meaning the characters are able to arm themselves to the teeth with garlic, holy water and wooden stakes.

Overall, this movie is a really good time. It's humorous while presenting a clear-cut message that brings a diverse narrative to today's often one-sided

landscape. However, if you're looking for a serious horror movie with twists and turns, then perhaps you should skip this one. If you're looking for a comedic horror movie with a diverse cast and crew, then I would highly recommend this movie.

"Vampires vs. the Bronx" is currently streaming on Netflix.